

## August 2006: Edition 5

**Snippets Plus compiled using information from the Australian Water Association & Murray Darling Association and various other sources including various printed media & Presentations Attended.**

**Compiled by Cr. Peter R. Smith OAM**

**PO Box 126, MANNUM. 5238**

**Ph 08 8569 8086 Fax 08 8569 8086 Mobile 0418 822 342**

**Email [psmiters@lm.net.au](mailto:psmiters@lm.net.au) or [myriver@lm.net.au](mailto:myriver@lm.net.au)**

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

**Murray Darling Association – “For Conservation and Sustainable Development”**

**Murray Valley Standard: 3<sup>rd</sup> August 06**

The final version of the Tintinara-Coonalpyn Land & Water Management Plan was launched recently, the plan, “to ensure sustainable use of land and water while maintaining biodiversity and farm profitability”. “The area faces issues emanating from rising groundwater tables and subsequent salinity increases, these issues have the potential to impact on the region’s economic and social wellbeing and this plan is not just about irrigation, crops and pastures it is mostly about people”.

**Channel Nine News: 4<sup>th</sup> August 06**

If pumping from the River did not resume today Adelaide would have most certainly run out of water.

**Adelaide Advertiser: 7<sup>th</sup> August 06**

Who says water does not cause armed conflict?

SRI Lanka

SRI Lanka’s Tamil Tiger rebels yesterday agreed to lift a water blockade of Government held villages in the Northeast – an issue that had led to some of the fiercest fighting between the two sides in nearly five years. “Our...leader has decided to open the sluice gate in response to a request made by Norway,” a rebel spokesman said.

**AWA**

Stage one-water restrictions could be introduced in Melbourne from September 1<sup>st</sup> unless good rains fall over the catchments in August, according to Victoria's Water Minister John Thwaites.

Would you drink Recycled Water? A survey for everyone to complete and then follow the results on the following website.

The National Pollutant Inventory (NPI) and measures associated with the data collection process will change its name to National Emissions Inventory (NEI), inclusion of transfers, nitrogen and phosphorus emissions as required reports and of exclusion of GHG (greenhouse gases), the last pending inclusion under new national legislation, as decided by COAG.

The approval process for reusing biosolids in Tasmania has been simplified. The new Approved Management Method for Biosolids Reuse (AMM) outlines a framework for classifying biosolids and specifies permitted uses for some types.

Regional cities have been told to embrace water use efficiency as farmers have, because cuts to irrigators will not be used to prop up urban drinking supplies. Federal agriculture Minister Peter McGauran issued the warning after residents of Toowoomba (QLD) rejected a proposal to recycle water for drinking, with two fallback options involving taking water from irrigators.

South Australia has released for public consultation, the first Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Bill, which will commit the State to a target of reducing greenhouse gases by 60% of 1990 levels by 2050.

Dr Heather Chapman (CRCWQ&T) says the concentrations of hormones in water sources are extremely low compared with the levels in medication. "There is no strong scientific evidence that the low levels of hormones, such as may find their way into sources of water used for drinking water supply, cause any harm to human health" she said.

China INA has started to implement an ordinance to regulate and control the volume of the Yellow River, the second longest river in the country. This is China's first law on water volume control of the country's long rivers.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) says that Scotland will meet its targets on improving the water quality of its rivers, estuaries and coastline. SEPA must reduce the length of rivers and streams classed as poor quality by 351 km by 2006. By the end of 2005, it had already achieved a reduction of 393 km.

Tasmanians will have an opportunity to comment on ways to reduce heavy metal pollution, caused by 90 years of industrial discharges into the Derwent Estuary. While industry has made attempts to reduce loads over the past 20 years, a scientific basis is now needed for guide management actions.

Faced with more prospective drought, the QLD Beattie Government has announced almost \$5B of water infrastructure, including \$2.2B for two new dams, an extra \$400M for the south regional pipeline from Brisbane to the Gold Coast, \$334M to fast-track the western corridor recycled water scheme for industry, and an extra \$80M for the \$800M Gold Coast desalination plant.

Huge media interest in Indirect Potable Reuse since the Toowoomba referendum, including a taste test last Friday on ABC 702 Radio in Sydney. Tap water was ranked best by Bill Grainger (chef) and Catherine Saxelby (nutritionist) but they felt that desalinated and recycled water were palatable as well.

