



News Release

April 30 – for immediate release

Irrigation NZ backs national regulation for mandatory water measuring

Irrigation NZ strongly supports the approval of national regulation requiring water takes to be measured as part of a wider programme to improve fresh water management.

In order to move forward and optimise water management in New Zealand water measuring is an essential part of the equation.

You can't manage water if you don't measure it, says Irrigation NZ chief executive Andrew Curtis.

Irrigation NZ (INZ) has been in full support of this regulation for a number of years and has proactively led the water measuring working party since its inception.

The national body representing irrigation interests nationwide agrees that a national regulation is by far the most efficient way of getting water measured rather than leaving the decision and timing to each individual regional council.

If regulation had been left to the regional councils they would have had the ability to only legislate measuring for new consents or renewals meaning it would have taken more than 25 years to get the tools in place for optimal water management.

INZ is also pleased to see the government has taken a pragmatic approach to water measurement and allowed some areas, where water is plentiful, to be exempt for now.

This will assist with regulation being realised in the timeframes set – all takes over 20 l/s need to be measured by 2012, over 10 l/s by 2014 and over 5l/s by 2016.

“It will be a stretch but in most regions the suppliers, installers and regional council's have systems in place it's now just a case of ramping things up,” Curtis said.

For water meters on pipes the measurement accuracy is plus or minus 5% and for open channels the requirement will be plus or minus 10%. These are both sensible and internationally accepted levels of accuracy.

Accepting and encouraging these regulations is just another example of the proactive stance being taken by irrigators to ensure the sustainable management of the nation's water resource.

Curtis acknowledged there is considerable cost to irrigators associated with long-term and accurate water measurement, the average quality installation costing several thousands of dollars, and this needs to be recognised by the wider community.

To ensure consistency with the implementation of water measurement nationally INZ will be working with government and regional councils to implement an industry led standard for water meter installation and verification.

"It just makes sense. A water meter is a water meter whether it's in Northland or Southland and an industry led standard is the best way to achieve this," Curtis concluded.

Further comment:

**Andrew Curtis – INZ Chief Executive
03 379 3820 or 0274 966314**

Irrigation NZ

Irrigation NZ is a national body representing all irrigation interests in a unified voice to promote excellence in irrigation development and efficient water management based on the principles of responsible and sustainable water management throughout New Zealand.