

# Citrep

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Newsletter of the Murray Valley Citrus Board

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John Tesoriero

## Chairman's Report

Having served the Murray Valley Citrus Board as its Chief Executive for 6 years until 2009, I thought it was a natural progression to apply for a position on the Board when I returned to Mildura with my wife Julie and daughter Sarah in 2012.

The two and a half years in between were spent in Gippsland working as General Manager, Water Supply with Southern Rural Water. The reason for returning to Mildura was to be closer to family and friends and enjoy the many benefits our region has to offer.

It is fair to say that my appointment by the Minister as Chairman of the MVCB was a surprise and I only hope that I am up to the challenge, and can deliver lasting benefits to the Murray Valley Citrus growers.

The MVCB has delivered significant benefits to growers in recent times namely, seasonal area freedom from Queensland Fruit Fly into Japan, helped secure critical needs water for NSW citrus growers during the drought and played an integral role in forging better trade relations in Asia. The Board was also instrumental with other key commodity groups in establishing the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area.

Be that as it may, our industry is facing difficult times through an unfavourable exchange rate, no market for our overrun fruit, market access issues and a domestic market that's oversupplied. In addition there is the threat of Queensland Fruit fly within the PFA, and a change in state government policy re the future management of QFF, the latter seeking industry agreement to

shoulder the majority of management and eradication costs within the PFA.

Even with these current challenges, Murray Valley Citrus growers voted to extend the term of the Board for a further four years and I am very pleased with the wealth of experience and talent of our Board. I would like to welcome new Board members Geoff Rix and Craig Urand who have joined existing members, Jan Denham, Keith Richards, Trevor Radloff, Alison McGregor, Jeremy Giddings and Tony Fay.

When I was appointed to the role of Chairman, my aim was and still is for the citrus industry to work together for the benefit of growers in our region. It's important that we have a strong robust peak body, but it's also really important that we have the MVCB in place to leverage state funding to combat fruit fly, pest and disease management and provide the vital Research, Development and extension services to our growers. We will continue to provide these services as long as they are valued and supported by our growers.

*Cont'd on page 3...*



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Hugh Flett

## Chief Executive's Report

The citrus industry continues to experience testing times, particularly in some key areas.

Among significant challenges confronting growers is the Queensland fruit fly (Qff), resulting in post harvest costs of treatment for both domestic and export markets; the collapse in price for local content in juice and the high exchange rates impacting on returns for export fruit, leading to an oversupply in domestic markets.

The Murray Valley Citrus Board (MVCB) will continue to address these key issues with the intention of closely monitoring the situation, taking a researched and strong grower advocacy role with all the relevant agencies involved in these areas of concern.

We have no influence over our exchange rates. It would be in our best interests if the US economy was to improve, and did so quickly. An upswing in US economic fortunes would bring about increased investment in the US, thus leading to an improved US dollar and a corresponding lowering of the Australian dollar.

In the meantime, growers are seeking to supply other markets, which in some cases are more exacting in terms of protocol requirements (e.g. Fullers Rose Weevil). On farm practices to achieve these protocols are costly, and there needs to be a commensurate return on investment. By sending product to other markets, the pressure on domestic markets is lowered. Maintaining the balance between export and domestic markets benefits all growers.

Our Board shares the concerns of all growers about the declining content of locally grown product used in juice. Much of the overrun in the last two seasons has been dumped. Several factors contributed

to this situation. Two years ago, a light crop meant that there was insufficient locally grown content and juice companies moved towards importing larger volumes of frozen juice concentrate, much of which is produced in countries with far lower production costs than in Australia. This is now entrenched as the preferred production technique for juice products within Australia.

Poor labelling laws also contribute to the problem. Before the introduction of Free Trade Agreements, it was a legislated requirement that juice produced in Australia had to contain 25% locally grown content. Our Board intends to make representations on behalf of growers, to both sides of politics in Canberra. In this context, the state of the citrus industry is the key issue on the agenda. If a viable industry is to remain, then actions are required to be implemented at a Federal level.

At this stage, it appears likely that similar discussions on the current state of the citrus industry will be held with the Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC), the Murray Group of Councils (MGOC), Victorian and NSW DPI and Biosecurity Australia regarding protocols. It is important that these agencies are reliably informed and they may be able to provide further advocacy and facilitation. We will notify growers when these meetings take place and the outcomes that eventuate.

The MVCB has so far distributed over 14,000 litres of Naturalure chemical, free of charge to those citrus growers inside the 1500m radius of Qff outbreaks. We commend these growers for applying baits


on farm to eradicate this serious pest. It is estimated that grower returns have been hit with an additional \$10m in costs to treat, following the harvest, for the last two seasons. There is light on the horizon. The number of outbreaks has fallen and there have been very few Qff detections in recent times. Potentially, any of the remaining outbreaks will be declared closed early in 2013, provided no further flies are detected.

The MVCB is working through a proposal from the Victorian DPI to deregulate Qff as an exotic pest for the remainder of Victoria (including the Vic market). This will place additional pressures on our Pest Free Area (PFA) boundaries. In addition, the DPI is looking for industry to cover 70% of all costs for Qff control and eradication for the remainder of 2012 and beyond. The MVCB and other industry groups are still in negotiations with the Department about how this may effectively work in the future.

Qff will remain a key activity of the MVCB until such time as the region returns to a PFA. Living with Qff simply costs too much and risks our access to important overseas markets.

For these important reasons, the Board will remain focussed on developments and outcomes in these areas. At the same time, every effort will be made to see that growers remain fully informed.

**Hugh Flett**  
CEO, MVCB



The Board, CEO and staff of the MVCB extend best wishes to all growers for an enjoyable and safe Christmas. Our hope is that we can all look forward to a rewarding New Year.

## Chairman's Report *Cont'd from page 1...*

Ensuring our industry returns to profitability is a key objective of the Board. To do that we have to focus on the things we can control. There is not much we can do about the exchange rate, it's something that we have to live with and hope that economic conditions in the USA improve to bring the dollar down and make us more competitive on the export market.

However, finding new markets, meeting the requirements of existing markets and ensuring growers produce fruit that meets both export and domestic demand, as well as ways of improving productivity remain a priority. A united industry with growers, packers and processors working together is also important for long term profitability. The Board is very disappointed that some packers have decided not to collect the levy from growers, as has been the practice ever since the Board was established under the Agricultural Industry Development Act. This action by a minority has resulted in staff following up levies with individual growers; an administratively costly exercise for both staff and growers and if this practice continues it will result in additional costs that will need to be met by growers.