A new database that collects evidence of contaminants, biology and biological effects from around the UK coastline has been developed by DEFRA and IT partner IBM. The launch of the Marine Environment Monitoring & Assessment National (MERMAN) database showed for the first time that all of this data can be held in the same place.

Prime Minister Howard has re-iterated his support for water recycling and called for its widespread adoption as inevitable.

Mayors in regional Australia should show the same courage as Toowoomba's mayor and acknowledge full recycling of water should be a first priority, not a last resort according to Democrat Senator Bartlett.

The Queensland Government has its water priorities the wrong way around trying to build two new dams where the rain no longer falls and Premier Beattie is threatening of state of emergency over water.

Victorians now know that watering your driveway is not acceptable but changing peoples' habits does not in itself solve the problem sharing less water between more people.

**Adelaide Advertiser: 8<sup>th</sup> August 06**  
Just Weeks Away From Drought

Dams are half empty, some farmers are within a fortnight of a drought crisis and the River Murray wetlands are suffering as South Australians experience their driest winter in 47 years.

The river also is under pressure from dry conditions across Southern Australia this winter.

SA Water said that if dry conditions continued through spring, Adelaide's summer water supply would need to be bolstered by more pumping from the River Murray.

The MDBC's drought update says flood plains along the River Murray are at "breaking point" and need heavy rain flows within the next year. It says flows into SA over the past year amounted to just 2050 gigalitres compared with the long-term average of 6600 gigalitres.

River Murray Minister Karlene Maywald said the lack of high rivers over the past decade had contributed to a growing salinity problem on the river's flood plains.

**10<sup>th</sup> August**  
\$9m to revive SA Rivers

More than 2000 wetlands plants have been planted and 40ha of weeds destroyed in the first year of a National plan to help struggling river systems.

## MDA

Cities profligate with water: farmers treat it as a precious resource

Rural people have always treated water as a precious resource and used it sensibly.

That's the view of new Queensland Water Commission chief, Elizabeth Nosworthy.

"It really is in the cities that behaviour with water has been fairly profligate," she said in an interview with *Queensland Country Life* today.

"So we are trying to get people in the cities to start thinking about using water much more wisely," she said.

Elizabeth Nosworthy currently is getting to grips with the state's strategic plans for water for the next 50 years.

"They (rural people) are not going to be left behind in all this," Ms Nosworthy said.

Ms Nosworthy believes the Water Commission will be pivotal in achieving greater water security for the state.

This will be done principally through the establishment of a regional water grid, recycled water schemes for power stations and industry, desalination and water-saving initiatives, and new dams and other storage's.

### Watershed election in Qld.

Don't expect a landslide against Qld Premier, Peter Beattie in the coming election - despite all his troubles over acute water shortages in South-East Qld.

The poll shows 60pc of Brisbane residents and 51pc of nearby Sunshine and Gold Coast residents blame the Beattie Government for the poor state of planning of water resources in South-East Qld.

But would Coalition leader the Nationals' Lawrence Springborg do a better job to ensure continued supply of water? 'No' said 64pc of the people in Brisbane and 57pc of the people on the two coasts.

So the poll seems to confirm Mr Beattie's Labour Government will face a major backlash over water - not to mention the State health administration scandal, and other issues.

But it also indicates that the Qld National-Liberal Opposition hasn't made significant progress in convincing the public it is a viable alternative government.

The poll was published amid speculation this week that Premier Beattie is gearing up for a September election.

### Green spreads across far west of NSW.

There's a thick carpet of green being rolled across the far west of NSW where farmers are revelling in some of the best winter growth seen in years.

It's restoring hopes that a major seasonal turnaround may finally be in store.

Locals have described the take off of winter herbage along the Darling River as "magnificent", with much of the far west looking as though it has been spread with super phosphate.

This follows falls of 100 millimetres and more in some districts in the past two months.

And while all have acknowledged that the grass is short, and the drought has been very long, there's been a marked lift in western morale and a restoration of hope that a back-to-back drought-breaking season was potentially in reach with just another fall of rain.

