



The Harvey Water "Furphy"

MEETING WITH COLLIE IRRIGATORS – MAJOR FUNDING FOR PLANNING FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Harvey Water met with a group of Collie River Irrigation District (CRID) irrigators at Waterloo on 19 March.

The meeting covered a wide range of topics to inform irrigators about the issues and opportunities facing Harvey Water with a focus on CRID.

Using the company business plan as the basis we first looked at **Water Delivery Services** noting that with the Harvey Pipe Project (HPP) due to be finished in a couple of months the focus is now squarely on what can be done in CRID.

We then turned to **Water Supply** and how this has declined in recent years along with an analysis of the water allocations within our CRID license.

Harvey Water is viewing its future as a fit-for-purpose water supplier in the south west, not just an irrigation water provider. There is no reason why we cannot do this as we have both access to water and the ability to construct infrastructure, both of which control where and how water can be supplied.

Our focus will always be on irrigation but we cannot ignore the opportunities and potential of industrial water supply. In particular, industrial sales will increase our ability

to fund the approx \$150 m needed to pipe CRID.

The influence of the **National Water Initiative (NWI)** was noted and how this extends through the federal and state governments right down to directly affect how water is managed by Harvey Water.

External Trade of irrigation water is a particular issue. Harvey Water has a second to none track record on this and believes that we already satisfy the intention of the NWI by what we have done and how we have done it with the HPP. We will work to have this recognised and accepted.

New **Water Legislation** is being developed at federal and state level, with each being consistent with the NWI. The legislation will affect what we do at Harvey Water and the company is keeping close watch on developments.

One of the features of the new WA Acts is the need for a **Statutory Management Plan** which will apply to the South West. These plans will allow for permanent **Water Access Entitlements (WAE)** instead of the 5 year water licenses we currently have. But, there may also be a review of licenses before the WAE are granted.

The Statutory Management Plan may be ready by 2010 and Harvey Water has already been involved in discussions on how it should be developed.

The **Dam Safety Program (DSP)** being run by Water Corporation will impact on our water supplies for the next few years with water having to be



released from the dams to allow the work to proceed.

Work is underway at Stirling, at Wellington maybe next year, at Drakesbrook next year as well and at Logue Brook in 2011/12.

The biggest challenge now facing Harvey Water is how to find the \$150m to provide the best possible irrigation water delivery system for CRID.

Essentially we must and will continue to strongly support and promote the reduction in salinity in Wellington dam as this is the necessary precursor to any investment that we make.

A major once-in-a-lifetime opportunity is the federal funding of \$320000 for **System Modernisation Planning**. Harvey Water will match this with \$80000 of our own funds to make a total of \$400000. This gives us all the opportunity to spend a year having a serious and thorough look at CRID, what the future holds and how we can plan to provide what is really needed.

Although CRID irrigators rightly point out the difficulties they suffer because of the poor quality water from Wellington dam, we now have the federally funded opportunity to turn our sights on to what the future of CRID will be and think positively and creatively about it.

A Steering Committee will be formed to oversee this **Collie River Irrigation System Planning (CRISP)** project and this will include a majority of irrigators.

The requirement from the government is that there be major consultation and discussion with irrigators in developing CRISP and Harvey Water will do this willingly and with open minds. We sincerely hope that irrigators will do the same.

As part of CRISP Harvey Water has agreed to join a program called **HotSpots** being run by CSIRO with Federal funding. This project is intended to make sure that we all know exactly where any losses are occurring and that any federal funds directed at stopping losses /saving water are invested in the right areas.

Harvey Water anticipates that this might cost around \$2 m and we will obtain these funds from the government. It is expected to take 18 to 24 months to complete HotSpots.

Water Smart funding to improve irrigation infrastructure is planned to be available over 10 years. Although the CRISP outcomes may need to wait until water quality improves before we are able to get the funding, this does not mean that we should take this planning opportunity lightly and not get heavily involved now.

Our sincere desire is to obtain a rock solid plan which clearly shows that funds invested in improving irrigation infrastructure in CRID will be properly invested into an area and into industries which have a strong long term future.

This is a very exciting opportunity for all irrigators and one from which Harvey Water is intent on gaining the best benefit.

The federal **On-Farm Improvement Funding** which was raised before Xmas is not likely to be confirmed along with the scope and requirements of the program, until after the May Federal Budget. There is no reason why CRID irrigators may not participate in this program.

Harvey Water raised the possibility being considered to move water from



Wellington dam into Harvey dam to improve the water supply there through a **Benger Pipeline**. It is suggested that about 5 GL of water could be moved over each 12 months. CRID irrigators raised several ideas about how this water could be obtained.

Some of the water could come from our industrial allocation, some could come from winter run-off into the major channels nearby and there are some trading possibilities for irrigators.

The trading options are interesting and will form further discussions that we will have with irrigators

STOCK WATER

Please note that Stock Water rosters will be carried out every 3 weeks after the closing of the season, and orders are to be phoned through the OSI ordering system.

Further information may be obtained by phoning Harvey Water on 9729 0100.

OTHER NEWS

Visitors

Harvey Water hosted a visit by 10 Iraqi officials including the Governor of a province who are interested in the company structure.

Landline

Harvey Water may feature (very briefly) on an ABC Landline program due for screening during April.

Research Project

A trial to compare different methods of irrigation of pasture, including surface, centre pivot, solid set, fixed overhead and sub-surface systems is

being established at Wokalup Agricultural College. There will be a Field day on 10 May to explain what is happening there. All welcome!

Water Sales

Water sales year to date are a bit behind average and will depend on the type of autumn we have and the amount of early germination which is sown.

Salinity in CRID

Salinity testing by Harvey Water at 14 sites from Wellington dam to the ends of the channel system shows only a slightly increasing trend from 980 ppm at the dam to 1046 ppm at Wellesley Rd, for example. There is a slight increase in salinity in channels where the flow is low compared to full channels, suggesting seepage in from the soil.

Please contact Geoff Calder at Harvey Water on Tel: 9729 0100 for further information on any of the items above