There has also been adverse publicity from some, challenging the Board's legal right to collect the charge in return for services provided to growers. We have been advised by the Victorian Government that in their view the Murray Valley Citrus Industry Development Order 2012 (the Order) is legally valid and that citrus producers in the Murray Valley production area are required to pay the specified charge to the MVCB.

It is also fair to say the current Federal Government policy is not working in our favour with its focus on free trade at all costs. The emphasis must be on fair trade to ensure we are not disadvantaged in the global market. Our aim will be to work with Sunraysia Citrus Growers in their advocacy role to the Federal Government on issues such as local content and labelling laws etc.

The Board will shortly be developing its 2013 – 2016 Strategic Plan and the input of growers will be sought to assist in the development of the plan.

As this is the Christmas edition of Citrep, I would like to extend sincere thanks to my fellow Directors for their

valuable contribution to the Board over the past 12 months. I would also like to recognise and pay tribute to outgoing Board members Paula Gordon, Peter Morrish and David Salter and wish them well in their future endeavours.

To our dedicated staff and CEO Hugh Flett, thank you for all your tireless efforts throughout the year and I look forward to working with you all in addressing issues vital to the prosperity of our industry.

Finally, on behalf of the Board and staff, I hope you all have a joyful Christmas with family and friends and a profitable 2013.

**John Tesoriero**  
Chairman, MVCB

## IDO Activities

- Produced the weekly Citrus Board News
- Assisted with the BBQ and field walk on Strategic Cost Savings on Farm at Mourquong and Citrus Gall Wasp and Fullers Rose Weevil Management in Coomealla
- Attended Vic DPI 'Feeding Asia's Demand' meeting in Melbourne
- CAL meeting on R&D investment plan
- Promoted citrus at the Wentworth and Mildura Shows
- Participated in Vic DPI Horticultural Industry Network meetings
- Provided monthly citrus articles for Sunraysia Daily
- Held IDO steering committee meeting
- Submitted funding application for new IDO project 2013/16
- Submitted milestone report for current IDO project
- Held CITTgroup on crop regulation and winter yellows
- Met with Victorian DPI Market Access team
- Met with Victorian DPI and NSW DPI in regard to Qfly outbreak
- Distributed Naturalure chemical to Qfly affected growers
- Held grower training sessions on application of Naturalure
- Held CITTgroup on Huanglongbing with Florida researcher Dr Tim Spann
- Distributed Citrus Gall Wasp Parasites
- Held CITTgroup on alternative chemicals for Citrus Gall Wasp and orchard protocols for Fuller's Rose Weevil
- Attended DAFF market access meeting
- Met with a citrus entomologist to develop a red scale modeling project

# Geoff Rix - Board



Mr Geoff Rix was appointed to the Murray Valley Citrus Board in June, 2012. The following background details are relevant to his appointment.

Geoff has comprehensively responded in his own words to the questions put to him; his motivation for farming, the reasons for being in agriculture, the influences on him, some significant developments in the citrus industry (its immediate priorities and future) and the aspects that give him satisfaction.

"I was born in Mildura, the son of Ken and Marilyn Rix (citrus and melon growers) brother to Andrew [apricot and almond grower] Tim (teacher and wine grape grower) and Jenny (teacher). Life growing up was on the Jindalee block in Dareton with after school hours and school holidays were filled by helping on the farm. The original Rix farm was sold in the 1980's. Other land was subsequently leased to grow Rix rockmelons.

I was educated at Dareton Primary School, Coomealla High School, then Ballarat

Grammar for Years 10, 11 and 12. I achieved a Bachelor of Applied Science (Computer Science) from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology graduating in 1989. Further training has included the Citrus Leadership Course in 2007.

#### Further education includes:

- Qualified 'Auschem' training deliverer (Chemical Users Course) 2012
- Certificate IV TAA 2007 (Sunraysia TAFE), upgraded to Certificate IV TAE40110 in January 2012
- Diploma of Irrigation (Sunraysia TAFE, 2009)
- Diploma of Production Horticulture (Sunraysia TAFE, 2009)
- Diploma of Vocational and Education Training – Practise (Sunraysia TAFE, 2010)
- Advanced Diploma of Management (Sunraysia TAFE 2012)

#### My Community involvements include:

- President and Secretary of the Wentworth Apex Club (1996 – 1999)
- Vice President of the Wentworth and District Rowing Club (2011 – current)
- Vice President of the South West Water Users' Association
- Licensed Ultra Light aeroplane pilot, 2006
- President of Murray Darling Amateur Swimming Club (2010/11, 2011/12)
- Coach Demons Basketball Under 12 team
- Completed Grade one coaching course

#### Other Interests:

- Rowing for the Wentworth Rowing Club
- Victorian State Champion in 2012 D Grade Men's single scull.
- Recently, together with Trevor Radloff (another MVCB member) won a masters' double scull event in Bendigo.

Supporting children in their basketball pursuits. Annabelle and Bronte both

# Member Profile



This spread left-right:  
 1. Geoff and Ken inspecting new growth on graft  
 2. Rix Family 3. Geoff, Andrew and Ken

representing Mildura in the 'Heat program'. Skiing on the Murray and Darling Rivers, having grown up on the river and skiing after hard days on the farm. Flying when time allows.

My profession is a Horticulturist and Horticulture Teacher at the Mildura campus of the TAFE institute.

I have been married to Cheryl for 18 years and we have three daughters, Amy (14), Annabelle (12) and Bronte (10).

### Motivation For Farming

My motivation for farming stems from an era when the lifestyle meant that husband and wife could work together on the farm and make a comfortable living (probably at least an average income) that would allow adequate time for family and friends.

I believe I had a very fortunate upbringing on the family fruit block at Dareton, which included hard work helping with grape and melon harvest periods. Having brothers and sisters meant great fun after work down at the river. I think, to a certain extent, if you

have had a happy childhood it is probably what you try to replicate for your family. Also, once the farming bug gets into your blood it is very hard for it to be extinguished. Unfortunately, the ambition has become harder to achieve through no fault of the farmer, but due to external forces.