"People here once again have hope and some are even talking about the future, not that there's been enough rain to start restocking, but there's been enough to restore hope," Bourke and Wanaaring districts' rural financial counsellor.

4.

### **Premier Peter Beattie takes control of Qld Water Ministry.**

Qld Minister for Natural Resources and Water, Henry Palaszczuk, announced today he will retire from politics at the next election.

Premier Peter Beattie takes over the Minister for Water portfolio immediately, without waiting for the forthcoming election.

The decision comes amid mounting speculation about a September election in Qld, although Mr Beattie doesn't have to go to the polls until May 2007.

The acute water shortage crisis in South-East Qld will be a major focus of that election.

Mr Palaszczuk served as Minister for Primary Industries from 1998 to 2005, before transferring to Water.

"I will continue to work with Mr Beattie and stakeholders on water issues up until the next election," Mr Palaszczuk said.

"While the decision to build the Traveston Crossing Dam has cost me many personal friendships in the Mary Valley, I do not regret recommending it to the Government as I know it is essential."

### **Sunday Mail Adelaide: 13<sup>th</sup> August 2006** Summer Water Ban Fear

SA Water says its still too early to know whether water restrictions will be introduced this summer. Five Adelaide reservoirs – Millbrook, Kangaroo Creek, Little Para, Barossa & Warren – are below last year's levels. Adelaide's water consumption has also risen from last year – up 318ml – as a consequence of the low rainfall.

### **AWA**

A deadline of September 30 has been set by the Queensland Government for 18 SEQ councils to show they will embrace recycled water for industry and reduce wastage, or face heavy fines. Premier Peter Beattie and Gold Coast Mayor Ron Clarke have signed an agreement to start work on the \$100m Tugun Desalination project.

Linda Van and Alex De Sousa of Brisbane head to Sweden this week to represent Australia in the international Stockholm Junior Water Prize on 22<sup>nd</sup> August. AWA, sponsors Flygt and Gold Coast Water wish them the best of luck! The pair were even congratulated by Malcolm Turnbull.

Communities in the Murray-Darling Basin face unprecedented economic challenges after record dry conditions in June and July resulted in the Lowest Runoff into the Murray River since records started.

The SA Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, says an Aerial electromagnetic Survey of the Stockyard Plain Basin area to gain a better understanding of Groundwater resources and Salinity in the Riverland will be completed this month.

Due to the low rainfall in recent weeks, the Victorian Minister for Water has asked the Wimmera Catchment Management Committee to delay release of Environmental Flows to the Wimmera and MacKenzie Rivers until the end of the month.

The NSW Water Environment Merit Award was won by UTS, for its project, 'A Novel Flocculation for Sustainable Water Reuse and Sludge Recycling' submitted by Prof S Vigneswaran

Become a water saving star and enter awards. The prestigious save water! awards are calling for Water Savings stars to enter the 2006 awards program, which recognises and rewards outstanding achievement in water conservation.

Entering is easy at OFWAT (UK Office of Water Regulator) published a discussion document in Feb 2006 on Financing Networks (a basis for planning) raising eight key issues and inviting comment. The results have now been published together with additional suggestions raised with water utilities having the most contributions.

## 5.

AWWA is considering a Mutual Aid and assistance network designed to provide a mechanism in which water and wastewater utilities that face threatened or specific damages from a natural or human-caused event can quickly obtain emergency assistance by sharing resources (personnel, equipment, materials), from others.

As Water grows ever scarcer, discussion is turning to the proposition that water may become the "oil of the future" with pricing tied to demand, market forces and technologies capable of extracting and treating it from currently unproductive sources and a stepped price mechanism linked to use and quality.

A controversial theory that water molecules behave differently from others because they have a "MEMORY" - a belief long held by homoeopaths who use radionics for preparing remedies, but usually pooh-pooed by scientists - has been used to explain the behaviour of trace contaminants in highly treated water utility

ALINTA and Investment bank, Macquarie are squaring up to bid for Britain's €7 billion (\$17.5 billion) utility Thames Water which is being sold by German entity RWE. The company is Europe's biggest water business, serving 13 million people in London and Southeast England.

Seventy per cent of fresh water is used in agriculture and a vast amount is wasted. Water trading is the only way to go according to Roger Bate.

