

DECEMBER, 2006

# MURTHO ROAD IRRIGATORS

## COMMITTEE NEWS

Welcome to the December edition of the Murtho Road Irrigators quarterly newsletter.

In the past 6 months since the last newsletter there have been some large developments in the Murtho district. The main one being the completion of the Murtho Strategic Environment Initiative. A summary version of this document was sent out to people that indicated interest. All that read the summary were very impressed with how community concerns were incorporated into the plan, giving all positive comments back.

Murtho Road Irrigators have also seen the development of a new logo (see below).

The committee wishes to thank all people that have been involved in trying to improve the districts natural resources and on-farm practices over the past year and hope you keep up the good work. They also wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I would like to give recognition to all people that have provided input into the new SEI. This project has been in the pipeline for many years now, trying to make it a more community focussed document and it is great to finally see it come into fruition. I especially wish to thank the MRIA committee members which have put in many countless hours going through the processes to get the plan finalised.

It would be great in 2007 to work hard as a region trying to complete the actions identified within the SEI and I encourage you all to have a good look at what needs to be achieved next year and to lend a helping hand to the staff at the Renmark to the Border Local Action Planning Assoc., who will be implementing these projects.

All the best for Christmas and the New Year.

**Stuart Martin (Deputy Chair)**



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## SALT INCERCEPTION SCHEME ANNOUNCEMENT AND UPDATE

Early this year it was announced that Murtho was to receive funding for the initial stages leading up to the building of the scheme. Since then a community meeting was held in September to discuss the process in implementing the scheme, including the submission process through the Murray Darling Basin Commission, certain design and disposal aspects of the scheme, as well as community members questions about the scheme being answered. This meeting was attended by Dan Sartoretto (DWLBC) who is the Project Manager for the Murtho SIS.

Recently the Commission decided to proceed with the next stage of the Murtho SIS. This stage comprises of the full design of the scheme including bore locations etc. The Commission has also committed \$3/4 million to fund this stage of the project.

A sub-committee has been formed with Roy Steven and Stuart Martin sitting on that committee. If you have any questions that you would like clarified it is recommended to contact either Roy or Stuart (contact numbers are on the last page) before contacting either the LAP or DWLBC project officers for information.

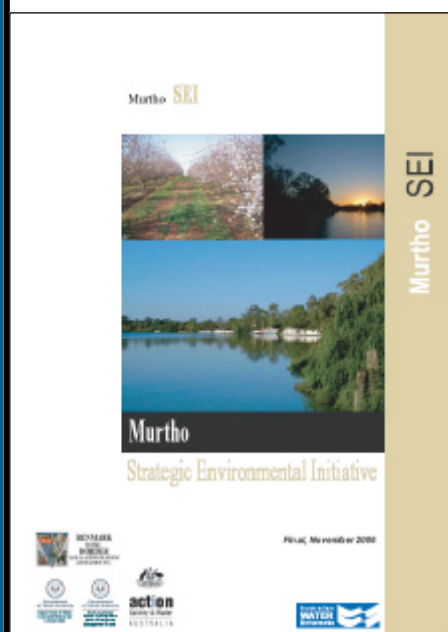


## MURTHO STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE COMPLETE & LAUNCH

November finally saw the completion of the upgraded Murtho Strategic Environment Initiative. This is a comprehensive document that looks at the regions geographical properties, economy, threats and remediation options that have been identified by the local community. The document covers north from Paringa along the Murtho Road to the Victorian border. The projects have been planned to extend over a 3 year period to 2009. The firsts years (2007) projects to occur in helping maintain and enhance the natural environment and horticultural region are listed on the last page and when they are due to be completed. Community involvement in these projects is encouraged and we welcome all whom wish to become involved in the planning and implementation of certain projects.

**A launch for the SEI has been scheduled for January 16th.**

The launch will be attended by the Honorable Karlene Maywald, Minister for the River Murray and David Wotton, chair of the SA MDB NRM Board, as well as several other government officers. The event will begin at the Col Col Embankment, in Pike River and will continue at Simarloo with drinks and catering. **Please pencil this date into your schedules and invitations to the event will follow in the new year.**



## CROP SURVEY OUTCOMES

The crop survey process has been completed for the 2005/06 irrigation season. Thankyou to all growers that contributed their information this year.

It was a season that saw very little change, except for the addition of two properties that had never been surveyed before that saw an overall increase in total cropped area of 619.5 hectares.