Being a world of greater trade (not always free) the deregulation of industries has allowed lower cost of production countries to become our competitors. Hence, the 'level playing field', which included non-tariff protection (actively pursued by the Coalition Government in the 90's in trying to make farmers more competitive) has led to many leaving the sector and the younger generation being turned off farming as a career path. However, I still love farming and probably like a lot of people my age, continue farming because of my upbringing, often to the detriment of our own financial wellbeing. Striving to be successful farmers, where we produce a marketable product, is a means for people to feel good about themselves. I include myself in this. The lifestyle also allows me the opportunity to be present in the early years of my children's upbringing; something I value greatly.

My love of outdoor work is my motivation. I gain great satisfaction in being able to produce a crop of citrus/grapes/asparagus etc which people will buy and know is of good value and high quality. Comments from our family, when provided with fresh citrus, are a morale booster. They are along the lines of 'this is the best tasting citrus we have ever had and why can't we get this in the shops'.

### Significant Developments in the Citrus Industry

The deregulation of the market, in particular the removal of tariff protection for juice etc is of concern. It is a noble idea, but doesn't work in a country like Australia, where the standard of living is high and is maintained through high wages and the cost of doing business. I am not for tariff protection, but I believe it has harmed many farmers and almost led to the destruction of family farming as a way of life. Economies of scale are important to survive financially, however the larger plantings of recent times have

## Geoff Rix – Board Member Profile *Cont'd from page 5...*



Left-right:  
1. Geoff and Ken checking graft  
2. Geoff Anabelle, and Bronte



not obtained secure markets, which in turn has increased supply and reduced returns. Positives for the industry have been the development of efficient methods of irrigation and nutrition application to make crops more productive. Consumer friendly developments such as 'easy peel', 'seedless' citrus and gourmet products such as blood oranges have been a plus for the industry. Farming has become more technical but less physical, although oranges still need to be handpicked. Citrus farmers have needed to become smarter and more productive.

The reliance on export markets today for citrus farmers to be profitable is of concern when we have no influence on the biggest single factor affecting that profitability, the exchange rate. Our greatest frustration is we can grow and produce some of the best citrus in the world, but it is unsustainable due to factors outside of our control.

Governments of all persuasions are reducing the funding for research and development in all rural industries, including citrus, and this will have long-term repercussions in the industry. The realisation is that free trade has harmed farmers in many ways and not helped. I don't have the answer to this, but non-farming politicians and governments don't seem to want to acknowledge the harm done through their well-meaning policies.

Labelling of product has been a problem, but this is improving over time. Consumers need to be constantly educated about where food is grown and all the reasons why they should buy Australian.

### **Priorities; what still has to be done – now and in the medium to long-term**

Attempts are now being made to address some immediate threats to our industry, for example access to markets (particularly Asia) via pest free production areas and protocols. These trade agreement controls, which are hard to meet, are necessary if we want to stay in business.

The functions the farmer must perform to meet stringent export protocols mean the cost of production is always going to increase, so unless the returns increase then we go out of business. Farmer viability is thus dependant on securing profitable markets, which will pay for our premium citrus to fund the cost of production.

All people in the supply chain of citrus have a responsibility in making the product reach it's destination in a condition where the buyer will pay returns needed for our cost of production. Spreading the risk in marketing our product by opening up new markets has to be achieved by our national body, and implemented at grass roots by our local or regional bodies.

This information spread and industry development can't be done by one group alone, but by all groups working **together**, however different the regions wish to represent themselves. New citrus leaders need to be identified and supported. Successful existing organisations and bodies should not be dismissed as being irrelevant or unsustainable, but should be worked with for their one desire of achieving a strong profitable industry. Grower levies need to be collected, but

used in a manner where there is proven value to the industry as a whole, on a national and regional basis.

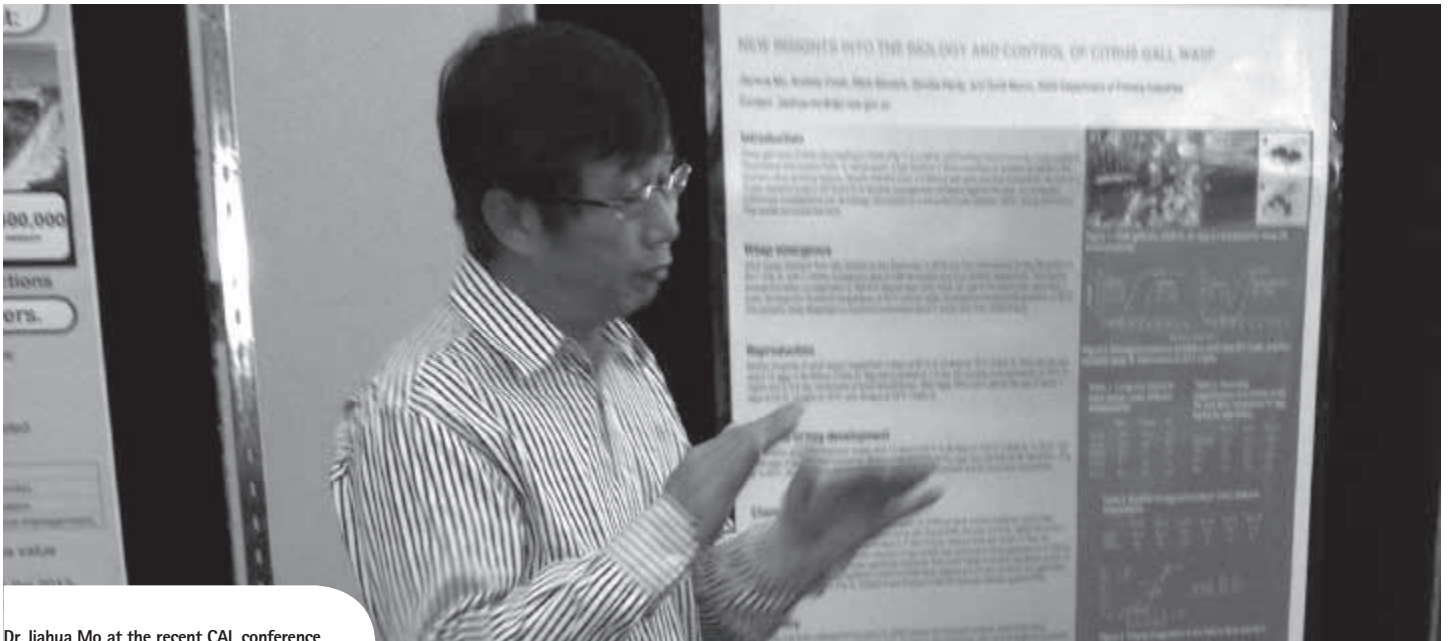
### **Things that give you satisfaction because they make a contribution to the industry**

Knowledge given freely at field days, by people who spend time helping growers because they believe they can make a difference, are a source of personal satisfaction. I am always amazed that people will help others without the expectation of reward or recognition. The confidence I obtain when meeting people who are passionate about the industry will often get me thinking about new ideas and renew my drive to do things to improve my crop/trees and farming practices.