One in three regional councils in NSW would consider using recycled wastewater for domestic consumption if the state's water crisis was to worsen. Will the new technologies result in new, cheaper water - recycled water - available for a variety of uses from irrigation to boosting water available for drinking?

### **Adelaide Advertiser: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

Limits on Murray will stay.

A dramatic drop in River Murray water levels will see restrictions on irrigation (80%) remain in place and result in further pressure on metropolitan supplies. There is also a predicted chance that SA will not receive its full entitlement of 1850 gigalitres this year. The Murray darling Basin catchments are holding 3814 gigalitres which is well below the average of 6220 gigalitres at this time of the year.

### **Adelaide Advertiser: 17<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

Call for State to raise cost of water.

Conservation organisation the World Wildlife Fund wants the State Government to raise water costs if it is serious about conserving the precious natural resource also pointing out that wastewater should be reuse for agriculture.

### **\$1.2m plug on water**

Adelaide City Council no longer can use unlimited water on the parklands paid for by the State Government. The Government has told council it will pay it \$1.2m for water use, adjusted annually with CPI. Any money spent over that will be paid for by ratepayers.

### **MDA**

Govt millions to revive Macquarie Marshes.

Some of Australia's most important wetlands have been given a lifeline thanks to a \$13.4 million grant from the Federal Government's \$1.6 billion Water Smart Australia scheme.

Federal Parliamentary Secretary for water, Malcolm Turnbull, says the money will go towards a \$26.8m NSW Wetland Recovery Plan, jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State Government.

The plan seeks to restore health to the internationally significant Macquarie Marshes in central west NSW, and the Gywdir Wetlands, located downstream of Moree, in the north of NSW, which have been under severe ecological stress.

The Macquarie Marshes and the Gwydir Wetland cover approximately 220,000 and 100,000 hectares respectively.

Both areas are vital to river systems, nesting water birds, and commercial cattle grazing and farming.

## 6.

Mr Turnbull says the project has important demonstration value for wetlands management where balancing competing needs for water in a period of drought poses a major challenge.

"These important areas are listed under the Ramsar Convention and are under severe ecological stress as a result of drought and land and water management practices," Mr Turnbull said.

"This plan may become a model for other important wetlands in NSW where balancing water for environmental and other purposes continues to be a major challenge.

"The NSW Wetland Recovery Plan will include projects designed to improve knowledge of wetland and environmental water management, improve water flows and address noxious weeds.

Water savings will also be made through more efficient infrastructure such as piping open channels and market mechanisms to recover water.

The open transfer of water data and information is closer to becoming reality following Australia's first Water Data Summit in Adelaide.

The National Water Commission and the Executive Steering Committee on Australian Water Resources Information (ESCAWRI) co-convened the summit at which an agreement was reached to seek endorsement from government ministers to open water data transfers between jurisdictions.

The summit agreed to put this recommendation to the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council later this year.

The summit also agreed to finalise a set of principles for open exchange of water data preferably via the Internet.

A range of benefits to water users are expected to flow from improved access to water data, but a number of hurdles remain in relation to data standards, transfer protocols and data quality.

Ken Matthews, chairman of the National Water Commission, says current approaches to sharing data are "reminiscent of the times when passengers had to change trains at state borders because each state had its own idea of the best railway gauge".

"Until recently technology had been the major brake on the effective use of our water data," Mr Matthews said.

"Today the opportunities offered by the Internet have turbo charged the way water data can be shared across the country, making open water data sharing easier and more accessible.

"Competition for water means it is vital that we can effectively measure what we have, how it is used and understand where and how water is lost."

National plan to protect farm profits from climate change Australian agriculture has a new plan to help deal with the effect of climate change on water availability, farm production systems and heightened risks of pest, weed or disease.

These potential climate change problems are tackled in a national action plan which has been released by the Federal Government, following work with the backing of the National Farmers Federation and the states.

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Peter McGauran, says the plan will "tackle head-on" climate change issues in order to protect farm profitability.

"The plan requires firm commitments to the task by governments and industry," Mr McGauran said.

The plan provides a framework for coordinated action, focusing on adaption to climate change, as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

NFF chief executive, Ben Fargher, says the plan is a great example of how the climate change issue needs to be dealt with in Australia.

