

IREC Executive Officer's Report

IREC Annual General Meeting – 2009

The continuing drought, along with the resolution passed at last year's AGM – that IREC conduct 'reduced operations' – has seen IREC have a very quiet year, but one that has allowed us to maintain our presence and our involvement in the region.

The GRDC Update, held in August, contained a number of very interesting and informative presentations, and was well supported by commercial sponsors. Unfortunately though, even with a broad mail-out to all growers, and advertising on the local TV stations, we did not attract large numbers of growers to the event. I think this is a sign of the times with other industry events also being smaller than usual.

This event will have to be reviewed for next year as it is not economically viable for GRDC to host such an event that is not supported. I believe that it is important IREC does maintain ownership of this event and so will work with GRDC and their consultants to ensure we get larger numbers next year.

Two more editions of the Farmers Newsletter were published this year, and as usual our editor Lucy Kealey had no trouble sourcing interesting and relevant articles. The publication is still seen as being of high quality and reaching a specific target audience and it is important it is maintained as IREC's flagship vehicle of extension.

A number of new advertisers came on board this year, again reflecting the value of the publication in the industry's eyes, and many of them have signed up for the next three editions as well.

Lucy and I worked together on an application for Round Two FarmReady funding from the Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). This funding is for work on Climate Change and we are proposing to produce two editions of the Farmers Newsletter specifically focussed on Climate Change. Our application was supported by ICF, RGA, Murrumbidgee Irrigation, NSW DPI and Murrumbidgee High Security Irrigators and we will work with these organisations to ensure the content of the journal is relevant, appropriate and useful for them if our funding is successful.

The total amount requested for the two editions was just under \$70 000, with IREC contributing another \$10 000. If this funding is received, it will mean we can continue the publication of the Farmers Newsletter for the next two years without it being a huge financial cost to IREC. We will continue to look for funding such as this to finance the magazine into the future.

I would like to thank Lucy for her contribution as editor as well as assisting with the Funding application for the FarmReady funding. She even hand-delivered the application to the DAFF office in Canberra!

Thank you to Hayley Wordsworth who keeps the office ticking over and welcomes me on my sporadic visits to the office. Her support with the Farmers Newsletter and the GRDC Update, as well as keeping all the accounts in order, is much appreciated.

I'd like to thank Peter Draper for his support as Chairman. He puts a lot of faith in me and I hope he is not disappointed. Peter has advised he will not be seeking re-election as Chairman of IREC and I would like to acknowledge his long and valuable contribution to the organisation. He has been chairman of IREC for 10 years and I have been fortunate to work with Peter during my time both at IREC and RGA and I wish him the best of luck in his next endeavours.

I will be taking a bit of time off at the start of next year, but will leave IREC and the publication of the next Farmers Newsletter, in the very capable hands of Hayley. I will be available from home and by about March or April will be pleased to be back on board as needed.

Margaret Andrezza
Executive Officer