I take the responsibility of being a Board member of the Murray Valley Citrus Board seriously. It is important that there is a strong regional voice and local grower levies are spent in the area, particularly on issues such as bio-security, grower education, development of varieties that suit a changing climate and securing better returns for growers. Local representation, decision-making, large and small-scale growers and strong relationships within the industry and with key stakeholders (such as processors and Government) are all important to the future of the industry."

## Funding Application for Sunraysia Californian Red Scale Model

Californian red scale (CRS) is a major pest of citrus in Australia as its presence on domestic and export fruit, downgrades fruit quality therefore reducing grower returns.



Dr Jiahua Mo at the recent CAL conference

The detection of one red scale on a piece of fruit destined for Korea knocks out the whole container. Presently, red scale is mainly managed in Australia by petroleum spray oil (PSO) and releases of the commercially available bio-control agent, Aphytis.

PSOs have the best effect when timed at the crawler and whitecap stages when the scale is most susceptible to oil sprays. Aphytis prefers to parasitise 3rd instar females scale, so Aphytis releases the need to be timed to this stage of the CRS lifecycle.

In Australia, only general guidelines are available with respect to the timing of PSO sprays and Aphytis releases. Two PSO sprays are recommended annually for CRS, the first during November/December and the second during February/March. Releases of Aphytis are recommended for October-March. As the CRS lifecycle varies within districts, years and citrus varieties, reliance on the general and broad windows to guide the timing of PSO sprays and Aphytis release can be hit and miss.

Spray applied at different crawler density within this window is likely to perform

differently. Research has shown that insecticides applied to control CRS on eight occasions when crawlers were found, have a five-fold difference in the performance of the eight spray timing in terms of percentages of heavily infested fruit.

To correctly target CRS, growers have to periodically monitor CRS development before spraying on different citrus varieties. This can be time consuming and costly. Monitoring based spray timing is also limited by the requirement of grower skills in distinguishing the different development stages, sexes and generations for CRS.

Therefore, the MVCB, in conjunction with Dr Jiahua Mo, Entomologist with New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, has applied for matched Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) funding. The aim is to develop a timing guide for PSO application and Aphytis releases for specific Murray Valley districts and citrus varieties, based on temperature-driven life cycle models and field timing trials.

If this funding application is approved by the Citrus Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) and HAL, Murray Valley citrus growers will be able save time and money as they

can target PSO application and Aphytis releases to the specific stages of CRS. Model development itself is quite straightforward with minimal cost to the industry. CRS life cycle varies between districts due to climatic differences and variations among red scale populations. Local data is needed not only for the estimation of model parameters, but also to verify the predictions of the model.

Published CRS life cycle models are based on the timing of male flights and accumulated degree-days since. In addition to such a model, Dr Mo will be investigating stochastic models, which simultaneously predict proportions of individual CRS stages at given calendar dates. The latter type of model has the advantage of not relying on prior knowledge of male flights and hence is easier to use.

The MVCB will let growers know of the outcome of the funding application.

Further information can be obtained from

**Mary Cannard**  
Industry Development Officer  
MVCB on 03 5051 0504

# MVCB Board an

## MVCB Board



**John Tesoriero**  
Chairman



**Geoff Rix**  
Grower Lower Darling



**Craig Urand**  
Grower Nangiloc



**Jan Denham**  
Grower Ellerslie



**Keith Richards**  
Grower Ellerslie



**Trevor Radloff**  
Grower Ellerslie



**Allison McGregor**  
Agricultural Consultant



**Jeremy Giddings**  
Irrigation Specialist



**Tony Faye**  
Victorian DPI Senior  
Policy Analyst

The new Murray Valley Citrus Board announced by Victoria's Agricultural Minister, Peter Walsh in August 2012, will serve a four year term.

Mr John Tesoriero was appointed Chairman of the Board. John has a history in the water sector and was the Chief Executive Officer of the MVCB for six years.

Two Murray Valley growers, Geoff Rix (Lower Darling) and Craig Urand

(Nangiloc) are the other new appointments to the Board.

Continuing Board members include Jan Denham and Keith Richards (both Ellerslie citrus growers): Trevor Radloff: Agricultural consultant, Alison McGregor:

Irrigation Specialist, Jeremy Giddings and Victorian DPI Senior Policy Analyst, Tony Faye.

Outgoing Board members were Paula Gordon, Peter Morrish and David Salter.



# Staff Profiles

## MVCB Staff



**Hugh Flett**  
CEO



**Mary Cannard**  
Industry Development  
Officer



**Tony Bothroyd**  
Field Officer



**Sue Chapman**  
Finance and Accounts



**Deb Scott**  
Administration



**Kristi Goldup**  
Administration

The MVCB operates with six staff members, three full time and the other three part time, totalling a full time equivalent of four.

### CEO **Hugh Flett**

Hugh is the link between the Board directors and the business of the Board itself. The CEO has the responsibility of achieving the strategies, priorities and objectives of the Board as set down in the strategic plan. He oversees the staff in their respective roles and monitors the outputs and achievements against a set of agreed requirements. As CEO, Hugh also oversees the financial and statutory performance of the Board and reports to the Board on a regular basis.

### Industry Development Officer **Mary Cannard**

Mary's main areas of responsibility include overseeing Research and Development projects and then extending those findings to growers through activities such as Citigroups, field trials and farm walks. She is also available to see growers on farm with any production issues they have. Mary's other key focus is on biosecurity including Queensland fruit fly, Fullers Rose Weevil, citrus gall wasp, red scale and others. In addition to these functions, Mary has oversight on the annual crop forecast and production of the final report available to growers. Mary also attends most promotions in which the Board is involved.

