

### The Australian Year of the Farmer

The Australian Year of the Farmer celebrates the hard work of everyone involved in producing, processing, handling and selling products from 136,000 farms across the country. Australian farms and the industries that support them generate more than \$405 billion each year, that's 27% of our GDP. This is about celebrating and enriching the connections between rural and urban Australia. There's more to this agribusiness than meets the eye.

There is a website dedicated to this celebration, with information on special events ([HERE](#)).

### MEDIA

#### Celebrating Australian Farmers in 2012

Minister Joe Ludwig and MP Sid Sidebottom didn't want to waste any time in welcoming in "The Year of the Farmer".

Their joint media release on 04 January - ([HERE](#)) contains some really good points for everyone.

- "opportunity for all Australians to celebrate the significant contribution our farmers make to the country."
- "Australian farmers and their industries do the hard work involved in producing, processing, handling and selling produce from 136,000 farms across the country, which generate more than \$405 billion each year,"
- "there will be an increased demand on our farmers for quality, safe food, and to continue to take good care of Australia's productive land,"
- "I look forward to Australian farmers leading the way in 2012 in feeding the nation, leading the world in innovative farming techniques, as well as sustaining the vital agribusinesses that underpin our economy."

Here, here.... cheers to our farmers!

## January Media

January can be wonderful for beat-up political stories. Too many people not playing close attention and the need to fill airspace/column inches combine with a lack of stories whilst politicians are on leave to create stories such as that run by 7:30 on the Basin Plan - ([here](#)).

It simply isn't a story that Jamie Briggs wants to get himself some coverage by disagreeing with his own party. Politics is littered with those who thought this a way to the top. Dean Brown is on the MDBA payroll, hence his motivation.

Our understanding is that there is not significant change in the Coalition Party Room.

## Cost of River Murray High Court challenge remains a secret

An article which appeared in the Adelaide Advertiser ([here](#)) and Weekly Times ([here](#)), discusses South Australia's potential High Court challenge, taking on Canberra and or the upstream states.

At the bottom of this article you can read comments "The Advertiser" has chosen publish and add a comment if you wish.

## Minister Hodgkinson MDB Tour

As some of you may know, Minister Hodgkinson is conducting a number of regional consultation meetings on the Basin Plan. These are not MDBA meetings.

We've been informed these **ARE NOT** public meetings and invitations were sent to those who they wanted to attend. We don't know who they contacted, so it's hard to say if they're meeting with the right people. So if the Minister is visiting your area (see chart below) and you think you should be there but have not been invited, please let us know and we will inform the Minister of these requests.

LOCATION	DATE/TIME	VENUE
<b>Finley</b>	2/2/12 11:30am -2:30pm	Finley RS Club Tocumwal St Finley
<b>Leeton</b>	3/2/12 9am – 12pm	Leeton Soldiers Club Cnr Yanco & Acacia Ave
<b>Dubbo</b>	6/2/12 11am – 2 pm	Dubbo RSL Club Cnr Brisbane & Wingewarra Sts
<b>Narrabri</b>	7/2/12 6pm – 9pm	The Crossing Theatre 117 Tibbereena St
<b>Moree</b>	8/2/12 10am – 1pm	Moree Services Club Albert St
<b>Forbes</b>	9/2/12 9am – 12pm	Forbes Services Memorial Club 41-43 Templar Street

## ABARES Commodity Report

We are again providing a Briefing Note on the Irrigated Agriculture sections of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) Quarterly Commodity Report. The summary of the recent domestic and international developments is available ([HERE](#)).

This information covers Sept, Oct, Nov 2011 and includes forecasts for Dec 2011 and the start of 2012. We have summarised sections on:

- Wheat
- Coarse Grains
- Oilseed
- Cotton
- Dairy

Please let us know if this is useful to you.

## NSWIC Council Meeting

The next NSW Irrigators Council Meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 01 March, 2012**. If there are any changes to your representatives for Council, please advise us. We will also be asking for agenda items and updates, if you can start thinking about this it would be greatly appreciated.

