

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MURRAY IRRIGATORS INCORPORATED

Minutes of the Committee Meeting No. 17 at the Swan Reach Hotel on Monday 17th February, 2003 commencing at 3.05 p.m.

PRESENT

Tony Roe (Chairman), Rob Smyth, Ian Zadow, Sam Newell, Greg Hocking, Ted Woods, Paul Martin, Mike Vegter (Executive Officer), Sharon Powardy (Assistant Executive Officer) Rod Ralph (Public Officer),

Richard Thomas, Frank Condo and Basil Mondello (Guests).

APOLOGIES

Tim Whetstone

MINUTES

MOVED S. Newell SECONDED R. Smyth That the Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 14th January, 2003 be taken as read and confirmed as a true and correct record. CARRIED.

BUSINESS ARISING

Rod asked if Heather Hutchins of Dept Water Land & Biodiversity Conservation had been contacted about SAMI being on their mailing list. Apparently it was an oversight that SAMI did not receive an invitation to the Adelaide Parliamentary Forum, as SAMI are on their list. SAMI now has an official invitation.

Media Support

The Chairman expressed his concerns on the lack of media support for irrigators in this State. He would like to see something done about this. R. Thomas tabled a suggested strategy and examples of some advertising. He suggested Nigel Austin would be good to talk to, and presented some indicative costs for consideration.

R. Thomas also suggested that when advertising not to do an editorial, but an "advertorial" as an editor has the right to do any changes to an editorial, but an advertorial goes into the paper as we have written it. Discussion about seeking financial support from businesses in return for them being able to put their logo, etc on our stationery. This could be an ideal way of paying for it. G. Hocking suggested that we really do need to educate some of the irrigators as well, and try and get them to join our Association. Until we get most of the irrigators involved and talking not much will be achieved.

T. Roe had been interviewed by ABC Radio this week on reusing water.

Irrigators are not being portrayed properly in the media. The question was asked, "What do we expect from the media". R. Ralph suggested that we could be responding more vocally to the current irrigation issues. It was suggested that we do something with ABC radio. B. Mondello said that it was only irrigators who listen to the ABC, and we really needed to get to the broader community.

R. Smyth said that he had some graphs of reduced drainage at Cadell now that channels have been removed. He said that it was very interesting and that this is the kind of things we could be advertising.

B. Mondello asked whether there would be any statistics available on irrigation use/urban use. No one could provide detail to the meeting.

P. Martin entered the meeting at 3.30 p.m

G. Hocking will contact Catherine Hockley (Advertiser) before our next committee meeting. M. Vegter suggested that Greg contact Catherine and introduce ourselves to her as a first step. We need a plan and objective, i.e. direction of irrigation, security. M. Vegter suggested that Irrigators Inc. Vision Statement might be a good place to start. R. Ralph suggested that Catherine might be able to do a story on SAMI. G. Hocking will then get back to M. Vegter and T. Roe to get some target points together.

Ian Zadow asked if the letter discussed at the last meeting had been sent out to the bigger irrigators that are currently not members. M. Vegter tabled a copy of the letter sent.

R. Thomas asked whether private irrigation companies had been targeted. M. Vegter said that any irrigator that had a water allocation over 1,000 MI and who were not current members was sent a letter.

R. Thomas said that he had a lot of contact with the dairy farmers in the Lower Murray, and if we wanted him to hand deliver letters to them he would be more than happy to do this. P. Martin suggested that this would be a good idea, and we could follow up with an information meeting in the area. Ian Zadow had spoken to a few irrigators in the Lower Murray area and they were not interested in joining SAMI as they feel everything is going along just fine and they had their own organisation. Graham Smart had indicated that he no longer wants to be on the Executive Committee of South Australian Murray Irrigators.

R. Thomas suggested that we might be able to put a story together and place it in the National Foods & Dairy Farmers Newsletter, which comes out monthly.

Ian Zadow asked if R. Thomas could help organise a meeting and a membership drive with Lower Murray irrigators. A meeting to be set up before Easter.

Ingrid Franssen Salinity Workshop - P. Martin has not organised the workshop as yet, but will contact Ingrid and organise them for April.

- Two meetings Upper Riverland
- One meeting Waikerie
- One meeting Mannum
- One meeting Lower Murray

M. Vegter had spoken to Ingrid and she informs us that they will have funding available to hold these meetings.

Ian Zadow asked if we had any advice back from Peter Hoey about funds for SAMI. M. Vegter said that we have not received any information back from Peter about this, but we had an indication from his office that the \$4,800 we asked for was being positively looked at. We have not received any written confirmation on this.

Meeting Venues - T. Woods informed the meeting that the Lutheran Hall at Nildottie was available for hire for \$15.00. T. Roe had spoken to the Manager of the Swan Reach Hotel and they would not charge us if we used the hotel, but if we wanted their meeting room it would be \$35.00.