### Field Officer **Tony Bothroyd**

As the Field Officer, Tony spends much of his time on farm with growers who may need advice on growing techniques or disease issues. Tony is also the driver behind the annual crop forecast and a great deal of his time between late December and March each year is spent collecting data on farm and producing preliminary reports prior to the final report. Tony is also charged with much of the responsibility for promotional activities of the Board. A significant amount of time is required to ensure that these promotions showcase the citrus industry in the Murray Valley in its best light. This has been evidenced by winning many awards at these promotions.

### Finance and Accounts **Sue Chapman**

Sue is a part time contractor (2 days per week), CPA qualified, whose primary function is to look after the financial and statutory requirements of the Board. This includes levy returns, collection, audit, payroll, budgeting and preparation of the annual report.

### Administration **Deb Scott**

Deb is a part time employee (2-3 days per week) who looks after the Board's requirements including organising meetings and minute taking. Other duties include maintaining the website and grower contact database, processing and updating property registrations and levy returns and general administrative duties.

### **Kristi Goldup**

Kristi is employed part time (1 day per week). Her duties include maintaining the grower contact database, entering levy returns and property registration details, distributing information to growers and providing reception and administration assistance to all staff.

## EJT Packers Continues to Progress in Challenging Times

In 2005, an article was published in Citrep on EJT Packers under the heading of a "Profile of a Progressive Packing House". Given this, it is an appropriate time to revisit the company to determine their progress to date and to attempt to relate this to the current state of the citrus industry.



Left-right:  
1. David Bailey grading oranges  
2. Loading cartons

In the initial article, reference was made to a number of points that can act as a comparative basis of measurement.

The impressive EJT buildings and infrastructure consisting of two acres of roof and concrete provided a good start to profiling the company in 2005. Mr John Bailey was the Managing Director and outlined the then establishment and strategy of EJT Packers.

"Over the past 22 years the company operation has continuously developed with the packing house tripling its capacity. Packing operations were streamlined through the installation of the latest photo-electronic sizing, mechanical packing and labelling equipment in May, 2003. These new lines ensure that the company can develop and service their export markets with long lines of consistent product, whilst simultaneously being able to rapidly increase output to meet crucial, peak season, market demands.

EJT Packers have historically concentrated their efforts into the middle to upper quality and price range for both export and domestic markets.

We want to supply certain people with a certain product. We will supply all sectors of the market, but will pick and choose who we do supply. It is interesting to note that we still deal with people in the domestic markets that we dealt with in 1983. Therefore, we must be doing something right," John Bailey said.

"In conjunction with a core grower group EJT are planting new varieties of citrus, which will strengthen our ability to meet emerging markets. The business therefore has good access to early, mid-season and late navels, which will allow a steady export growth for at least the next 10 years. This growth will be supplemented by further plantings of 'easy peeler' style fruits.

EJT Packers were also one of the first citrus packing houses in the Sunraysia region to achieve Quality Certification through AQIS, for full trade description to non-phytosanitary countries. In June 2000, we gained accreditation with AQIS for phytosanitary inspections to approved destinations. In June 1997, ISO 9002 accreditation for receipt, grading, packing, storage and dispatch of citrus fruits was attained. This has since been replaced

by HACCP accreditation to international standards.

An interesting aspect of the EJT packing program is what can be referred to as the citrus/avocado mix. In November, 2004 we commenced avocado packing and marketing for a couple of growers which proved an instant success. The growers were well pleased with the returns for their fruit and the wholesalers happy with the presentation of the product.

We have a new packing line and a new shed and everything handles avocados very well. The decision to do this was a considered one and based on seasonality factors.

We have an excellent reputation with the supply of citrus, but the trend with Valencias indicates production and demand is less than it used to be and the variety has lost a lot of traditional markets because of competition. We decided we could supply a service through avocados and it seemed a logical step to pack and market the product to keep the facility in operation and the staff employed. We intend to develop this to a larger grower base in 2005/06," John Bailey stated.

In January, 2004, the company was restructured with David Bailey becoming Managing Director. This decision was part of the family's succession planning to ensure continuity of their service to the Sunraysia citrus industry.

Succession training is important to us. Basic principles, such as staff working 'with' you, rather than 'for' you apply at EJT and should not ever change. I am pleased our son David has become an essential part of the business having spent 11.5 years as a baker," John Bailey concluded in 2005.

Mr David Bailey now takes up the story told in his own way.

"The first of two major changes we have dealt with is that Mum and Dad have fully retired and are enjoying it. However in saying that, they are still quietly there, which is great as their knowledge and experience in the industry is huge and Dad is a great sounding board, assisting us in working things through. The second factor is, that over time, we have built a good relationship with the Favco group. After a lot of discussion, they commenced doing our domestic marketing in May this season. This provided me with time to work more closely with our exporters, concentrate on the daily running of the packinghouse and importantly, to develop better communication strategies with our growers.

Our small staff has been relatively unchanged over the years. However, our production manager, Wayne Keating has recently started his own business in plastic welding. His position was taken up by combining the roles of Paula Whitchurch and Travis McLean, both from within the company. We currently have 5 permanent employees who have been with us for more than 13 years. When needed, we employ a number of local, casual workers as well as backpackers in the peak times of the season. This works well for us.

Our running capacity over the line has increased for two reasons. We have modified our newer grader to grade increased volume efficiently on a daily basis. This allows more through put, giving us the ability to grade different varieties. This change has allowed us to close down our older grader in the original shed, and move that volume of fruit into the newer shed where we gain flexibility and time. The other reason for our volume increase

is our continued grower support and their increased production volumes.

In the future we will need to look at replacing our mandarin grader, which is in the original packing house. The volume of Imperials that we now process has greatly increased compared to when the grader was first set up. We have just out-grown it. To be more efficient, we need to get more volume through in a shorter time frame. Another reason is due to the popularity of Afourers; buyers are starting to shy away from late season Imperials and to swap over to Afourers, which will make our marketing window for Imperials shorter. There also is a reasonable volume of younger plantings of Imperials yet to come into production, which only adds pressure to that smaller window of opportunity. All of this only highlights our need to modify our small grading line into a modern grader that will have the ability to handle greater volumes in a shorter period and provide more flexibility in grading other varieties as well.

Without doubt, the main variety everyone is talking about at present is the Afourer. With strong demand and no other Mandarins around in the market place, especially late in the season [and being seedless] it has huge advantages. I believe Afourer will follow the success of Imperials. There are also a few other varieties in the pipeline, for example a blood mandarin and a few other seedless types, so it will be interesting to see how these will be accepted in the market place when released to the public.