There were increases in citrus, vegetables and nut trees and were due to the additions of the new properties. Small decreases were seen in stone fruit, tropical fruit and vines. Apart from the addition of the new properties, all other properties saw very little changes in crop types.

	04/05	05/06	Difference (ha)
<b>Total Area</b>	4193.48	4813.02	+619.54
<b>Stone Fruit</b>	24.31	23.06	-1.25
<b>Citrus</b>	1091.36	1829.81	+738.45
<b>Tropical Fruit</b>	22.03	21.85	-0.18
<b>Nut Trees</b>	460.67	838.91	+378.24
<b>Vegetables</b>	0	160.24	+160.24
<b>Vine Fruit</b>	1660.92	1631.21	-29.71
<b>Other</b>	194.7	199.24	-4.54
<b>Vacant / Land in Transition</b>	71.63	108.7	+37.08
<b>Unknown</b>	667.87	0	-667.87

Irrigation systems saw large changes in drip systems, overhead sprinklers and pivots. This is solely due to the addition of the two new properties.

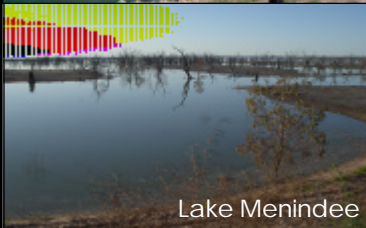
A report has been completed on both Murtho and Pike Rivers crop survey results and is available for anyone interested. To receive a copy call Tahlee on 8586 4346.

	04/05	05/06	Difference (ha)
<b>Drip</b>	2160.39	2933.4	+773.01
<b>Overhead</b>	463.24	519.63	+56.39
<b>Pivot</b>	110.85	168.84	+57.99
<b>Under Canopy</b>	595.66	579.83	-15.85
<b>Other</b>	136.21	49.88	-86.33
<b>None</b>	59.17	104.11	+44.94
<b>Unknown</b>	667.96	457.33	-210.63

## IRRIGATOR INFORMATION TOUR



Fort Courage



Lake Menindee

The 1st and 2nd of September saw a new venture for the Murtho Road Irrigators and the Renmark to the Border LAP. The Group in conjunction with the Pike River Land Management Group organised an informative tour for growers to visit areas in Victoria and New South Wales to see where SA's water comes from, storage in these states and projects that are occurring to help save water. The group of 26 irrigators traveled to Fort Courage, just outside Wentworth to have a look at the Darling-Anabranh Pipeline Project, where it is expected to save 97% of water lost through evaporation and seepage. Water saved is to contribute to the Living Murray Projects 500GL. The second stop was at Lake Menindee where the systems management was discussed and the problems they have been having there. Options to make the system more efficient was also discussed. The group stayed at Broken Hill and the following day visited Lake Victoria to see the storage levels and then returned to Renmark. The LAP and the MRIA will plan to make these events a more regular occurrence so keep your eyes peeled on future newsletters for when we plan to hold the next tour.

## PROJECTS FROM THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE FOR 2007

- Involvement in SIS studies, approval submissions and Steering committee **(ongoing)**
- Involvement in training, mentoring and participation in R&D trials to optimise irrigation efficiency (through IRES) **(ongoing)**
- Develop a district irrigation Code of Practice and report on achievements. Review every second year to incorporated latest technology **(ongoing)**
- Participate in an Integrated Floodplain Management Plan **(end '07)**
- Promote the Irrigation Efficiency Project and identify new course options **(ongoing)**
- Liaise with RP council on planning and development strategies/regulations **(ongoing)**
- Audit water meters for accuracy every 5 years **(ongoing)**
- Work with government and power providers to ensure uninterrupted power supply at a high level **(ongoing)**
- Develop GIS land risk layers (soil degradation, erosion, recreation) **(complete - mid '07)**
- Develop river frontage action plans with RP council and houseboat Codes of Practice with industry **(end '07)**
- Active Water Allocation Plan review participation in liaison with SA MDB NRMB **(end '07)**
- Develop rabbit and fox control programs **(mid '07)**
- Arrange field tours to develop local knowledge of fauna and flora **(end '08)**
- Participate in floodplain grazing policy development and assist in trials **(end '08)**
- Involvement in political process influencing labour availability including infrastructure development **(ongoing)**
- Promote sustainable tourism attractions and a Code of Practice in conjunction with the MDA Sustainable Recreation Officer **(ongoing)**
- Monitoring and evaluation of SEI implementation and seek funding through available sources **(ongoing)**



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