WATER PROPERTY RIGHTS

- R. Thomas tabled an extract from Introduction to Property Law.
- M. Vegter tabled the C.E.O. Group on Water Property Rights.
- M. Vegter and T. Roe are going to Adelaide to a round table meeting with the CEO Group on Water on 20th February to discuss the Water Property Rights Report. M. Vegter wanted to know what direction SAMI wanted them to take on this matter.
- M. Vegter read the 'Achieving Sustainable Water Management - A Commonwealth Position Paper' to the meeting.
- There were concerns over the position of urban water users. It seems the irrigators were being targeted, they had to be responsible about salinity, but urban users did not seem to have to be responsible for their use of water.
- S. Newell asked what would happen after the 10 year Water Allocation Plan is up, will we lose water then?
- Section 47 of the CEO's Group on Water Property Rights was read and discussed.
- It was stated that the State Government owned the actual water and the irrigators have the licence to pump the water.
- The National Farmers Federation Key Issues on Water Property Rights was tabled.
- R. Ralph stated that irrigators had to be compensated for any water taken. S. Newell he would not like to lose the same percentage of water as interstate, because of their inefficiencies.
- R. Ralph said that something needed to be done otherwise the river would be lost to us. S. Newell did not want SAMI to agree to the 10%, and asked if we should have a policy. M. Vegter read the policy that we set in place at the last meeting. The interstate irrigators had to be more efficient with their irrigating. R. Ralph told the meeting that South Australia had more surplus water than interstate and he believed could afford to give up 10% of their water. M. Vegter asked him if C.I.T. had looked at the affect on their irrigators if they were to lose 10% of their water.
- G. Hocking read an extract from WAP, from page 17 last paragraph.
 - "Under average or median flow conditions, the capacity of the resource to provide for increased diversions without significant impact on the ecological health of the main stem of the river is greater than the current level of consumptive diversions. However, the South Australian Government made a decision in 1969 to limit further consumptive diversions on the basis of the ecological and water quality needs to the river under low flow conditions. This decision has

been upheld since that time and is now reflected in the Cap on Water Diversions under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement 1992."

- Frank Condo asked if he could have a copy of WAP sent to him.
- P. Martin said that South Australians had to defend themselves. We needed to make decisions and go as a collective group.
- P. Martin suggested that it might be beneficial for the government to buy back some of the non-productive land.
- F. Condo asked how many irrigators would this effect; if they were to lose 10% of their water. It was asked if M. Vegter could send out surveys to our members to find out the effects on their infrastructure and efficiency of water.
- S. Newell proposed a policy to the Committee for them to consider for the next meeting.

Number 1

"We believe that across the board cuts in the Murray-Darling Basin allocations are inequitable for South Australian Irrigators and should not be implemented unless considerable efficiencies in irrigation practices are achieved by water users in other States"

Number 2

"1969/1970 levels of usage are operating in South Australia where 1994 levels of usage apply in other States."

R. Ralph said that he has graphs of water usage from each State.

CORRESPONDENCE

Out - Ann Jensen

In - Regional Land & Water Management Plan Steering Committee invitation to attend a meeting on 7th March. R. Ralph said that it was not an irrigator meeting - more for the LAP organisations. He did not think SAMI needed to be represented there. R. Ralph also said that he would be attending, so if anything was relevant he could report back

MOVED R. Smyth SECONDED S. Newell That the correspondence be received. CARRIED.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Bank Reconciliation as at 31st January, 2003
Balance Sheet as at 31st January, 2003
Income & Expenditure as at 31st January, 2003

Sunlands Account - \$368.81

MOVED R. Smyth SECONDED S. Newell That the Sunlands account be paid. CARRIED.

OTHER BUSINESS

Irrigators Inc. Strategic Plan - P. Martin had a tele-linkup meeting to discuss this. He thought that it was very good except for their expenditure. If their sponsorship were successful this would lower the costs to us. R. Ralph said that if their sponsorship was not successful that he was concerned that SAMI could be jeopardised because of their financial position.

S. Newell pointed out that in the past there had been no Executive Officers Working Group, and do they really need it?

MOVED S. Newell SECONDED R. Smyth That we accept the Executive Officers Working Group. CARRIED.

Irrigators Inc Constitution - P. Martin had emailed this morning to the members who were delegates to Irrigators Inc. proposed changes to their constitution. These will be discussed at the meeting in Melbourne on Sunday 23rd/Monday 24th February.

Murray-Darling Basin river Murray System Update - Was tabled.

Ian Zadow asked whether the Public Meeting for the Lower Murray should be held at Murray Bridge or Meningie and it was decided that Meningie would be the best place. It was decided to hold this between April 5th to 12th and to include Ingrid Franssen as a guest speaker. P. Martin to contact Ingrid to see if she is available and I. Zadow to organise a venue.

New Membership Letters - S. Newell said that he thought that we were going to contact the irrigators personally, before we sent letters. G. Hocking, P. Martin and S. Newell to be sent a list of the irrigators who received letters.

Next meeting to be held at Swan Reach on 17th March, 2003 at 3.00 p.m.

NSW Bus Trip - As members of the Committee we should make contact with members of SAMI in each area. Trip to be offered to members first, then to non-members. Send a newsletter to members and include an itinerary.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.45 p.m.

CONFIRMED.....

CHAIRMAN

DATE.....