David packing oranges

We have maintained the volume of Avocados we pack and are starting to see an increase again after the drought and heavy pruning that occurred to keep trees

alive during that time. We have also begun packing Pomegranates in the past two years.

It is hard to see past the current market position for the citrus industry. The high Australian dollar and, more than ever, strong competition from other countries and their low prices in the market place make it difficult to stay positive. However, in the long term, I do believe as in most industries things will turn around and that we will all survive to see it. The positives at present are that there are people out there who do want Australian citrus, and in time, I believe the dollar will come back down to a more profitable level for all. Unfortunately, we all have to ride the storm out first. We need to keep talking to the governments of countries, which want our fruit, to try and reduce the protocols they have in place. The other priority is to continue trials on other methods of treatments on our Australian fruit that are cost effective to the grower to overcome those barriers.

The aim of EJT Packers has always been to do the best job that we can possibly do in any season and achieve the best return possible for our growers, even though over the years that has become more challenging. However, it remains our aim to this day to keep this positive relationship with our growers.

We will endeavor to continue to move with the times and adapt to the challenges, as one thing is certain, there are never any seasons which remain unchanged from one year to the next," David concluded.

Clearly, EJT Packers remains a family centered enterprise. David Bailey has taken over where his father left-off in seeing that EJT Packers continues to provide cost competitive, efficient and rewarding citrus and avocado packing and marketing services to their growers, whilst simultaneously providing wholesaler and consumer satisfaction. The company is to be applauded for this positive approach.

**E. Warhurst**  
Compilr

## Carbon Trading and The Citrus Industry

In earlier articles the attention of Australian citrus producers was drawn to the Federal Government's Carbon Farming Initiative<sup>1</sup>, which forms part of its strategy to reduce Australia's net emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG). The Initiative is based on the sequestration of carbon in either soil or plant material.

The first article described the Government's National Carbon Offset Standard<sup>2</sup>, which sets out the definitions and rules that underpin how the national carbon sequestration market will operate. The second article in the series described the amounts of carbon in citrus trees, and how those amounts change over the first two decades or so of a planting's life. That article also discussed the feasibility of citrus producers offering a sequestration service based on growing trees given the definitions and rules contained in the National Carbon Offset Standard. The third article discussed soil carbon; how much was there, and what the capacity was to increase those amounts in the top metre or so given the amounts found in other soils around the world.

This article, the fourth and final in the series, draws together and summarises the important points that citrus producers, and the citrus industry, will need to understand and may wish to consider when participating in the debate about any national carbon sequestration market, as well as involvement in that market at some point in the future.

### CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Part of the Government's strategy to meet its GHG reduction targets is to offset the release of CO<sub>2</sub> by encouraging the removal of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere using biological and geological processes and preventing that carbon from being released back into the atmosphere. At first glance it seems logical that Australian agriculture could be a major player in the provision of sequestration services to those industries seeking to offset their GHG emissions.

However, the Government's National Carbon Offset Standard stipulates that any carbon sequestered must be additional to the amount that would have been sequestered in the normal course of events. Removing old citrus trees and replanting with young

trees would be viewed as "business as usual", and therefore, the carbon that would be accumulated in the leaves, branches and trunk as the trees grew would not be viewed as offsetting GHG released elsewhere in the economy. In other words, under the Standard's current definitions and rules, citrus producers would not be able to provide a carbon sequestration service based on just growing trees. There are other reasons why a carbon sequestration service based on growing citrus trees is an unattractive proposition, but the Standard's "business as usual" stipulation is probably the main one.

On the other hand, increasing the level of soil carbon in citrus orchards, and agricultural land more generally, does potentially qualify as an eligible sequestration service. It would need to be argued, and accepted by the agency charged with administering the sequestration market, that any additional carbon in the soil after the start of the service was due to a change in management/cultural practice. This would need to be based on solid knowledge of how much carbon was in the soil at the start, and therein lays a major issue. There are very few measurements of soil carbon available that could seriously be considered as baseline data for how much carbon is present in agricultural soils. Some industries may be slightly better off than others in this regard, but the citrus industry as a whole has very few data on organic carbon levels in soils used for citrus production. That deficiency can be overcome by collecting samples and taking measurements in a structured broad-based program that addresses the issue of natural variability in soil carbon levels across different growing regions/locations. Other technologies are currently being researched that might make this task much simpler and less costly<sup>3</sup>. However, it is not clear how far off these technologies are, and, in any case, there would need

to be local verification/calibration work carried out before they could be accepted. Further, having solid baseline data will be critical to satisfying other rules set out in the Standard: namely, that the amount of carbon claimed to be sequestered must be measurable and verifiable.

That issue aside, economies of scale also become important here because of some of the other features of the Standard. Firstly, carbon is to be sequestered for at least 100 years, and it will be difficult for any individual or entity to guarantee that a particular parcel of land will be managed for that period of time in such a manner as to not run down soil carbon levels. It is also very difficult for any individual or entity to provide an iron-clad guarantee that a specific "bundle" of carbon dioxide sequestered, will still be there in 100 years time. It is also possible that having entered into a contract with another party to provide a sequestration service, that party may in fact have some claim on that parcel of land, which may affect its future use and value.

Secondly, the Standard calls for measurements and auditing. Presumably these will be the responsibility of the sequestration service provider, and presumably may need to be carried out more than once over the 100 year period. The Standard also requires sequestration service providers to be registered. All of these involve cost, which may be on-going and, given the 100 year stipulation, way beyond the life of the person or entity that entered into the agreement in the first place.

Some of these limitations may be overcome by individual producers or businesses acting collectively. Indeed, the Federal Government's Carbon Farming Initiative allows for small providers of sequestration services to aggregate and collectively provide a large sequestration service.

<sup>1</sup> Design of the Carbon Farming Initiative. Consultation Paper. Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency. 2010.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/government/initiatives/~media/publications/carbon-accounting/revise-NCOS-standard-pdf.ashx>

<sup>3</sup> Knadel, M., Thomsen, A. and Greve, M. 2011. Multisensor on-the-go mapping of soil organic carbon content. Soil Science Society of America Journal 75, 1799-1806.