"For the agriculture sector, the framework outlines our ability to maximise opportunities and minimise the risks associated with climate change," Mr Fargher said.

7.

"Encouragingly, emissions from the joint agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors have fallen by around 40pc since 1990." Australian farmers have been able to achieve this through sustainable native vegetation management.

"The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reports that on average, each farmer plants approximately 150 seedlings annually for conservation purposes.

"Widely implemented farming techniques to mitigate emissions also include precision applications of fertiliser, minimum- or no-till cropping practices and maintenance of permanent groundcovers to optimise soil condition."

\* Copies of the National Agriculture and Climate Change Action Plan are available at:  
[www.daff.gov.au/climatechangeactionplan](http://www.daff.gov.au/climatechangeactionplan).

Productivity gains can match doubling in water price

Improved technology means irrigators will be able to stay ahead of the game if forecasts of a doubling in the water price are realised.

Speaking at yesterday's ATSE Crawford Fund's water conference in Canberra, CRC for Irrigation Futures chief scientist, Dr Wayne Meyer, argued that productivity gains could keep pace with price rises.

Dr Meyer says only 10-30pc of the available irrigation water is actually being used by plants, with the rest lost between the storage and the field by evaporation and seepage.

"The analysis indicates that achieving a doubling of yield at a crop level will be hard, but halving the water used is possible but expensive," he says.

With this in mind research will shift from breeding new high-yielding crop varieties from crops, to growing the same crop with less water.

Dr Meyer also played down fears that high volumes of agricultural water would be shifted to urban use, saying a maximum of 10pc of the irrigation water available could possibly be used by the cities.

National plan to protect farm profits from climate change Australian agriculture has a new plan to help deal with the effect of climate change on water availability, farm production systems and heightened risks of pest, weed or disease.

These potential climate change problems are tackled in a national action plan, which has been released by the Federal Government, following work with the backing of the National Farmers Federation and the states.

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Peter McGauran, says the plan will "tackle head-on" climate change issues in order to protect farm profitability.

"The plan requires firm commitments to the task by governments and industry," Mr McGauran said. The plan provides a framework for coordinated action, focusing on adaption to climate change, as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

NFF chief executive, Ben Fargher, says the plan is a great example of how the climate change issue needs to be dealt with in Australia.

"For the agriculture sector, the framework outlines our ability to maximise opportunities and minimise the risks associated with climate change," Mr Fargher said.

"Encouragingly, emissions from the joint agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors have fallen by around 40pc since 1990." Australian farmers have been able to achieve this through sustainable native vegetation management.

"The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reports that on average, each farmer plants approximately 150 seedlings annually for conservation purposes.

"Widely implemented farming techniques to mitigate emissions also include precision applications of fertiliser, minimum- or no-till cropping practices and maintenance of permanent groundcovers to optimise soil condition."

8.

### **Water prices to double by 2050**

Irrigators are facing a 50pc increase in the price of water in real terms within the next 20 years as urban demand and environmental pressures grow.

The message was delivered this morning by Dr Frank Rijsberman, keynote speaker at the *Water for Irrigated Agriculture and the Environment* conference at Parliament House, Canberra.

Dr Rijsberman, who is director general of the International Water Management Institute, says the pressures of global population growth alone will double the price of agricultural water within the next 50 years.

Water prices could go higher still, depending on the impact of climate change, changing global trading rules, and domestic political pressures.

Societies will have to choose between allocating the available water to either the environment or to agriculture.

"If you need more water for cities, its probably just going to come straight out of agriculture," Dr Rijsberman said.

So the challenge is for agriculture to find new ways to become more water efficient.

Dr Rijsberman admits, however, this may be difficult, given the advanced state of irrigation technology.

### **Beattie Govt promises funds for statewide water grid**

A re-elected Beattie Labour Government will invest \$496 million to help build a \$1.3 billion Statewide Water Grid, to improve water supplies in regional and rural Queensland.

The grid would complement the existing SEQ Water Grid.

Premier Peter Beattie said the Statewide Water Policy will enhance water security and supply through the provision of new infrastructure.

The Statewide Water Police would also examine new sources of supply and encourage greater conservation and education across business, industry and the community.

