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Growing opportunity - water and beyond.

<b>POLICY &amp; PROCEDURE</b>		
<b>ISSUED BY:</b>	<b>MANAGING DIRECTOR</b>	
<b>MANAGED BY:</b>	<b>PUBLIC RELATIONS</b>	
<b>INTRODUCED:</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 2007</b>	
<b>REVISED:</b>	<b>JUNE 2010</b>	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SPONSORSHIP AND DONATIONS POLICY</b>	<b>1</b>

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Murrumbidgee Irrigation’s (MI) corporate philosophy includes a commitment to act as a responsible corporate citizen. We demonstrate commitment in a number of ways throughout the Company including through the Sponsorship and Donations Policy.

The purpose of this policy is to establish the framework and guidelines within MI for the creation of sponsorships and donations with individuals and groups living in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) and to ensure a coordinated and equitable approach to corporate social responsibilities.

The Company recognises that sponsorship and donations are a powerful way to fulfil the Company’s vision of *Growing opportunity- water and beyond* and strategic objectives as stated in its *Corporate Plan 2010-2015*. These include:

- Actively supporting and contributing to the community and wider region
- Seizing opportunities to engage directly with customers and key stakeholders on opportunities to improve the efficiency and productivity of water use
- Seeking opportunities to support community planning efforts in considering the future in the face of considerable uncertainty and change, and in building greater community awareness and support for the MI brand
- Create opportunities for environmental improvements through building capacity in the community
- Building a culture that seeks to go beyond mere compliance with environmental licence obligations. Relevant water quality standards will remain an enduring priority in protecting and enhancing the environment for future generations.

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## DEFINITIONS

1. **Sponsorships** involve investments in events or causes for the purpose of achieving various corporate objectives. MI is always looking for new and exciting opportunities to promote our Company through sponsorship activities, including promotion of MI and its role in the MIA community.

MI will not sponsor:

- Funds for capital works, amenities or equipment
  - Political or religious organisations or groups
  - Industries/activities that are unrelated to MI's core operation and customers
  - Any events or activities considered dangerous or violent
  - Any events or activities considered construed or discriminatory
  - Any activities that are of a commercial nature e.g. business start up costs
2. **Donations** to support charitable causes are another important part of MI's corporate social responsibility activities and involvement in the MIA community. Donations differ from sponsorships in that they seek little or no financial return for the investment provided.

MI actively operates its own program to raise funds for registered charities known as Murrumbidgee Irrigation's Charitable Donations Program (see section 2 -Murrumbidgee Irrigation Charitable Donations Program - A Staff Fundraising Initiative). MI will also consider requests operated outside its own internal fundraising program, depending on the budget and objectives of the charitable project or event.

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**ANNUAL ALLOCATION**

Each financial year, MI will allocate a budget for its sponsorship and donations program.

**GENERAL CRITERIA**

MI will consider supporting community based projects, events and charities that reflect the Company’s vision, mission, commitment, objectives and strategies as stated in its *Corporate Plan 2010-2015*.

**SPECIFIC CRITERIA**

To ensure that our sponsorships and donations derive the maximum benefit for both MI and the community, specific criteria have been developed to evaluate all current and future activities.

MI will consider providing support for the following:-

**1. MIA community based projects or events**

- Community based projects or events must offer a natural link to the *Corporate Plan 2010-2015* and will consider supporting community based projects or events based on at least **one** of the following four areas:
  - a. Water, particularly the promotion of water safety.
  - b. Programs to build the capacity of the next generation (persons under the age of 25) within the MIA to pursue social, educational, vocational and cultural endeavours.
  - c. Activities that promote investment and/or social benefits to MIA area.
  - d. Protecting and enhancing our environment.

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## **SPECIFIC CRITERIA**

### **1. MIA community based projects or events (continued)**

- MI does not generally sponsor sporting clubs due to the number of organisations across our region. The Company will however consider special sporting events linked to water safety such as swimming. Programs that are currently supported by the Company on an annual basis are:
  - NSW Swimsafe program
  - Local Swim Club programs

MI will also consider sponsoring sporting events if they are for the purpose of supporting charity.

- MI does not generally sponsor general education or school events due to the large number of schools across our region. MI also runs a school programs through its education program. MI will however consider sponsorship of special events at TAFE or tertiary learning centres in the MIA area that recognises achievement such as annual award or graduation ceremonies. The purpose is to demonstrate our commitment to growing the knowledge and skills of not only our own staff but also building the skills of future generations.
- MI will not provide general operational funding for community groups. Neither will it consider applications for concessions on its standing charges e.g. water rates, inspection fees etc. Applications by not-for-profit groups for concessions on charges will not be considered under this Sponsorship and Donations program.
- Projects and events must provide an opportunity to reach MI customers within the MIA. Where practicable, funds should be distributed equitably throughout MIA region including both rural and urban residents.
- Any event MI supports must be socially inclusive in terms of participants and audience. Under no circumstances will MI support events that purposefully exclude people based on culture, gender, race, religion or disability.

