

Thank you for agreeing to receive our monthly update. We appreciate you taking the time to keep abreast of what NSWIC is doing to represent Water Access License holders in NSW. This electronic bulletin is a collation of our weekly updates which are sent to our Member organisations.

If you would like more details about your local Member of NSWIC, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Welcome to the “Year of the Family Farmer”

Welcome to 2014 and the **International Year of Family Farming (IYFF)**.

The goal of the 2014 IYFF is to reposition family farming at the centre of agricultural, environmental and social policies in the national agendas by identifying gaps and opportunities to promote a shift towards a more equal and balanced development. The 2014 IYFF will promote broad discussion and cooperation at the national, regional and global levels to increase awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by small land holders and help identify efficient ways to support family farmers.

If you would like to know more about the activities taking place around the world, log onto the IYFF website [HERE](#).

NSW Irrigators Council

Farewell

It was a busy week with Andrew Gregson returning to the office on Wednesday and Thursday (29 & 30 January) for the last time as CEO of NSW Irrigators' Council. While working through administrative matters and handover notes he found an opportunity on Thursday morning to do an interview with the ABC [HERE](#) and then in the afternoon we were able to farewell Andrew and wish him all the best in his new role.

Andrew provided us with a farewell note:

Dear Friends,

What do I say after six and a half years?

Surprisingly, it's quite simple.

I say thank you.

Thank you for the opportunity to work for you, to learn from you, to be guided by you and, I think I can claim it, to be your friend.

And thank you for being the best farmers in the world. Remind people of that whenever you have the chance. I will.

Andrew Gregson

Andrew will be keeping his mobile number (0416 884 468) for anyone who would like to keep in touch.

NEW CEO ANNOUNCED

Not technically part of the January update, but information we're sure you would be interested in knowing in advance of the February update.

On Wednesday 12 February, NSW Irrigators Council Chairman, Richard Stott announced the name of Council's new CEO, Mark McKenzie.

Mark comes to our organisation from the Murray Valley Winegrowers where he has been the CEO for the past three and a half years. We welcome Mark to the role and are confident his experience and dedication will serve NSW Irrigators very well. You can see our media release and industry reactions [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

Commonwealth Environmental Water

Temporary Environmental Water Trade

The CEWH announced its first sale of an environmental allocation in the Gwydir valley. Before the official announcement by David Papps ([HERE](#)) and Senator Birmingham ([HERE](#)), the media made a considerable mess of the story and proved that there are very few individuals who understand the working of the water markets. The Greens were also quick to announce a 'sad day' for the environment and blaming 'budgetary factors' as a reason for trade - [HERE](#).

We responded (via twitter, phone and a media release) to the misconceptions that were floating around, in particular the claim that entitlements were to be traded. Our media welcoming the official announcement can be accessed [HERE](#).

Despite the poor and uncoordinated announcement process, it is a great outcome for our members in the north and a new stage in the management of Commonwealth environmental water. As the first tender has now been completed, our attention will

focus on where the proceeds will end up. Understandably, there are concerns across NSW that the proceeds could be used for large scale temporary allocation purchases elsewhere. We will watch this space closely.

We met with David Papps to discuss the first environmental trade and provide some feedback on the process. The CEWH was very receptive to our comments and is keen to maintain a dialogue with NSWIC and its members about future trading activities and the CEWO will provide an article for our next issue of Productive Water (February) on environmental water trading, the processes and the constraints (in particular section 106(1) and 106(2)).

Temporary Environmental Water Trade

The first tender for temporary environmental water in the Gwydir Valley closed on Thursday 23 January. The response was significant with 51 bids received by the CEWH over the three day tender period. Of these 16 bids were accepted with a total value of \$3.217 million. The media release can be accessed [HERE](#).

Twitter

The CEWH has recently joined twitter. For any news on Commonwealth Environmental Water, check out and follow - **theCEWH**.

Meetings

Meeting with Senator Birmingham's office

We had Monica Morona from Senator Birmingham's office visit us on Friday (31 January) to discuss the timing and process for the 2014 Water Act review.

Monica outlined that they are currently finalising the terms of references for the review and expect to release it sometime in February (likely middle to end of February). We also inquired about the arrangements for stakeholder input. We were ensured that stakeholder consultation will take place as part of the review process.

Mining and Coal Seam Gas

Moving Towards the Riverina

A company called Grainger Resources has lodged an application under the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 to explore for petroleum (CSG, conventional gas and petroleum resources) in the area of Hay, Griffith, Deniliquin, Moulamein and Hillston

(approximately 33,000 square kilometers). There has been some media attention recently on the issue - [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

The NSW Farmers Mining and Coal Seam Gas section has been following this issue very closely and has created a helpful background paper on what's happening and the process going forward. The latest update and information can be accessed [HERE](#).

We encourage members to remain informed on this developing issue. NSWIC needs to a brusque engagement with all sides to get the right to choose access.