Jeremy Giddings

## Monitoring Water Requirements in Spring and Early Summer

As mentioned in previous Citrep editions, proper irrigation scheduling in spring is often a challenge because irrigation demand steadily increases into summer, while at the same time variable weather conditions complicate irrigation decisions.

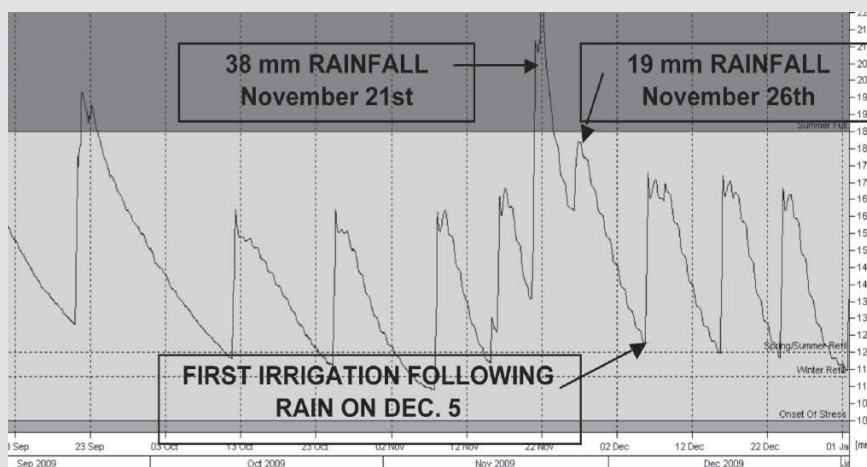
This could be of benefit to many horticultural industries, including the citrus industry. Large groups of small sequestration service providers would be in a far stronger position to guarantee that a particular proportion of their land would be part of a sequestration service, and the amounts of carbon sequestered across all the land participating in the service could be managed on a dynamic basis. Put another way, the group provides a sequestration service, but where that carbon is sequestered may change with time. But the group can show that across all the land participating in the scheme there is more carbon in the soil than before and that the extra carbon is at least equal to the quantity of carbon that the service agreed to provide. Obviously, the current research on alternative methods of measuring soil organic matter, referred to earlier, will make managing a service much easier. Large groups of small providers would also be able to collectively negotiate lower auditing and verification costs.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The suggestions by NSW Primary Industries colleagues Graeme Sanderson, Jeremy Giddings, Sandra Hardy and Karen Connolly for improvement of this article and the previous three articles in the series are gratefully acknowledged.

### Michael Treeby

NSW Primary Industries,  
Dareton  
NSW 2717



It is important to recognise that during spring the most active part of the rootzone is close to the surface, generally in the top 30 cm. Citrus growers adopting accurate soil moisture monitoring tools have identified this and adjusted their irrigation management accordingly. Improved tree health and some water savings have occurred as a result. During summer the full rootzone depth should be monitored (usually 80–100cm, but will vary depending on actual rootzone depth), however, during spring soil moisture should be more closely monitored at this relatively shallow depth to determine irrigation timing.

Irrigation demand steadily increases from September to December, requiring changes to irrigation depth and interval. Above is a capacitance probe graph used to monitor a patch of mature Washington Navel trees in Coomealla irrigated with full cover low level sprinklers. The graph shows an increasing rate of water use over the September to December period, with more frequent irrigations necessary in November and December compared to September and October.

This data is from 2009 and presents the first significant rainfall event for that season, when 38mm was recorded at Dareton on November 21st. Another 19mm was recorded a few days later on November 26th. This soil moisture monitoring tool was able to indicate to the irrigator that an irrigation was due just 9 days later on December 5th.

Knowing the rate of water use and recognising the varying depth at which water use is occurring is very important not only for irrigation, but also fertigation management. As mentioned in previous articles, this knowledge is becoming necessary for high level citrus production, and adoption of such technology is becoming a standard practice for many high value crops in the Murray Valley.

### Jeremy Giddings

Irrigation Officer,  
NSW Department of Primary  
Industries, Dareton

## Sunraysia Citrus Growers Inc. – Chairman's Report 2012

The past year has again been a testing one for citrus growers in the Murray Valley and throughout Australia. The continuing and sustained rise of the Australian Dollar has made it difficult to service many of our existing markets for a profitable return.

In turn this has led to a continued oversupply on domestic markets and a glut in domestic juice demand. It is disappointing that something out of our control (the high dollar) continues to cast a shadow over our industry and all other producers and manufacturers in Australia. The quality of fruit in the past season has been exceptional and ironically, higher quality packouts have led to increased marketing pressure.

Perhaps a highlight of the past year has been the increased volume of fruit being sent to China. This market has shown significant growth at sustained prices. Continued work to improve protocols will further increase the volume of fruit to both China and Korea into the future.

On a more disappointing note, this year also saw the introduction of the Carbon Tax. The full impact of this tax is yet to be quantified, but costs such as electricity (and water delivery) transport and refrigerant gas will all increase.

With the State governments in both Victoria and NSW balancing shaky budgets, the past year has seen reductions in funding and job cuts at DPI and the closure of the Lower Murray Darling CMA in NSW. Research and Development has long been at the heart of our industry and it will be important for us to fight to maintain the capacity at the Dareton Research Station.

This year saw growers in the Murray Valley vote in favour of an order to continue the operation of the Murray Valley Citrus Board. The clear mandate given to the MVCB highlighted the importance of a regional presence in Sunraysia. Whilst there was heated debate during the vote, SCG hopes that it can work with both the MVCB and Citrus Australia to achieve profit generating outcomes for growers at a regional, national and international level. SCG has the history, membership structure and financial capacity to continue as the agri-political representative body for citrus growers in our region. SCG opposes the introduction of any new Regional

Advisory Committee in Sunraysia as it is unnecessary and would not be beneficial to growers.

In my last Chairman's Report (2011) I wrote *"Whilst Minister Walsh has expressed his commitment to the QFF problem, we are yet to see any real measures to overcome the problem. It appears that both the NSW and VIC Governments are unwilling to commit funds to the issue and there is an increasing risk that they may walk away from the problem."*

Fruit Fly management continues to be a major problem for Citrus producers in the Sunraysia PFA. It is disappointing that both State Governments have now reduced their efforts against QFF due to budget constraints. In the case of Victoria, the Government is now looking for an industry contribution of 70% to maintain the PFA. The MVCB along with other industry groups are continuing negotiations to achieve the best outcome for growers. We can only hope that fewer fly trappings at present will make it easier to manage the problem and allow us to get back to area freedom for the 2013 season.

