



Managing change for sustainability

Kim Newth

New Zealand's largest privately owned irrigation scheme, MHV Water Ltd, is no longer simply in the business of delivering water to the farm gate, having evolved into a change management business with a sustainability focus.

That's according to the scheme's CEO Melanie Brooks, who observes that successful change requires a variety of different people and shareholders around the table, working together to achieve sound outcomes.

"We do a lot of work with Ashburton Lyndhurst Irrigation Ltd and Barrhill Chertsey Irrigation Ltd," she says.

"We are all part of Irrigo, which provides environmental services including education, as well as administrative support.

"We are also reaching out to independent irrigators to see how we can work more closely into the future."

Ashburton Lyndhurst Irrigation is another one of Mid Canterbury's original schemes and, like MHV Water, is a shareholder of Rangitata Diversion Race Management Ltd. BCI, operating since 2010, also

"We believe our farmers can reach the goal of reducing nutrient losses by 36 per cent by 2035, but there will not be a silver bullet. We are looking at a raft of different options."

shares the RDR supply through a water swap arrangement.

MHV Water Ltd delivers water, both open race and piped, from the Rangitata Diversion Race (RDR) to up to 58,000ha of productive land across the Hinds Plains.

The scheme also includes a number of water storage ponds. As a scheme, MHV Water provides a lot of support to its shareholders including face to face meetings on Farm Environment Plans (FEPs) to ensure compliance with RDR's resource consent conditions.

"These meetings are an invaluable way to catch up with our shareholders, talk about educational courses coming up and see how they're tracking and what their plans are for the year ahead.

"In the past, this was probably seen as more of a box ticking exercise but now we're making it more about what value we can add and how we can support our farmers."

Increasingly, FEPs are driving environmental awareness on the farm. "These plans are one piece of the puzzle – and an important piece – towards achieving improved water quality outcomes."

Underpinning MHV Water's strategic direction are four key purposes:

- Water for Optimal Growth;
- Environmental and Economic Sustainability;
- Stay Strong – 'Our People, Our Culture, Our Values';
- Enable Innovation in Agriculture.

"There is some fantastic work being done in agricultural innovation.

"We believe our farmers can reach the goal of reducing nutrient losses by 36 per cent by 2035, but there will not be a silver bullet. We are looking at a raft of different options.

"Some are already out there: for example, one of our shareholders is involved with the 'Forages for Reduced Nitrate Leaching' trial incorporating different pasture species, including plantain.

"CRV Ambreed is also looking at N sires; potentially you can breed an animal that produces less nitrogen in its urine. There's some really clever research going on and our farmers are already moving along that change curve."

Simply providing water storage, as MHV Water does, can have a big impact on water use, she notes.

Their farmer shareholders no longer use water 'just in case' of drought, but instead apply it 'just in time' and increasingly are shifting to a 'just enough' approach.

"We're continuing to see that evolution as we work together to achieve sustainability and the key is collaboration."

you+us



Tavendale
and Partners

Tavendale and Partners are proud
to support MHV Water

For more information about us visit www.tp.co.nz



MHV Water Ltd delivers water, both open race and piped, from the Rangitata Diversion Race (RDR) to up to 58,000ha of productive land across the Hinds Plains.





We'll move the Earth for you!
Ph. 03 307 7065
 203 Frasers Road ASHBURTON
 Email. stcxv8@tarbotton.co.nz
 www.tarbottoncontractors.co.nz






Fulton Hogan

Civil infrastructure specialists for over 80 years



Building communities

Fulton Hogan bring together specialist capabilities, and offer clients insightful solutions that meet their needs, all under one roof:

- Construction
- Civil construction
- Asphaltting and sealing
- Drainage
- Cobblestones
- Driveways and footpaths
- Landscaping
- Tennis courts
- Kerb and channel
- Irrigation
- Gravel supplies
- Traffic management

Contact us: Cnr Williams Street & The Terrace
 Phone 03 307 8260 0800 FH ASH1

www.fultonhogan.com