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### **1. MIA community based projects or events (continued)**

- Project or event organisers must give a minimum of four (4) weeks lead-time for sponsorships under \$1,000 and a minimum of eight (8) weeks lead-time for sponsorships over \$1,000.
- The benefit to be accrued to MI through sponsorship relative to the cost of the project needs to be sufficient. Does it represent value for money given other comparable investments across the sponsorship marketplace?
- The project or event must have the capacity to deliver opportunities to create positive community and/or media promotions or cause related marketing applications such as an opportunity for brand exposure and other media exposure/participation.
- The group or organisation must have adequate history in the conduct and management of community events or project.
- The organisation requiring assistance needs to have sufficient business expertise and personnel to effectively implement the programs proposed and help MI achieve its strategic objectives.
- Use of our name or image for projects, events or organisations is not permitted unless approval is given. Examples include, but may not be restricted to, reference to MI in or our image on advertising copy, media releases, displays/signage publications, promotional information and website content.
- The project or event must offer project or event evaluation and/or audience research during/or after the event. Project or event organisers will be requested to fill out an Evaluation Form (see Appendix D).
- Projects or events need not be “one off” activities. Consideration will also be given to funding of staged projects.
- Requests for charitable donations organised by external parties through a registered charity will be considered, however, as the Company staff operates its own “Charitable Donations Program,” there may not be sufficient funds in the allocated budget for charitable events organised outside of this program.
- For charitable donation requests, the charity must be registered with tax deductible status or must be incorporated bodies or operate from a trust account

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## **1. MIA community based projects or events (continued)**

### ***Selection Process***

- All community requests for assistance are to be referred to the Public Relations Coordinator for consideration under the policy guidelines.
- All applicants for sponsorship or donations are required to complete the “Sponsorship and Donations Program Request Form,” which is available at any MI office, or may be downloaded from the website [www.mirrigation.com.au](http://www.mirrigation.com.au) (see Appendix A). Applicants must complete and send this form at least four (4) weeks prior to the event and any print or advertising deadline for sponsorships under \$1,000 and at least eight weeks (8) weeks for sponsorships over \$1,000.
- Sponsorship over \$1,000 will be embodied in written agreements between MI and the sponsorship partner (see Appendix B). Requests for support other than financial will also be considered.
- Persons or organisations may need to attend a briefing with MI’s Public Relations Coordinator to discuss details of the application. This may or may not result in a successful application. Even if a sponsorship and donation application fits the criteria, MI has complete and final discretion in the decision to undertake any sponsorship. Unfortunately, the number of applications always exceeds the funds available. Worthwhile programs cannot be guaranteed support regardless of merit or previous support.

### **Sponsorship and donation requests should be sent to:**

Public Relations Coordinator  
Murrumbidgee Irrigation  
PO Box 492 (Research Station Road)  
Hanwood NSW 2680  
Email: [info@mirrigation.com.au](mailto:info@mirrigation.com.au)  
Phone: 02 6962 0200  
Fax: (02) 6962 0209

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## **SPECIFIC CRITERIA**

### **2. Murrumbidgee Irrigation Charitable Donations Program - A Staff Fundraising Initiative**

- Murrumbidgee Irrigation’s Charitable Donations Program aims to provide monetary gestures of support for community/charitable organisations across the MIA region. The Company’s Charitable Donations Program is operated by MI staff.
- Staff fund-raising initiatives for charitable causes will be matched by the Company dollar for dollar to a limit of \$500 per activity and up to ten (10) activities per year. Each year MI will aim to choose a number of different causes from across our region to support. All cases will be assessed on their merits.
- Charitable donations must meet the following criteria:
  - The charity must be registered with tax deductible status or must be incorporated bodies or operate from a trust account
  - The event must be voluntarily organised by staff with no additional costs to the Company

#### ***Selection Process***

- Staff may nominate activities/events/charities at the beginning of each financial year and will be advised by the Public Relations Coordinator when nominations open.
- If staff wish to coordinate an event on behalf of a recognised charity and would like to receive matched funding from the Company, please fill in the Charitable Donations Request Form (Appendix D). If a staff member has agreed to be the organiser of the event, they must take responsibility for collecting and sending the funds back to the registered charity.
- If more than ten (10) events are identified, a selection process will be undertaken by the PR Coordinator and the Managing Director.

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**PRINCIPLES**

The following are the fundamental principles that shape our relationships with our partners:

- Involvement in a sponsorship or donation of any project, event, program or conference will not entitle any partner to influence any decision of MI.
- MI will not enter into any alliance or partnership with any corporation or organisation where the association with the prospective partner or acceptance of the sponsorship would jeopardise the financial, legal or moral integrity of MI or adversely impact upon MI’s standing and reputation in the community. In assessing projects, the PR Coordinator will observe the requirements of MI’s Code of Conduct. Any conflict of interests must be declared, recorded and managed in accordance with MI’s procedures.
- All sponsorship alliances or partnerships must be consistent with existing MI policies.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

- The Company’s Sponsorship and Donations Program will be administered through the Public Relations business unit in cooperation with associated staff.
- The General Manager, Corporate and Customer Operations is responsible for final approval of all sponsorship and donation requests.
- The MI Executive team is responsible for the implementation and review of this policy.
- All Board members, Executives, casual, permanent and contract staff and volunteers are responsible for adhering to this policy.
- Requestor of funding is responsible for completing the Sponsorship and Donations Program Request Form (Appendix A) and an Evaluation Form (Appendix C).

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**DETERMINATION OF FUNDING**

MI may decide to take the following actions to requests for support:

- Decline the request.
- Approve the amount requested for the project or event on receipt of a Tax Invoice.
- Partly approve the request and allocate a proportion of the funding requested – in this case MI should be satisfied that the remainder of the funding could be obtained from other sources otherwise MI reserves the right to cancel without finding itself financially liable.
- MI’s Public Relations Coordinator will notify all applicants of the outcome of sponsorship requests in writing. MI requires at least four (4) weeks to give any sponsorship and donations proposals under \$1,000 due consideration and a minimum of eight (8) weeks for requests over \$1,000.
- MI’s Public Relations Coordinator will conduct regular audits of its Sponsorship and Donations Program, to ensure that program procedures have been followed and funds expended in accordance with the guidelines. Any non-conformances will be reported to the Managing Director.