The circus that is the Basin Plan continues, with the Government still looking to have something through parliament this year. The SDL number has now been increased by 450GL to 3200GL in a measure to appease South Australia. The extra 450GL is to come from savings from infrastructure projects. There is still no consensus amongst the states and it would appear that there is a lot of water to go under the bridge before 2019. All this, at a time when the storages are at record levels and Dartmouth is about to spill for only the third time ever. If only all those consultants fees could have been spent on digging another dam!

SCG has maintained its membership of the National Irrigators Council (NIC) and receives weekly updates on the political happenings surrounding the plan. The NIC is the most recognised irrigator lobby group and enjoys significant political and media access.

In the last few months, the Directors of SCG have contributed money towards the production of a documentary called "Muddied Waters a Clear Solution".

*The project consists of a documentary, interactive website and educational strategy to promote smarter solutions that will change minds and change policy.* The documentary will be finalised in early December and will air on commercial television shortly after. One of the key elements of the project is to focus on the importance of irrigation and food and fibre production in the basin. The project aims to counter the "Green" views that have become mainstream and often against the truth and at the expense of basin communities.

SCG will be looking for some fresh direction in the next financial year and will be looking to appoint some new Directors to fill existing vacancies. All members are encouraged to consider joining the Board and sharing their industry views. The time commitment required of Directors is not onerous and we would particularly welcome member representation from the Nangiloc region.

The SCG Directors have met with building contractors and are awaiting some design concepts and costings. The work to be undertaken during the next year will include exterior painting, modernising the front of the building and repairs to the back fences. Once the work is completed, the Directors will look at the potential for refreshed promotional advertising on the external walls.

A net surplus of \$36,069 was achieved for the year ending 30 June 2012 compared to the previous year's surplus of \$21,346 (2011). Levy income for the 11/12 season was \$29,208, an increase of 50%. This change was due to the exceptionally light crop of 2010 being followed by the very heavy crop of 2011. The administrative costs of maintaining SCG have been significantly reduced over the past two years and surplus funds are being invested in bank term deposits.

## QFF Eradication Continues

The onset of warmer weather in Sunraysia has corresponded with the commencement of fruit fly treatment activities across outbreak affected areas in the region.

I would like to thank the Directors for their support and contributions during the past year. Thank you also to our Administrative Assistant Deb Scott for all her hard work throughout the course of the year.

### Vince DeMaria

Chairman

Sunraysia Citrus Growers Inc.

The onset of warmer weather in Sunraysia has corresponded with the commencement of fruit fly treatment activities across outbreak affected areas in the region. Whilst significant gains have been achieved in eradicating numerous outbreaks across the region over the past 24 months, significant work is still required in order for the regions Pest Free Area (PFA) status to be fully regained.

Despite the existence of 14 outbreaks still requiring treatment in the PFA region, surveillance data indicates that fruit fly numbers are very low in comparison to the previous two seasons.

All fruit growers need to remain vigilant in their farm hygiene and ensure that their property is as unattractive to QFF as is possible. Since January 2010, 26 outbreaks have been detected on commercial fruit properties, which could have been prevented through better monitoring and orchard hygiene practises.

This includes monitoring fruit for sting wounds leading up to harvest, ensuring left over or culled fruit is treated or mulched on the ground and removing any unwanted fruit trees around the property including within the vegetable garden.

Growers must also ensure visitors to their property, including all contractors, are aware of their responsibilities when travelling into the PFA and that they understand not to carry fruit with them. Previous outbreaks have been linked to the illegal movement of uncertified fruit into the PFA region via this pathway.

Current information on existing outbreaks is available on the DPI website: [www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au). An interactive map enables clarification of property QFF status by simply typing in the property address. Outbreak maps and re-instatement information with links to other agencies such as AQIS (export) and PIRSA (South Australia) are also available on this website

Further enquiries can be directed to:

**QFF Hotline**

**Phone: (03) 5051 4618**

## MVCB Product Price List

Available through the Murray Valley Citrus Board office.

Item Name	Grower Price
<b>PUBLICATIONS</b>	
Citrus Disease and Disorders	\$30.00
Citrus Growing Manual	\$22.00
Drip Irrigation Book	\$10.00
Good Bug Book	\$44.50
CD The Good, the Bug and the Ugly	\$70.00
<b>PRODUCTS</b>	
Citrus Peelers - Complete	\$2.00
Cranston Gauge	\$48.00
Hand Lens	\$8.50
Citrus Sizing Rings (USA & Domestic measurements)	\$25.00
Phenolphthalein PH Indicator	\$50.00
<b>NET BAG SALES</b>	
Grapefruit 3 kg net bags - per 1000	\$240.00
Navel 3 kg net bags - per 1000	\$240.00
Valencia 3 kg net bags - per 1000	\$240.00
<b>MEETING ROOM FACILITIES</b>	
Half day Board Room hire	\$55.00
Full day Board Room hire	\$110.00
Half day Projector Multimedia hire	\$110.00
Full day Projector Multimedia hire	\$220.00
Coffee Tea & Biscuits (per head) - Board Room hire	\$2.50
<b>CITREP NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING</b>	
<i>Black &amp; White</i>	
1/9 PAGE Portrait (60 mm x 85 mm)	\$35.00
2/9 PAGE Landscape (125 mm x 85 mm)	\$70.00
2/9 PAGE Portrait (60 mm x 175 mm)	\$70.00
4/9 PAGE Portrait (125 mm x 175 mm)	\$140.00
1/3 PAGE Landscape (190 mm x 85 mm)	\$110.00
2/3 PAGE Landscape (190 mm x 175 mm)	\$200.00
FULL PAGE (190 mm x 265 mm)	\$275.00
<i>Colour</i>	
1/9 PAGE Portrait (60 mm x 85 mm)	\$80.00
2/9 PAGE Landscape (125 mm x 85 mm)	\$160.00
2/9 PAGE Portrait (60 mm x 175 mm)	\$160.00
4/9 PAGE Portrait (125 mm x 175 mm)	\$310.00
1/3 PAGE Landscape (190 mm x 85 mm)	\$240.00
2/3 PAGE Landscape (190 mm x 175 mm)	\$500.00
FULL PAGE (190 mm x 265 mm)	\$610.00
FLYER - 1 PAGE INSERT	\$300.00

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