

IREC MEMBERS MAKE LOCAL RESEARCH RELEVANT

It is pleasing to be writing the chairman's article for this year's spring edition of the *Farmers' Newsletter* with full dams and the promise of a good finish to our winter cropping program.

SOME winter crop plantings around the area were extremely late due to the wet rice and cotton harvests. Conditions were challenging and it is surprising to see so much crop coming through, albeit late. Wet conditions do present their own set of challenges. Getting machinery onto the fields has been difficult with many innovative planting methods experimented with! Replanting has been a very common pastime, unfortunately. But we look forward to good results come harvest.

IREC Field Station

We had a big summer cropping program at the IREC Field Station at Whitton this year. The rice yielded well at 10.45 t/ha while only using 4.4 ML/ha of water through the irrigation system outlet. All rainfall run-off was captured off 55 ha of cotton to supply the rest of the cotton planting. The cotton only used 5.4 ML/ha in its own right, yielding over 11 bales/ha.

These numbers demonstrate the immense value of the small 15 ML storage, a rice crop, and automation of pumps, valves and bay outlets to be able to capture all rainfall run-off and re-use.

Like many of you, at the field station we were unable to plant any of the planned winter cereals. So we are calling on our members to weigh into the discussion about what to grow next. There will be some back-to-back cotton due to there being no black root rot at the field station, but other rotational options being considered include:

- rice
- sunflowers
- maize
- soybeans
- sorghum
- safflower.

So please have your say and contact the IREC office or simply reply to our recent online [member survey](#) (follow this link).

Rob Houghton

Outgoing Chair, IREC
Irrigator, Gogeldrie



Rob showing us his undies ... to demonstrate good soil health at the IREC Field Station. As part of the '[Soil your undies](#)' program, a pair of cotton undies was buried for 2 months. The degree of decomposition indicates the level of biological activity in the soil.

IREC takes this opportunity to thank Rob for his dedication and hard work to rebuilding and reshaping IREC over the past 9 years.

The current status of IREC is testament to his strategic guidance and leadership, as chair of IREC, since late 2013. Thank you Rob.

Support local innovation

Farmer involvement has always been the key to providing innovation at all levels. Please lend your thinking to our organisation so that we can ensure that the right questions are being answered through levy-funded research.

This can be done by firstly ensuring that your business is a financial member of IREC, and taking part in our annual field day, workshops and bus trips. The events have always been a hothouse for innovative ideas and robust discussion.

Farmers, advisors and any interested people can become members of IREC. We thank our ongoing members for your support and loyalty. Encourage your friends and neighbours to read about [membership benefits](#) and [join now](#) from the IREC website.

IREC strategic plan

Your feedback and input are valued as IREC is approaching a new strategic planning period. As a reminder, please read the IREC Vision, Mission and Goals to the right.

IREC is an organisation that will evolve into a national hub for irrigated agriculture with your support. Geographically we are well placed to lead the way with all technological advancements in irrigation as we have such a reliable water source, and a climate that lends itself to a wide range of permanent and annual crops.

As this is my last contribution to the *Farmers' Newsletter* as chairman of IREC, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our IREC team led by Executive Officer Iva Quarisa, Office Manager Hayley Wordsworth, and Rachel Diversi, who assists with projects and communications.

I also thank the many farmers surrounding the IREC Field Station who have generously offered their time and machinery and the IREC committee who has been generous with their time and experience.

The organisation would not be where it is without the loyal support of this team.

I wish incoming chair, Matt Toscan, all the best and I hope he finds the experience as rewarding as I did. 🌅

Contact the Chair

Matt Toscan

Mobile: 0429 695 058

Email: irec@irec.org.au

Web: irec.org.au

VISION

Working together for profitable and sustainable irrigated agriculture.

MISSION

To support and enhance research and extension for continual improvement in irrigated agriculture.

GOALS

- Promote new and existing research for irrigated agriculture
- Provide a network for irrigated research, development and extension
- Influence research and extension policy
- Be a recognised hub for irrigated agriculture
- Provide a forum for irrigators to share new and innovative research ideas