Mr Beattie said the funding package would include a \$420 million equity injection for delivering new infrastructure including new dams, weirs, water storages and pipelines.

Mr Beattie said more than 60pc of the land area of the State was currently drought declared including 62 shires and five part shires.

Opposition leader, Lawrence Springborg, however, blames the Qld Govt, not the drought, for the current acute water crisis in South-East Qld.

He points out the Govt has been in power for most of the past 14 years.

Yet South-East Qld still relies for most of its water on dams built under Coalition governments led by the Nationals.

### **City-bush perceptions under the microscope**

A new campaign to help all Australians understand 21st Century farming has won funding support from the Federal Government.

Perceptions of farming will be under the microscope with the Australian Government contributing \$40,000 to a new research effort initiated by Queensland-based farm organisation, AgForce.



Federal Agriculture Minister, Peter McGauran, says the funding from the National Landcare Program will help drive research into the differing beliefs city and country people may hold about conservation and animal welfare on farms.

"I congratulate AgForce for its active approach to highlighting the integral role our primary producers play in our economy, our environment and in animal welfare," Mr McGauran said.

9.

"AgForce developed and implemented its 'Every Family Needs a Farmer' campaign this year to help counteract misinformation and ignorance in the city about agricultural production."

This new research will help focus future campaigns to deliver accurate messages to the general community.

"AgForce research shows one in five primary school students think that milk comes direct from a carton and meat from the supermarket.

"This research will show where the gaps in knowledge are and will give us an insight into how best to get the message through to the city that primary producers are strong environmental managers and highly value animal welfare," Mr McGauran said.

### **Force regional cities to recycle their water: poll**

More than 80pc of *FarmOnline* readers believe regional cities should be forced to adopt water recycling.

The views are a clear rebuff to the residents of Toowoomba, who recently rejected a plan to introduce recycled water to their drinking supplies.

In the fallout from that referendum, Agriculture Minister Peter McGauran said regional cities should follow farmers' lead in adopting efficient water use strategies.

Mr McGauran argued regional cities could not expect their water supplies to be topped up by further cuts to irrigators.

"There's enough pressure now on water use for agriculture without seeing more lost to production to prop up urban communities," he said.

But Mr McGauran stopped short of backing a policy that would "force people to accept recycled sewage as drinking water".

However, it is clear country people disagree, with this week's FarmOnline poll revealing 80.7pc of readers believe regional cities should be forced to adopt water recycling.

The sentiment was strongest in WA where 94pc of respondents voted 'yes', but in drought-crippled Queensland only 74pc of respondents thought cities should be forced to recycle.

### **Herald Sun; 21<sup>st</sup> August 2006**

Heat applied to water bans

Millions of Victorians look certain to be hit with tough new water restrictions amid a burst of early spring weather.

One in three people in the World is suffering from water shortage, according to a recent study and those findings show the situation to be even worse.

Youth Forum (same day)

### **Recycling for our future**

I think that recycled sewerage water should be allowed now because if we run out of fresh water in the future we know that we'll still have recycled water. So choose recycled sewerage because if you do choose it, water won't run out.

Secondly I think if you don't want to drink the recycled sewerage water because of the thought of it, just pretend you're drinking fresh water. If you think about wasting water, think again.

**Written by a Grade 5 student at a Victorian Primary School.**

We Must Listen to and Educate our Future Leaders

**Herald Sun: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 06**

\$70m lift for rivers.

The State Government (Vic) has promised \$70 million to bolster the health of regional rivers. The State's 10 catchments authorities will use the money to fight salinity, weeds and pests and to build sustainable irrigation systems.

10.

**Adelaide Advertiser: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 06**

Record Drought Feared

With only nine days of the season left, South Australia is on course for one of its driest winters on record.

**Same Day**

'Next Step' to save Murray

State and Federal Governments have been urged to "take the next step" to save the Murray, including new controls on farm dams, tree planting and ground water overuse.

**23<sup>rd</sup> August 06**

Drought toll on roos same day "Memories of 1956 Flood" what a contrast as at it's highest the flood sent 341 gegalitres into South Australia.

**24<sup>th</sup> August 06**

Winter of our Discontent

Adelaide is just five days away from recording its driest winter since records began 168 years ago.

