



# Newsletter

**JULY 2007**

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc  
GPO Box 1108 Sydney NSW 2001  
Website: [www.nswfarmwriters.org](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org)

## How do you muster a paddock of carbon ?

Whatever the outcome of the next Federal election, a national greenhouse emissions trading scheme will be introduced in Australia over the next two to four years.

Such a scheme will progressively result in quite profound changes in the Australian economy, and one of the sectors that will face the most significant changes will be agriculture. Accounting for between 16 and 25% of national greenhouse gas emissions, agriculture is the second biggest emitting sector, and one that will be looked at closely as a source of future emissions abatement.

The Director of the Australian Farm Institute, Mick Keogh, has been analysing what a national greenhouse emissions trading scheme will mean for Australian agriculture.

On Friday, July 27 Mr Keogh will address the NSW Farm Writers lunch to discuss how agriculture should respond to national emissions trading proposals, given its relatively high dependence on fuel and energy inputs, and its international trade exposure. Mr Keogh will discuss whether emissions trading schemes are a potential goldmine for farmers with emission offsets to sell, or will they simply mean higher farm input costs that will sap farm profitability.

Mr Keogh was appointed executive director of the Australian Farm Institute in 2003.

The Institute's purpose is to conduct research into strategic policy issues of importance to Australian farmers.

Mr Keogh's research on topics from biofuels, rural employment to productivity spark national debates. Prior to joining the Farm Institute, Mr Keogh was general manager of policy at NSW Farmers and an agribusiness consultant.

Mr Keogh says some sub-sectors of agriculture may fare better or worse under a national emissions trading scheme.

So while there might be opportunities in carbon off-sets farmers need also need to think about what they can do at a farm-scale to reduce their emissions.

The Australian Greenhouse Office says emissions from livestock and agricultural soils represent a loss of valuable carbon and nitrogen resources. Methane emissions from livestock represent a loss of up to 15% of potential energy that could be used for animal production.

Mr Keogh will be giving his perspective on whether agriculture can reduce its emissions and improve its productivity at the same time.



*Mick Keogh, Director of the Australian Farm Institute and provocative thinker on greenhouse gas emissions and agriculture.*

Join our Corporate Members of the Month on Friday, 27 July to hear Mr Keogh tell us what is hot about climate change for agriculture.

To book your place for lunch on Friday 27 July go to our website: [www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGS.htm](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGS.htm)

**Register early and online for the Friday, 27 July lunch to hear Mick Keogh.**

**Corporate Members of the Month TBC.**

**Venue:** The Menzies Hotel, 14 Carrington Street, Sydney

**When:** **Friday, 27 July at 12pm for 12:30pm**

**Cost:** \$60 per head, or voucher, for members. \$70 per head for all non-members

**Register:** **BEFORE 5:00pm on Wednesday, 25 July 2007**

online: [www.nswfarmwriters.org](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org), email: [bookings@nswfarmwriters.org](mailto:bookings@nswfarmwriters.org), ph: **Stuart Hutton, (02) 9338 2626**

**Reminder:** If bookings are not cancelled by the deadline, the person making the booking will be invoiced. We will do our best to accommodate late bookings and cancellations – please phone **Stuart Hutton, (02) 9338 2626**.

## Raining in the wrong places, Basin remains dry

A report from a presentation by CEO of the Murray Darling Basin Commission Dr Wendy Craik at Farm Writers on June 29.

Murray Darling Basin Commission CEO Dr Wendy Craik told the Farm Writers Lunch on June 29 that the Basin's water storages remained critically low.

Recent rain across the Basin that had helped winter crops go in had generated minimal run-off.

Catchments were so dry that even the June rains had generated only 103 gigalitres of inflow to Basin storages, compared to a long term average of 600 gigalitres.

In the 11 months to April 2007, every month was the driest month ever in the 115 years that records of Murray Darling Basin inflows had been recorded. May thankfully broke this trend with some promising rain that led to modest inflows in June.

Dr Craik was very cautious about the capacity of the system to recover after a sustained dry period.

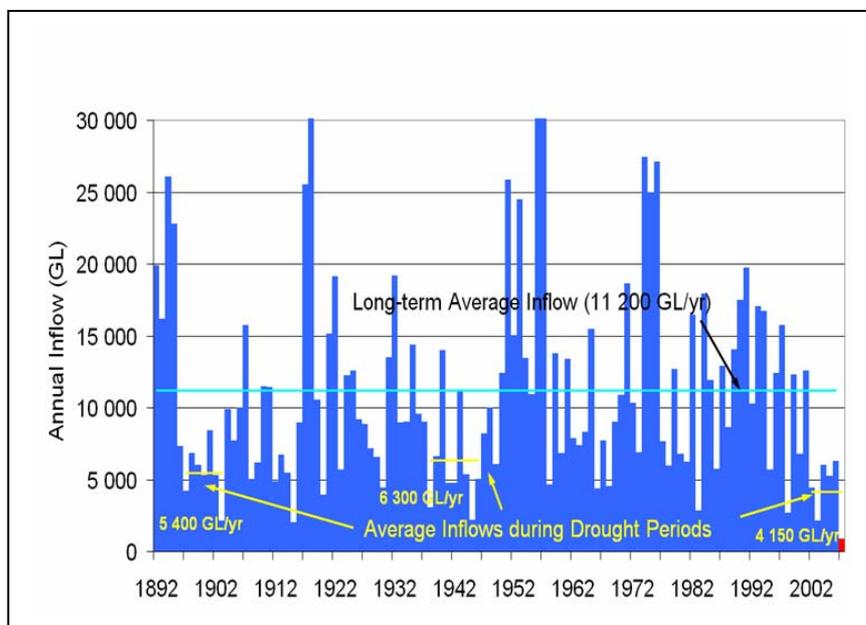
Much of her presentation was about the future impacts of climate change on the Basin, and what that might mean for long term water yield.

Dr Craik said CSIRO research had identified climate change and farm dams as the two factors that would have the biggest impact on water yield in the Basin in the future.

She said a planning group including MDBC, Federal and State Government agencies had put together contingency plans to assure supplies for stock and domestic use. This group had identified 1310 gigalitres was required in storage to guarantee supply. However, of that 1310 gigalitres, only 300 gigalitres was needed for consumption, the balance would be lost during transport and due to evaporation.

Dr Craik said natural flow regimes were affected by river regulation and water use and that past decisions have been made on a 'wet' season premise. A number of large developments were undertaken in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which now appears to have been a wetter climate cycle.

However, the prospect of climate change meant that risks were growing and compounding and there were increasing concerns about sustainability of irrigation in the basin.



Total Murray System Inflows: Annual flows (year ending June) showing forecast for 2006/07  
Source: MDBC

## Farm Writers' membership renewals due end July

TO ensure you stay plugged into the agribusiness network across NSW, renew your Farm Writers' membership before 31 July 2007.

Fortunately, the Association is able to offer subscription fees at their current low levels for the ninth year in succession.

Member benefits include the opportunity to purchase seminar vouchers at the discounted members' rate and to receive this newsletter and priority email notice of coming events.

Emails will be sent to each member with more information and a renewal form, or you can visit [www.nswfarmwriters.org](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org) to download a membership form.

## Congratulations Colin Munro OAM

Congratulations to Farm Writers life member and rural media icon Colin Munro.

Colin was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours for service to regional Australia through the promotion and preservation of rural culture, particularly through television and radio.



### July 2007

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc

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