

IrrigationNZ Principles

1. OWNERSHIP

Nobody 'owns' water it is a common resource for all.

Irrigators hold a 'right' (permit) to take and use water.
This should:

1. reflect the investment required to enable the adoption of 'Good Management Practice' at both the community scheme and farm level.
2. reflect the 'social contract' irrigators have to undertake 'Good Management Practice' in order to achieve efficient and effective irrigation.
3. be transferrable but not allow super profit scenarios to occur – monopolies of the water resource yielding what are effectively water rents.

2. WATER ALLOCATION

Water is plentiful. With sound planning, investment and management it can be made available to all that require it.

There are two components to allocation –

1. Setting limits that determine resource availability.
2. Dividing up the available resource between abstractive users.
 1. Setting of limits:
 - a) Allocation limits must be set through transparent, science based and community led processes that consider cultural, economic, environmental and social values and objectives.
 2. Allocating the available resource:
 - a) Irrigators need allocations and permit conditions that allow for a secure and reliable water supply. This enables investment in and adoption of 'Good Management Practice' irrigation.
 - b) Security and reliability also benefits the wider community as it results in a diversity of land use, higher value outputs and enables better environmental performance. Reliability and security provides resilience.
 - c) Allocation methods and their implementation must be simple, cost-effective, equitable, enable transfer, give reliability and security, and recognise the lifespan of sunk-investments based upon the adoption of irrigation 'Good Management Practice'.

3. Over allocation:

- a) Over allocation of water should not be an issue in New Zealand as in most cases it can be addressed through sound planning, investment and management.
- b) In the few cases where over allocation may exist a user led approach to its resolution must be adopted. This must follow a sound science based process to clarify the actual source and scale of the problem, and implement practical solutions that consider all impacts (cultural, economic, environmental and social) on both the water body and the local community.
- c) The resolution of over allocation must incorporate a pragmatic transitional period that recognises the lifespan of the permit and/or the sunk-investment (the latter based upon 'Good Management Practice' irrigation), or alternatively provide compensation.

3. WATER QUALITY

Water quality must not be unacceptably altered as a direct result of irrigation.

There are two components to water quality –

1. Setting 'desired state' limits to reflect community values.
2. Dividing up the management responsibility between users.
 1. Setting of limits:
 - a) Water quality limits must be set through transparent, science informed community led collaborative processes that consider cultural, economic, environmental and social values and objectives.
 - b) Limits setting must be outcome based – the state desired as opposed to a prescription of management practices or allowable discharges.
 2. Management:
 - a) The widespread adoption and demonstration of 'Good Management Practice' is the most practical way to achieve water quality limits. The justification for this approach includes; evidence shows there are considerable environmental benefits to be made through ensuring all users attain 'Good Management Practice'; there are

multiple factors that drive water quality and these are both dynamic and temporal in their nature, it is therefore extremely difficult and costly to devise regulatory or market mechanisms that do not create perverse outcomes.

3. Limit Exceedance:

- a) Where it is suspected limits are being exceeded an inclusive community led approach to its resolution must be adopted. This must follow a science based process to clarify the actual source, scale and temporal nature of the problem, and implement practical solutions that consider all impacts and their related effects (cultural, economic, environmental and social) on both the water body and the local community.
- b) The resolution process must adopt a pragmatic transitional period that recognises the lifespan of the permit and/or the sunk-investment (based upon 'Good Management Practice'), or alternatively provide compensation.

4. WATER MANAGEMENT

Auditable community self management systems are the optimal approach to water management.

1. Water 'knows no boundaries' – it must be managed at the appropriate scale, i.e. at the catchment, sub catchment or hydrological zone level.
2. The drivers of water quantity and quality are dynamic and inter-linked – its management must integrate both components and avoid perverse incentives.
3. Water measurement is essential – 'you need to measure water to manage it'.
4. Community self management systems must be robust, transparent and auditable. They involve the transfer of the day to day management of the resource to users with clearly defined boundaries and consequences.
5. A collaborative community led approach that fosters knowledge and understanding must be employed when transitioning to a new water management system.
6. Wider community stakeholder values and perceptions need to be recognised and informed through simple fact based messages to demonstrate and promote the potential of 'Good Management Practice' irrigation.

5. SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

Decision making must be informed through transparent and sound science.

Decisions must:

1. Be founded on a fact-based value judgements and not subject to emotion or political motives.
2. Clearly provide the assumptions used and qualify the limitations of these.
3. Give the range of likely outcomes and the uncertainty associated with these.
4. Where a range of scientific opinions exist, acknowledge the difference then seek to constructively find common understanding.

6. COMMUNITY WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

There is both public and private benefit from irrigation – the development and funding of community irrigation infrastructure must reflect this.

1. To maximise the community benefit ('value add') from water infrastructure its planning and development must be:
 - a) integrated with other infrastructure, i.e. transport, electricity, telecommunication.
 - b) linked to national and regional economic growth strategies.
2. Public funding of rural water infrastructure projects should be:
 - a) targeted to the development stages to foster a collaborative multi-value approach.
 - b) considered for the construction stage, particularly if the infrastructure will help achieve community objectives.
3. Funding must be linked to the use of community led approaches and the adoption and demonstration of 'Good Management Practice'.

7. WATER CHARGES

Irrigators already pay for the private benefit they receive from the use of the water.

1. Irrigators pay for their on-going private benefit through increased tax take, increased rates, infrastructure costs, regulatory water management charges and the adoption of 'Good Management Practice'.
2. Regulatory water management charges must reflect the public and private benefit of irrigation, and be fair, equitable and relevant. There must also be oversight of the process by irrigators.