

**December 2006: Edition 9**

“Snippets Plus” compiled using information from the Australian Water Association, Murray Darling Association, FarmOnline & various other sources including various printed media & presentations attended.

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Australian Water Association – “Promoting the Sustainable Management of Water”

Murray Darling Association – “For Conservation and Sustainable Development”

**December 1<sup>st</sup> 2006**

**Farmonline**

**No option to postpone dairy vote**

IF retiring Dairy Australia chairman, Pat Rowley, had the choice he would not commit farmers to a vote on the dairy service levy in the middle of the country's worst ever drought.

**Adelaide Advertiser**

**Loophole in the water-saving regulations – Child's play exempt**

Householders can water their lawns any time of the day for as long as they like, despite the State's water restrictions – but only if children are playing under a sprinkler.

**2<sup>nd</sup>/ 12/06**

**Adelaide Advertiser**

**Infrastructure key to keep water flowing**

Parliamentary secretary for water Malcolm Turnbull did not mince any words in Adelaide last week when he blasted State Governments over the water crisis.

**Melbourne runs dry**

Drought has pushed stream inflows into Melbourne's catchments to a new low – 40percent below the worst recorded.

**3<sup>rd</sup> /12/06**

**Water demand surges again**

Adelaide's daily water consumption soared to its highest level this week – just two days after the State Government announced the toughest water restrictions in South Australian history.

**4<sup>th</sup>/12/06**

**AWA**

Latest ABS Water Account for Australia 2004-05 (Cat. 4610.0). Key findings include a 14% decline in water consumption from previous survey in 2000-01; a 4% decrease in agricultural use from 69% total to 65% over the period; an increase in water use in booming mining sector, plus electricity and gas; and a decline in use by householders.

The new Marsden Jacob Report 'Securing Australia's Urban Water Supplies Opportunities and Impediments' points to the current drought and climate change; suggests that reliance on surface waters for urban supplies should be reviewed; new sources of supply sought; and conservation measures fast-tracked. New water recycling initiatives including indirect potable reuse (IPR) are discussed.

The Queensland Government has announced its intention to introduce South East Queensland Water Recycling Plebiscite Bill 2006 into Parliament. This will set in motion a Referendum set for 17 March 2007 for residents of the state's south-east to vote on the use of Recycled Water as part of the State's ongoing water supply, in good times and in bad.

A Water Minister with a super portfolio of responsibilities for water, environment and climate change has been appointed by the recently returned Victorian Government of Steve Bracks. John Thwaites, his Deputy, has been given the job.

ENVIRO 08, which will take place in the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, in May 2008, will be managed by a new team. The project manager is Max Spedding and he will report to AWA and WMAA, the Conference and Exhibition owners. The successful Enviro 06 conference format will be retained with an exciting program of current and strategic issues. Many thanks to Enviro 06 Chairman, Paul Howlett, and event organisers, QUITZ, who have decided to pursue other interests. Details for ENVIRO 08 will roll out early in 2007.

The latest of the three-yearly surveys of public attitudes to the environment Who Cares about the Environment? found NSW citizens are more concerned about specific issues, particularly water and increasingly about climate change, than air quality and industry regulation.

The VicWater Board has formally endorsed the 'Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Framework' for implementation by Victorian water businesses. The Framework was developed by the Victorian water industry in response to the challenge to reduce greenhouse emissions whilst providing services to a growing population with a reduced water supply.

GHD has been awarded funding from the Victorian Smart Water Fund for the trial installation of six urine-separating composting toilets and two waterless urinals at a new school campus in Maryborough, Victoria, where water restrictions are at their highest.

The Victorian Water Act 1989 was amended in October 2006, incorporating the requirement for water authorities to have regard to the principles of Sustainable Management; introducing on-the-spot fines for permanent water savings plans; and providing a stronger governance framework for water authorities.

The Water Services Association of Australia will be releasing 'AQUALITY' a process for use by water utilities to examine the implementation of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines Framework for the Management of Drinking Water Quality, and can assist in prioritising work to address matters raised in the Guidelines.

Water Restrictions for Adelaide and other River Murray water users will be raised to Level 3 on January 1, 2007, which will reduce the time people can use sprinklers in their gardens from 36 hours a week to six.

In October 2006, Groupe Laperrière & Verreault Inc. (GL&V) acquired the Australian and UK business of COPA WATER. These businesses will join GL&V's water division EIMCO WATER TECHNOLOGIES, which is a world leader in water process technologies.

The Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC) is reviewing the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity. The review process includes early consultation with peak Environmental and Industry Organisations to seek feedback on key strategic issues, and a second round where general public and organisations can provide input.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's Annual Report for 2005-06 is now available. It contains an overview of the department's portfolio, achievements for the year, and projected challenges for programmes for the year ahead.

ReWater, a quarterly newsletter focusing on Farming with Recycled Water and a range of other items about recycled water, can be download from

Mid Kent Water, UK, has thanked its customers for using water sparingly over the summer, so avoiding the need for rationing and standpipes as the reservoirs dried up, despite a wet May. British PM Tony Blair & Chancellor, Gordon Brown, have warned that UK residents will either have to adjust their habits or face severe and expensive restrictions on how much water they consume as climate changes.

The 2nd INTERNATIONAL SALINITY FORUM will be held in Adelaide in 2008. If you are interested in attending or want to submit a paper, details can be found at (Website)

**Australia's peak urban water body says that unless people decide to drink recycled effluent in cities, its use to water parks and supply industry will do little to help solve growing shortages.**

Australia's annual water consumption dropped 14 per cent in the four years to 2005, a decrease largely driven by household saving and changes to farm crop types.

Melbourne has one of the cheapest water supplies in Australia according to a recent report.

The \$387 million Kwinana desalination plant south of Perth is delivering drinking water following completion in time and on budget.

Billions of litres of untreated urban sewage and toxic effluents that flow into the Great Lakes each year are threatening a critical ecosystem that supplies drinking water to millions of people.

The Queensland government has made a profit of \$140 million selling power to NSW in the past 2 years but used billions of litres of scarce drinking water to do so.

Water flows to the top of the political agenda as South East Queensland faces a New Year referendum on recycled water.

**4<sup>th</sup> /12/06**

**Farmonline**

**Serious wool supply problems loom if rain doesn't fall**

International wool buyers are starting to wake up to the potential supply threat the drought in Australia is posing, prompting forecasts of higher prices in the new year.

### **Cotton Cleared as water waste culprit by ABS**

The perception that cotton is the cause of Australia's water shortage has been dismissed with new ABS figures showing cotton crops are only grown when water is available.

**5<sup>th</sup>/12/06**

### **Water crisis now state emergency: NSW Opposition**

NSW Opposition leader, Peter Debnam, says a NSW Government report into water supplies and management should prompt a "state of emergency" to be declared.

### **Murray Valley Standard**

#### **Weir proposal concerns**

A group of concerned residents held a meeting at the Wellington Hall recently in response to the possibility of a weir being constructed at Wellington.

**6<sup>th</sup>/12/06**

### **Farmonline**

### **Adelaide Advertiser**

#### **Torrens clean-up code a failure.**

Almost 50 companies audited in the Torrens catchment area during the past three years failed to have an environmental plan in place to prevent pollution of the River Torrens, a report says.

### **Big fall in wool clip**

Australia's wool clip is likely to a 20-year low as farmers grapple with the drought and sell their sheep for slaughter.

### **Adelaide Now**

#### **Dire warning for North Pole ice sheet**

The ice sheet covering the North Pole and Arctic Ocean could recede and disappear completely in the summer months by 2040, researchers said today. If greenhouse gas emissions continued at the current rate, the Arctic's future ice cover would have periods of relative stability followed by abrupt retreat, said a team of scientists of the National Centre for Atmospheric.

### **Gas emission cuts will hurt**

Australia's farm sector and multibillion-dollar metals processing industry risk decimation if deep cuts in domestic greenhouse gas emissions are put in place by 2050.

### **Water report an embarrassment – Debnam**

The NSW government has been damned by its own report on supply and management of water in the state, says Opposition Leader Peter Debnam. He said Premier Morris Iemma should declare a state of emergency so that swifter action can be taken to address the water crisis. A government report released last week found water supply and management was the major environmental issue facing the community, with four in five people saying the State Government needed to do more.

### **City water prices given OK**

Urban water prices in Australia are adequate to meet future demands, the chairman of New South Wales's independent pricing authority said today. Michael Keating, head of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), also believes state governments are doing an effective job in water management – far better than Canberra could do. In a lunchtime address in Sydney, Dr Keating said many commentators had said urban water prices were too low and should be doubled, or even tripled, but there was no evidence to back their claims.

### **Dry run for Melbourne's water catchments**

Melbourne's water storages have fallen to 41.6 per cent capacity on the eve of the first day of summer. Water storages dropped 0.6 per cent this week after no rain fell in Melbourne's four main water catchments.

