

Chairman's report

Friday 21 February 2014



Murray Irrigation

This is the Chairman's report, distributed following a meeting of the Murray Irrigation Board of Directors yesterday.

Water efficiency allocation

The Board agreed to make a water efficiency allocation of one percent of permanent delivery entitlements, excluding Class A (Town Water Supply) and domestic supply agreement customers. This announcement takes the water efficiency allocation to nine percent or 94,800ML.

This efficiency allocation is possible because of conveyance savings from operational efficiencies.

Customer meetings next week

Murray Irrigation will hold seven customer meetings next week, from Tuesday 25 to Friday 28 February. Each meeting is scheduled to run for two hours. Information will be provided on;

- Water availability
- Operations including the Water Exchange
- PIIOP budget and delivery
- On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Programs
- Murray-Darling Basin Plan
- Southern Riverina Irrigators' reform
- Company priorities for 2014
- Renewal of the 2014 Strategic Plan

A key change we have made for these meetings is the inclusion of a specific customer feedback session. I encourage all customers to think about what feedback you can provide to your company that will help us improve our service to you. I encourage you to come prepared to share your views with us.

Each meeting will be attended by myself or Michael Hughes, Deputy Chairman and our General Manager, Anthony Couroupis. Other Directors will also attend wherever possible.

Our more recent customer meetings have not been as well attended as I would like. These meetings are an opportunity for you to learn more about our activities, to ask questions and to provide feedback. I encourage you to take up this opportunity. Dates, times and places are in *Talking Water* and are also available on Murray Irrigation's website www.murrayirrigation.com.au under 'Current activities'.

Carryover capacity

Arrangements for carryover of unused water from 2013/14 into the next season will be up to 50 percent of Class C Water Entitlements.

The Board also agreed to no longer offer a facility for the trade of carryover capacity. The carryover capacity trade option was developed in response to customer inquiry to carryover annual allocation greater than 50 percent of water entitlements. Since its development, use of this facility by customers has been minimal. The ability to carryover unused water from one season to the next will therefore revert to being a fixed percentage of water entitlements.

Water Act and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder

The Board agreed to support 'in principle' to advocate for changes to the *Water Act* (Cth) to provide the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder with more flexibility in the management of their water portfolio, including allowing revenue from water sales to be used to offset bulk water charges and/or to invest in infrastructure to improve environmental outcomes. The Commonwealth is required by law to conduct a limited review into the operation of the *Water Act* this year and we will use this review as an avenue to call for the change.

Meeting with Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson

I will have my first meeting with the Minister next week, items for our discussion include, potential water savings options for the Menindee Lakes, current reviews of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority joint programs, NSW position on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Intergovernmental Agreement and implementation, and NSW Office of Water charges for shallow groundwater bores.

Bruce Simpson
Chairman