NSW Farmers - Mining and CSG Workshops

A great turnout at the NSW Farmers Mining and CSG workshops in Hay and Griffith. Over 70 farmers and landholders attended the workshop in Hay and more than 120 were present for the Griffith session. This issue has received significant traction since Grainger Resources lodged their application for exploration licences in the area of Hay, Griffith, Deniliquin, Moulamein and Hillston.

Critical Industry Cluster Update

In light of the recent CSG application by Grainger Resources, attention has again focused on critical industry cluster status (CIC) in the Riverina ([HERE](#)). Green's Jeremy Buckingham spoke in favour of CIC status for dairy, cotton, horticulture and rice ([HERE](#)).

As a reminder, we have been pushing for critical industry cluster status for all of irrigated agriculture in NSW but were knocked back by Minister Hodgkinson and Minister Hazzard. The letter to the Minister can be found [HERE](#) and a response from Minister Hodgkinson ([HERE](#)) and Minister Hazzard ([HERE](#)).

Several members are pursuing this issue further with the Department.

Significant Impact Guidelines

In response to the release of the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.3: Coal seam gas and large coal mining developments - impacts on water resources (aka. 'EPBC Water Trigger'), we have drafted a letter to the Department to call for a review after 2 years to include key recommendations highlighted in our draft submission. The letter can be accessed [HERE](#).

The Significant Impact Guidelines can be accessed [HERE](#).

Electricity Roundtable Meeting

Stefanie met with the NFF, NIC and CA on Wednesday (22 Jan) to discuss the Energy White Paper - [HERE](#) and the Emission Reduction Fund - [HERE](#).

Stefanie also travelled to Melbourne (Friday 24 Jan) to meet with Dairy Australia for discussions on their recently initiated electricity project.

Energy White Paper

After her attendance at the Energy Roundtable, we have now finalised a draft response to the Federal Government's Energy White Paper - [HERE](#). The draft submission picks up on issues related to mining/CSG as well as electricity prices.

Local Land Services

LLS Update

This is your final opportunity to register for voting in Local Land Services board elections. We've been informed that the cut-off is now Monday 17 February.

Please contact your local LLS office if you have any questions or visit the LLS website [HERE](#). The election results will be announced 14 March.

Emission Reduction Fund

The Government has released the Emission Reduction Fund's Green Paper ([HERE](#)) outlining its preferred design options for the Emission Reduction Fund. Submissions to the Green Paper are open until **21 February 2014**.

The Emission Reduction Fund is the centerpiece of the Government's Direct Action Plan and will provide incentives for small and large scale emission abatement activities across Australia.

As such it could be of interest for irrigated agricultural producers (both soil carbon and direct carbon dioxide emission). According to the Green Paper, the Government is looking for the cheapest unit of carbon equivalent.

We put together a short document ([HERE](#)) highlighting the Green Paper's key principles.

Murrumbidgee General Security

Allocation Announcement

The NSW Office of Water announced (15 January) an immediate increase of 2 percent to the NSW Murrumbidgee General Security allocation, and access to the additional 5 percent of entitlement that had been reserved due to delivery constraints. This brings total general security allocation in the Murrumbidgee to 59 percent of entitlement.

The media release announcing the increase can be found on our Water Market website - [HERE](#).

Water Trading

Meeting with H2OX

We met with Matt Davis from H2OX on Tuesday (14 Jan) as they wanted to discuss the development of a new water trading platform.

The site is still in the development stage, but the concept sounded interesting. We will keep you updated as more information is known.

Water Bore Drillers

New Water Bore Drillers License Framework

In response to the consultation paper on the new water bore drillers license framework, [HERE](#) we have now submitted our final response. The final submission can be accessed [HERE](#).

Thank you to all our members who provided comments to the submission.

Scholarship Opportunities

A number of tertiary scholarships are again on offer this year from Member organisations.

You can find further information on Murrumbidgee Irrigation's program [HERE](#).

South Australian Election

The South Australia election is due to be held on the 15 March. Should be an interesting campaign to watch..... note that "side" issues usually get a run early in the campaigning, so keep an eye out for things like water silliness.

National Farmers Federation

The NFF put out a weekly newsletter for their Members, much like the one NSWIC distributes. To access these newsletters, click the link beside the date of each issue.

10 January – [HERE](#)

17 January – [HERE](#)

24 January – [HERE](#)

31 January – [HERE](#)

NFF – Farm Sector Employment Survey

The NFF have just launched an Agricultural Workforce - Farm Sector Employer Survey.

Collecting data on farm related employment; this survey will inform and shape the development of an Agriculture Workforce Development Plan. Participants can remain anonymous and we're advised it takes about five minutes to complete.

Running from 23 January to 20 February - more information can be found [HERE](#) and the survey can be accessed directly [HERE](#).

ABARES REPORTS

Climate, Water and Agriculture ABARES Updates

The last two months of reports can be accessed on our website page link [HERE](#).