

Introducing Irrigation Annual Reporting

Irrigation Annual Reporting is a framework for self-education by irrigators. It is NOT a process for extracting information from irrigators.

Involves every irrigator

Irrigation Annual Reporting involves every irrigator in improving the management of the local water resource.

Irrigation Annual Reporting began in the Angas Bremer Area in 1996.

The eighth District Summary Irrigation Annual Report for the Angas Bremer Area for 2003 – 2004 is now available. (ABanrep04.pdf)

Comparable, comprehensive annual district summaries of Irrigation Activity are starting to become available for additional locations in South Australia.

Property scale

At the scale of each property, Irrigation Annual Reporting is a simple, inexpensive process where each irrigator measures and records information, that is useful for them, on a **locally-developed** Irrigation Annual Report form.

District scale

At the district scale, Irrigation Annual Reporting involves local collection of the individual property Irrigation Annual Report forms then collation and presentation of all the collected data as the District Summary Irrigation Annual Report document.

Timely feedback

Feedback is an essential part of the Irrigation Annual Reporting framework.

Feedback is achieved by providing a copy of the District Summary Irrigation Annual Report document to every contributor and then discussing the content of this Report at community meetings held within 2 months of collecting the data.

Benchmarking

This feedback provides data for benchmarking. Benchmarking enables each irrigator to compare their own irrigation management with the irrigation management of every other irrigator and with their own irrigation management in previous years.

The feedback also enables industries to compare their irrigation performance with the performance of other industries.

As additional districts adopt Irrigation Annual Reporting, these districts will be able to compare themselves with other districts.

Eventually states will be able to compare themselves with other states.

Data is essential for resource management

The district summary provides the comprehensive picture needed by the community and by their elected administrators to best manage their water resources.

Confidentiality

Only when the confidentiality of information provided by individual irrigators is guaranteed and delivered, will irrigators accurately report the sensitive data useful for them to see how their irrigation practices are changing from one year to the next and how their irrigation

practices compare with other irrigators. For example the fraction of water that was wasted to drainage can be compared with how much was wasted in previous years and with the fraction wasted by other irrigators.

An irrigator will not provide accurate data if they suspect that their data may in future be used to their disadvantage. Irrigators know that independent checking of the accuracy of the data that they report is not affordable.

Legislated requirement

In South Australia a legislated requirement that licensees participate in Irrigation Annual Reporting is included in the current Water Allocation Plans for the Prescribed Areas of Northern Adelaide Plains, Barossa, River Murray, Angas Bremer, Mallee, Padthaway, Tatiara, Naracoorte Ranges, Comaum-Caroline, Lacepede Kongorong.

Community support

If Irrigation Annual Reporting is imposed without the support of the Irrigators, the information supplied by Irrigators is almost certain to be incomplete and inaccurate. If Irrigators feel no ownership of the data or of interpretations drawn from the data, the data has no value for improving their management of the water resource.

Before a successful introduction of Irrigation Annual Reporting a commitment is needed to selecting the right people and then to providing the resources to support them to do the hard work of clearly explaining the process and the benefits. Before legislating that licensees must participate in Irrigation Annual Reporting, the proponents of Irrigation Annual Reporting must build relationships, earn trust and respect and win the support of the majority in the community.

Pride and profit

When Irrigation Annual Reporting is embraced by Irrigators, their interpretation of their own data and their comparison of their own data with data provided by other Irrigators can provide Irrigators with powerful incentives to improve irrigation efficiency. The incentives include pride and profit.