**AWA**

Prime Minister John Howard has announced \$2.6m for the Porters Creek Wetland Stormwater Harvesting project on the Central Coast, the 8th New South Wales project to receive funding from the Australian Government's Water Smart Australia Programme. The Central Coast city of Wyong's population is expected to increase by 40 000 by 2025.

The Productivity Commission has criticised the attempts to save water through improved infrastructure, saying these gains are often illusory and more expensive than other options. This is just one facet of a major report, 'Rural Water Use and the Environment; The Role of Market Mechanisms' approx. 320pp.

Sydney Water Corporation was awarded the 2006 Stockholm Industry Water Award for its "Every Drop Counts (EDC) Business Program" demonstrating how the utility, partnering with business, industry and government has helped to save 20 million litres of water daily.

Prime Minister John Howard says Australia desperately needs to Recycle more water, but any reuse programs need to be tailored to individual communities and the issue does not need to go to a referendum.

Australia's finalists for the Stockholm Junior Water Prize, Linda Van and Alex DeSouza did not win; that honour went to China's team for a project to clean up a polluted urban water canal on the Caoxi River.

Surging demand for Irrigation to produce food and biofuels is likely to aggravate the scarcity of water, but supply is not running out, according to a major report by the International Water Management Institute issued in Stockholm to mark World Water Week 2006.

A reminder that the Smart Water Fund is calling for applications for Round 4 funding with \$6m in total available for innovative water conservation, water recycling and biosolids management projects. Deadline 6 September.

The Sydney Catchment Authority has launched a consultation paper on permanent transfers of water from the Shoalhaven River to Sydney. Consultation is open till 6 October 2006.

The Cosseys Dam upgrade, involving the URS team, has won a Silver Award of Merit at the Association of Consulting Engineers' New Zealand awards. This is a unique project requiring excavation and refurbishment of a 40m high earth dam that currently supplies about 15% of Auckland's water supply.

Toxic Algal Blooms abound across Europe's coastal waters, fuelled by summer hot weather and fertilised by human-induced pollution - a phenomenon that is likely to become common, according to the European Environment Agency.

A mix of Climate Change, drought and loss of wetlands that store water, along with poorly planned water infrastructure and resource mismanagement, is making water crises global events and no longer the problem of only the poorest nations, according to a recent report.

11.

AWA wish to advise a correction from last week's email news. Item 15 regarding the Eastern Irrigation Scheme in Melbourne - Earth Tech was not the consultant to Melbourne Water but was the scheme proponent and co-financier. Apologies to those affected.

As foreshadowed in last week's email news, Australia's 60 water specialists who met in Adelaide have agreed to recommend water ministers rubber stamp an open exchange of data.

The Queensland opposition will scrap unpopular water taxes as part of its \$1 billion plan to solve the drought gripping the South-East region.

One third of all water would have to be recycled by 2015 under a Federal Labour Government.

The NSW Government will introduce a new access regime to allow the private sector to compete with state owned water utilities for recycled water and wastewater services.

Sunday 27th saw the launch of the 1956 River Murray Flood 50th Anniversary Exhibition at Renmark, SA marking 50 years since the last big flood on the river.

Whether level 4 water restrictions will be introduced into South East Queensland after the forthcoming state election is not a topic anyone is prepared to discuss.

**Adelaide Advertiser: 29<sup>th</sup> August 06**  
**Recycling Scheme \$100m to Cut Water Waste**

Thousand of litres of stormwater will be recycled in Northern Adelaide as part of a \$116 million plan to be unveiled today by Prime Minister John Howard.

Mr Howard will detail measurers to divert 17 gigalitres of stormwater a year from flowing into Gulf St Vincent.

The \$90 million scheme will test whether some of the stormwater can be recovered to drinking standard after being channelled into Adelaide's natural under-ground aquifer.

Another trial will involve storing some stormwater in domestic rainwater tanks for use on gardens.

The recycling scheme involves a partnership between Federal (\$38m), State (\$16.4m) and Local Government (\$21m) from three local council – Salisbury, Playford and Tea Tree Gully – and another \$14.1m in private investment.

**Same Day**  
**\$28m Deal for Murray**

Native fish surveys and salinity interception projects in the River Murray will continue for at least the next two years.