## Young Farmers Forum – Canberra

Official registration is now open for the YOUNG FARMERS FORUM – Canberra 15 & 16 March. Our expression of interest launch has very well received, but official registration is what counts. Get info ([HERE](#))

## Innovation in Irrigation – Demonstrated in Moree

The Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association Executive Officer Zara Lowien announced this week, the “Innovation in Irrigation” Field Day. This is a part of the Australian Government’s National Water Commission funded “Improving Irrigation Efficiency in the Australian Cotton Industry – A Grower Led Approach” project, which is in its final year of funding.

Full details are available on the media release ([HERE](#)).

## Rice Scholarship

Each year the RGA awards two scholarships to assist with tertiary education costs. Information is available ([HERE](#)).

## Murrumbidgee Irrigation – New CEO

Announced on Monday (09) Jan was the name of Murrumbidgee Irrigation's new Chief Executive Officer - Raveen Jaduram ([HERE](#)). With a great deal of experience in the New Zealand water industry and some impressive Engineering credentials, Mr Jaduram will be welcomed to the MIA in the very near future.

## Snowy Scheme Tour

A tour of the Snowy Scheme, similar to the one run around the same time last year is open to interested parties.

This tour takes place 20 - 22 February and will commence with a briefing at the Snowy Hydro Visitor Centre in Cooma at 10:00am on Tuesday 21 Feb.

From our understanding the tour will set out to explore the various infrastructure installations and areas of interest within the Snowy Scheme – meaning a 4WD vehicle will be required. More detailed information may be available depending on what Snowy Hydro can provide us. Costs for the tour are covered independently.

Numbers have not been finalized, meaning there might be ability to join in if you want. Feel free to contact NSWIC to get more details.

## Full-Time Position in Canberra

Gemma at NIC will be taking maternity leave (last week will be the 31<sup>st</sup> January). If anyone knows of someone looking for work based in Canberra, please contact Tom Chesson at the NIC office – (02) 6273 3637.

## NSWIC Office Info

### Meeting with the Centre for International Economics

Stefanie and Mark met with two representatives from CIE in our office. CIE has been retained by NSW Treasury to determine if a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) is possible for the Strategic Regional Land Use Policy (Gateway Process). This was a very exploratory meeting as they have just started evaluating the inputs and parameters of a CBA.

We will be following up on this with CIE once they have visited stakeholder groups.

### From Stefanie's Desk

Stefanie is continuing her work on the draft for the economic response to the Basin Plan. There should be a copy for release to members for input in the near future.

A new analysis is being put together to look into the benefits of the On-farm Efficiency programs. Cooperation from several Delivery Partners will hopefully provide some examples we are able to use.

Stefanie has also started an initial evaluation of economic costs associated with Coal Seam Gas production.

## IN FEBRUARY

Both Andrew Gregson and Richard Stott will be travelling to Canberra the first week of February for various meetings. These include an introduction to Minister Burke's new staff (Sean Halse) and then a Peak Stakeholders meeting with NFF, NSW Farmers, Ricegrowers, Cotton Australia, NIC and others.

## Abbreviations:

Australian Bankers Association ([ABA](#))  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation ([ABC](#))  
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission ([ACCC](#))  
Australian Tax Office ([ATO](#))  
Basin Communities Association ([BCA](#))  
Capital Gains Tax ([CGT](#))  
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
Coleambally Irrigation Co-Operative Limited ([CICL](#))  
Commonwealth Environmental Water Holding ([CEWH](#))

Council of Australian Governments ([COAG](#))  
Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts ([DEWHA](#))  
Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association ([GVIA](#))  
Irrigation Australia Limited ([IAL](#))  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal ([IPART](#))  
Ministerial Council ([MinCo](#))  
Murrumbidgee Irrigation ([MI](#))  
Mungindi/Menindee Advisory Council (MMAC)  
Murray-Darling Basin Authority ([MDBA](#))  
National Irrigators' Council ([NIC](#))  
National Water Commission ([NWC](#))  
New South Wales ([NSW](#))  
National Farmers Federation ([NFF](#))  
The New South Wales Irrigators' Council ([NSWIC](#))  
NSW Office of Water ([NOW](#))  
Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program ([PIIOP](#))  
Required Annual Release (RAR)  
Royal Flying Doctor Service ([RFDS](#))  
Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDL's)  
State Water Corporation ([SWC](#))  
Snowy Hydro Limited ([SHL](#))  
Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities ([SEWPAC](#))  
Water Recovery and Environmental Use Stakeholder Reference Panel ([WREUSRP](#))

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