

Report from MacKillop Irrigation Management Group's  
**Making Every Megalitre Count**  
Bus trip on 9<sup>th</sup> November

**Attendees**

**Grower/Irrigator**

Kevin Ashton, Fred Burdon, Megan Charlick, Josh Dowdy, Chris Fry, Peter Hannaford, Tara Hawkins, Wayne Hawkins, Louis Koch, Krysteen McElroy, Steve Pretlove, Andrew Shepherd, Peter Stuart, Peter Hocking, Chris Klose

**Industry**

Justin Anderson (NAB), Tarnya Dalla (NRM), Mark Davies (TAFE), Mick Deland (PIRSA), Adam Hancock (Elders), Mitch Hartree and Nathan Smith (Ncte Ag Services), James Heffernan (Cox Rural) Tristan Porter (Water Dynamix), Michael Zerk (Rural Solutions), Megan Beck (Bio Sys), David Chester (Irrigation Aust), James Debarro (Alpha Consulting), Sharn Lucas (PIRSA), Rob Palamountain (NRM), Tim Powell (Integrated Irrig)

**Funding**

Funding to cover bus and lunch was received from Regional Landcare Facilitator (Tarnya Dalla) hosted by SENRMB

**Irrigation site visits**

The following properties were visited as part of the tour. Sites were organised by Tim Powell who acted as facilitator for these visits.

**Mundoolun Dairying** which is run by the Telford family, Trevor, Travis and Justin and located at Mount Shank, south of Mount Gambier. Travis was the host for the tour, with pivots being main delivery method.

Some points of interest and discussion were:

- Currently milking 1750 dairy cows through two dairies
- Grow corn for silage, lucerne and various fodder crops
- Fertigation and applying of trace elements, easy N and humic acid
- Irrigation scheduling using technology to plan
- Use of telemetry to start pivots
- Installation of wind fans to be energy self sufficient
- Depth and type of soils discussed
- Operation of pivot at night to reduce water loss due to wind and evaporation
- Composting system used on property
- Waste from dairy applied to corn through travelling irrigator

**Mick and Sue Ryan**, dairy farmers from Allendale East with main delivery system being pivot

Some points of interest and discussion were:

- Positioning of pivot limited through power lines and buildings – therefore pivot is required to go backwards and forwards
- Managing soil moisture and water loss through this system
- Parramatta grass and how easily it is spread
- Travelling irrigator much less efficient than pivot

- Future options when pivot becomes unusable
- Soil moisture monitoring using G Dots

**Coorara Estates** at Kalangadoo being run by Glen and Scott Tucker. The Tuckers operate a mixed enterprise property where they grow lucerne, lettuce, brassica, apples, vines and livestock and drip, fixed sprinklers and pivot delivery systems. Each partner has a specialist area to manage.

Some points of interest and discussion were:

- Water availability due to shallow aquifer
- Marketing of vegetables and apples and issues surrounding this
- Labour cost and requirements
- Use of products to enhance growth including fulvic acid
- Managing of the diversity of enterprises
- Producing a quality product and the benefit of this
- Soil moisture monitoring equipment
- Involvement with Grow SA and marketers in Adelaide
- Use of professional advisors who specialise in their area
- What is the next “golden egg”?

**Beck Family** from Mingbool were a late edition to tour due to extra time.

Points of interest were:

- High Value canola crop being grown under lateral mover
- Hard hose irrigation system

#### **Speakers and information provided on bus**

Each attendee received a folder containing information on Grow SA, Irrigation Australia, MFMG and other relevant info as required.

**Wayne Hawkins**, current chair of MIMG spoke on the formation of the new Irrigation Group and what we hoped to achieve. He also encouraged everyone to nominate to be involved.

**David Chester**, Industry Development Officer from Irrigation Australia shared his experiences from Western Australia and developing the horticulture and irrigation industry in Harvey.

Points of interest were

- Concreted channels with fibre loc cement and still experienced 28% loss. Did a deal with government to convert channels to pipelines – which then caused its own issues.
- Power in numbers – 380 irrigators in Co-op in WA
- Infrastructure for value adding – convince buyers to assist with funding to ensure continuity of markets.
- MIMG should access Austrade for information
- Look for federal support for researching products suitable to export
- Value adding is important, as is completing a business plan to provide security for your markets.
- Irrigation Aust will look into providing training for consultants and then growers to ensure they have as much knowledge as possible when looking at purchasing a pivot.
- Groundwater Excellence Group – South east has no representatives. Krysteen McElroy and Tim Powell to consider nominating.
- David to return in the coming months to assist with MIMG becoming an effective irrigating group.

**Rob Palamountain**, Senior Project Officer with SENRMB spoke briefly on the NRM Irrigation website and weather stations and their use in the region.

**Tarnya Dalla**, Regional Landcare Facilitator, spoke briefly on Ag Connect and how she can provide assistance for funding applications, articles and reports from previous projects etc.

**Irrigator Survey and Feedback Form** – each attendee was asked to complete this prior to leaving bus at end of day.

**MIMG Committee**

The following have indicated that they would be interested in being involved in the committee.

**Industry:**

Adam Hancock, Nathan Smith, Justin Anderson, Rob Palamountain, James Heffernan, Megan Beck, Tim Powell

**Grower:**

Fred Burdon, Peter Hannaford, Andrew Shepherd, Wayne Hawkins, Krysteen McElroy

At this stage a meeting will be planned for February 2012.

The day was concluded with dinner and drinks at the Prince of Wales Hotel in Penola, prior to returning to Naracoorte.

Report compiled by Krysteen McElroy, Executive Officer of MFMG.