

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MURRAY IRRIGATORS INC.

Minutes of the Committee Meeting No. 19 at the Swan Reach Hotel on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>, May 2003 commencing at 3.00 p.m.

### PRESENT

T. Roe (Chairman), R. Smyth, I. Zadow, S. Newell, M. Vegter (Executive Officer), S. Powardy (Assistant Executive Officer), R. Ralph (Public Officer).

F. Condo, T. Daniell (Guests).

### APOLOGIES

G. Hocking, T. Whetstone, P. Martin.

### MINUTES

MOVED R. Smyth SECONDED I. Zadow That the Minutes of the committee Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2003 be taken as read and confirmed as a true and correct record.

S. Newell's Policy was changed to read:-

"A graph of what water each of the four states has used since 1970 was tabled. NSW irrigators have been using far more than what is sustainable. Why should we take across the board cut until NSW starts to take some responsibility for their excessive water use?"

### CARRIED.

### BUSINESS ARISING

Ian Zadow asked whether we had heard from Dennis Hicks about the Lower Murray River Rehabilitation. M. Vegter informed the meeting that we had not heard back from him.

S. Newell asked what had happened with the Lower Murray Irrigators. I. Zadow advised the meeting that they had a meeting with their lawyers and they had been advised not to terminate Lower Murray Irrigators, but to go into recess. They asked for bank details so the transfer of funds could happen. T. Daniell gave a list of their financial members to S. Powardy.

Approximately 160 people attended the irrigator meetings along the river.

Bus Trip - Postponed perhaps to September.

R. Smyth told the meeting that C.I.T. were interested in letting their members know if a bus trip goes ahead.

I. Zadow suggested sending information with the agenda for the Annual General Meeting, to give the irrigators time to think about it.

R. Ralph suggested sending forms of registration for the Bus Trip in May, 2004. The meeting thought that May, 2004 was too far away and that we should go when there was actually something to see. It was suggested that we could leave on 19<sup>th</sup> October. It was decided to send invitations out when we send out the subscription mail outs. If we needed to we could advertise for other people who were interested in going. C.I.T. to be advised what we were going to do.

## CORRESPONDENCE

The letter to Hon. John Hill was tabled.

S. Newell asked whether we should be sending the same letters to the Shadow Minister. It was decided it would be more beneficial if we sent it to the Leader of the Opposition, John Kerrin.

## FINANCE

Bank Reconciliation as at 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2003

Income & Expenditure Statement/Balance Sheet as at 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2003

S. Newell asked whether we could just have a list of payments and receipts for each month.

The following invoices were approved for payment, along with any other accounts that we receive in regards to the meetings with Ingrid Franssen and P. Martin's account for the Irrigators Inc. meeting.

Sunlands Invoice	\$864.01
S. Newell's Accommodation	\$135.50
I. Zadow - Advertising	\$126.60
Mannum Motel	\$125.00

All costs involved with the meetings along the river with I. Franssen, will be invoiced to the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation.

MOVED R. Smyth SECONDED I. Zadow That the Financial Report be received. CARRIED.

## OTHER BUSINESS

P. Martin's meeting with Warren Truss.

A summary report from Paul Martin was tabled. Discussion took place about this meeting.

R. Smyth said that if irrigators say that they are responsible for the salinity then they would probably be charged with a levy.

T. Daniell was of the impression after the meetings with Ingrid that a lot of the irrigators did not understand the salinity impact on the river, and how could they pin point it to the irrigators.

It was asked if we could get commodity groups in South Australia to report to SAMI about their sector. These reports could then go to Irrigators Inc. as a report for the Federal Government.

When a commodity list has been completed, we should write to all of them asking what the Environmental Flow impact would have on their irrigators. It was decided to leave it at irrigator base only.

The list of commodity groups that the meeting thought of were:-

Citrus	Apple/Pear	Onion
Wine	Dairy	Fisheries
Dried Fruit	Potatoes	Poultry
Almonds		

It was also decided to contact Trent Mader, from Riverland Development Council, for any more to add to the list.

We need to pass the comments onto Paul Martin, by the end of July, so he can pass them onto Irrigators Inc. and the Ministerial Council. It was decided to send the information onto John Hill as well.

#### Executive Officer's Time

Paul Martin's comment about employing an Executive Officer for 0.4 time was discussed. Mike Vegter explained because of other work commitments and the water restrictions creating more meetings, he has not got the time to spend on SAMI as he would like and because of it SAMI was coming off second best.

R. Ralph suggested funding this project for six months, to see if it was financial.

It was suggested to talk to Horticultural Council about this idea. It would probably cost SAMI in the vicinity of \$20,000.