Under a new funding arrangement between Federal and State Governments, SA environmental initiatives will receive \$54m with more than \$28m being spent on the River Murray.

**Murray Valley Standard: 29<sup>th</sup> August 06**  
**Wastewater on longer a grey area.**

The results of grey water treatment systems on vessels on the River Murray will be made available at the completion of the trials in September.

SA's Minister for the River Murray has called on State and Federal Governments to commit to the next step of saving the Murray during her keynote address to the 11<sup>th</sup> National Water Conference in Sydney last

week.

**Adelaide Advertiser: 30<sup>th</sup> August 06**  
Nervous farmers sell off stock in big numbers.

Drought conditions stretching slowly across SA have forced many farmers to send a rapidly rising number of sheep and cattle to market.

12.

**Same Day**  
Study on Coorong

Serious ecological degradation and salinity in the Coorong wetlands are threatening birds and fish scientists say. The Coorong is "in a bad way" according to Adelaide University scientist Mike Geddes.

**Queensland Courier Mail: 30<sup>th</sup> August 06**

QUEENSLAND Premier Peter Beattie has been forced to close an embarrassing loop-hole that prevents councils from issuing on-the-spot fines for people breaching water restrictions in the state's south-east.

Mr Beattie said the state's executive council met this morning to change the regulation to ensure the fines for breaching level three water restrictions can be issued.

"The regulation re-introduces on the spot fines for ... illegal watering of gardens and lawns," he told ABC Radio.

"It's no big deal about this. No one's getting off."

The *Courier-Mail* newspaper today reported Brisbane and eight other South East Queensland councils on level three restrictions had not been delegated the power to issue the on-the-spot fines.

The report said Brisbane City Council had stopped fining people for breaking the water laws, with water inspectors reduced to warning offenders that they face a possible court summons.

The council's water spokeswoman, Jane Prentice, today said the government had failed to pass legislation that allowed councils to impose the fines. She said the council had been telling the government about the problem "for some time" and sent a letter to various government departments outlining their concerns on August 17.

She said when the council did not get a response from the government it notified Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman "a few days ago".

"Our legal advice as of yesterday was that we couldn't (issue on-the-spot fines) – obviously we are happy if the state government are going to do a quick fix," she told ABC Radio. "Our legal advice was that those (previous on-the-spot) fines were issued contrary to the legislation. "The legislation didn't stack up and we would be obliged to refund (the fines) if people requested that."

Mr Beattie said he had not been notified of the loophole until a journalist called him yesterday.

He accused the Brisbane lord mayor of trying to "score some political points" over the issue. "We have not received ... any communication from the council," he said. "Had the lord mayor rung me, rather than all this political nonsense ... we would have sorted this out. "This is just an attempt to score some political points ... a bit of Liberal Party skullduggery."

But Ms Prentice rejected the criticism. "I get quite angry when I hear the premier say why didn't someone tell him," she said.

"The lord mayor only became aware of it in recent days but our council offices have been talking to the state government about this problem – they have highlighted it for some time." Asked why the lord mayor did not notify Mr Beattie of the loophole, Ms Prentice said: "We were told we couldn't do anything in the caretaker mode of the state government. "To be honest we didn't want to highlight it because we didn't want people to go out there and breach ... level three (restrictions)."

**River News: 30<sup>th</sup> August 06**  
Lowest water levels on record

Water levels in the River Murray are the lowest in recorded history and with no relief in sight water restrictions for South Australian irrigators will continue and may be cut further.

**Adelaide Advertiser: 31<sup>st</sup> August 06**

Left high and dry

The driest winter in much of the State, including Adelaide, has led to conditions approaching those of the devastating 2002 drought.

13.

**Same Day**

Move to save water.

Strategies to protect water and land in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges have been outlined in a three-year plan.

**Same Day: Editorial**

Driest winter on record

Just as SA needs to design a comprehensive sustainable energy strategy, Australia must develop a national plan for the sensible utilisation of our limited water resources.

**Same Day:**

Save the Murray – Speed up the buy back

River Murray Minister Karlene Maywald wants plans to buy back water to resource to the River Murray accelerated after the PM said that arguments between the States over Murray water were stalling progress in its recovery.