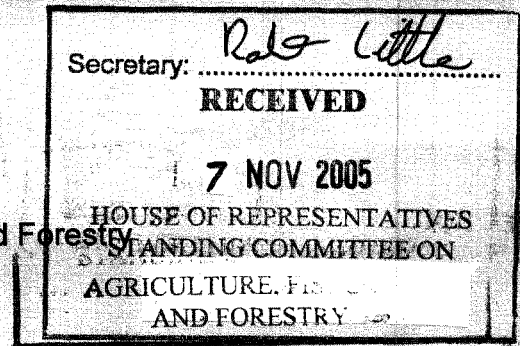




THE *Irrigation Association of Australia* LTD

Leadership in irrigation training, information and representation

Mr Ian Dundas  
 Secretary to the Committee  
 Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
 Parliament House  
 Canberra, ACT 2600



3 November 2005

Dear Mr Dundas

The Irrigation Association of Australia was asked to submit an addendum to its original submission to the *Inquiry into rural skills training and research*.

**The National Water Initiative**

The Intergovernmental Agreement on the NWI includes 8 key elements:

1. Water Access Entitlements and Planning Framework;
2. Water Markets and Trading;
3. Best Practice Water Pricing;
4. Integrated Management of Water for Environmental and Other Public Benefit Outcomes;
5. Water Resource Accounting;
6. Urban Water Reform;
7. Knowledge and Capacity Building; and
8. Community Partnerships and Adjustment.

None of these key elements specifically address education and training. Element 8 is principally, and importantly, about improving the knowledge base which underpins the implementation of the Initiative and the achievements of its agreed outcomes. However another essential element to the implementation of the NWI and, importantly, the achievement of practical results, is equipping the irrigators and the commercial sector that supplies them, with the necessary training and skills. This is specifically absent from the NWI.

Equally of concern in this regard are the performance indicators that are currently being developed to assess the progress of the NWI. Despite some of the performance indicators being about innovation and improvements in irrigation water use efficiency, it is currently not intended to have any measure of training

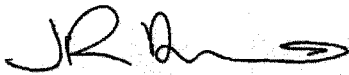
delivery or participation. Yet the original IAA submission highlighted the fact that while technology and best practice can deliver substantial water savings, there is a significant gap between this and the practical ability of many irrigators to implement innovations.

Training is essential. If the NWI were to be supporting training participation and delivery, providing policy incentives and drivers to encourage participation and to be measuring it as a key performance indicator, this would provide a very powerful stimulus for rural communities, commodity groups and the commercial sector to participate.

This is not seeking another set of compliance requirements for the industry rather incorporating training and qualifications into NWI activities and policy. Holding of ~~appropriate qualifications or competencies could form part of the requirements of~~ site use licences, could attract rebates or other concessions from rural water supply utilities and preferential standing for commercial tenders.

The IAA strongly believes that training and education should have a stronger emphasis within the National Water Initiative.

On behalf of the Irrigation Association of Australia



Jolyon Burnett  
Chief Executive Officer

3 November 2005