T. Roe to ring Peter MacFarlane, to see what his thoughts were on what we were proposing.

If SAMI wants to be taken seriously and be out front, we will need to seriously think about employing someone.

#### Irrigators Inc.

S. Newell reported that all state groups will need to put a paper together for Irrigators Inc about Water Recovery by 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2003. Also a reply to Irrigators Inc. by August on Property Rights and COAG.

S. Newell tabled a selection of logos that Irrigators Inc. were looking at.

V.F.F. did not attend the meeting, but two individual irrigators from Victoria did.

With the water restrictions to come into place, everyone must do the right thing. Make sure their meters are working correctly. .

Irrigators Inc. stand on Compulsory Acquisition was that they did not agree with it.

Executive Officer to email dot points to Laurie Arthur outlining the state of the river for a Press Release.

Next Irrigators Inc. Meeting to be held in Brisbane on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September and the A.G.M. will be held in South Australia on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> November. Goolwa or Mannum were two ideas.

## WATER RESTRICTIONS

M. Vegter and T. Roe have had the media asking them SAMI's position.

M. Vegter attended a meeting on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, that was organised by the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation. The meeting was attended by irrigator groups, and the government wanted feed back from them. M. Vegter highlighted points from the meeting.

- According to the media there was going to be a 20% cut on the usage. How was the 20% going to be applied?
- Young Plantings will be requiring increased water
- Sunlands/Golden Heights going to use the WAP calculation water efficiency.
- C.I.T. were looking at doing a similar thing.
- Private Irrigators. Have they had crop survey done?
- No one has consulted with the Private Irrigators.
- 20% cut was not on 2002/03 year
- 20% to be on the consumption, not the allocation.

T. Daniell, explained the difficulty in doing this in his industry. R. Ralph suggested writing to Senator Hill and explain to him the problems with his industry.

The decided risk the Government is prepared to take is a 20%, reduction in water us. This will be reviewed monthly.

T. Roe asked for SAMI's preferred policy, when we were attending meetings. It was decided that:-

- Consumptive water could still be leased
- Annual crop grower to be able to lease their water
- Efficient irrigator not to be disadvantaged
- Crop factors should apply

T. Roe informed the meeting that he was attending a Private Irrigator Task Force Meeting for the upriver irrigators organised by the Bookpurnong LAP. Karlene Maywald, M.P. will be in attendance.

SAMI's preferred recommendation:-

- An Appeals Court
- Permanent crops to get priority
- Critical times for crops to be considered
- Should government allow water for new development.

It was decided that T. Roe would be the spokesperson for SAMI. F. Condo said that irrigators were not very well portrayed in the media. We need factual and accurate information. Dot points of facts

and figures. To get the consumption figures for each state. The Riverland Development Council could help us obtain information.

M. Vegter was attending a MDB Meeting where Paul Harvey was giving a presentation.

- Salinity Impacts
- Possible Flows

R. Smyth advised that Central Irrigation Trust had met and the following comments were made:-

- They were not happy with P. Martin's comments over the media about the salt impact and salt levy.
- Extra water for younger plantings as they mature.
- There is over watering happening in 2002/03.
- Was there anywhere we can go to for Drought Relief Compensation in exceptional circumstances?
- High Security water in NSW/Victoria do they equal SA. If SA gets a 20% cut in water do the other states.
- Government has been part to blame for the decline in the river health, should the irrigators be charged all these salt levies?
- Environmental Flows are not to be used for any other reason. Not to be sold.
- How many megalitres do the shacks along the river use and how much goes into the backwaters and wetlands.
- There should be a united voice between SAMI, CIT, RIT, Horticulture House, Consultant, Lower Murray Representatives.
- Have meetings with - Karlene Maywald M.P.
  - Graham Gunn M.P.
  - Peter Lewis M.P.
  - John Dawkins M.L.C.
  - Government Representatives - Peter Hoey  
Roger Wicks

M. Vegter will be attending a Briefing Meeting on water restrictions in Adelaide on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2003.

R. Ralph asked if anyone has challenged the Minister on the 20%. Perhaps this is where SAMI could take a stand, asking for evidence that it needs to be 20%. There are a lot of scared irrigators along the river. The cut has to be on an average and based on one year, but not to go back too far. What the Government has told us is what they have been told by the Murray Darling Basin Commission.

M. Vegter stated that the problems with SAMI getting exposure is time and we seriously need to look at employing someone permanently as Executive Officer.

F. Condo asked if there has been any statement about water recovery. R. Ralph said how it would cost huge amounts of money, and you have to weigh it up was it all worth it.

Perhaps desalination units in the cities and the reuse of water could be looked at.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.

CONFIRMED.....  
CHAIRMAN

DATE.....