

Up Close with Darren Ferber – IAA Magazine Article
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Why did you do the CID?

It's the only real industry recognised standard for the irrigation industry, so I see the reason for it is to provide industry professionalism, and for specialists in the industry. It also enabled me to focus my practical day to day work with the theory that the CID program teaches.

What do you do as far as irrigation design is concerned?

We're an irrigation consultancy company, so our role is to provide independent irrigation design services to a range of clients, who are primarily end-users. So we are the technical link between the irrigation dealers, installation contractors and the irrigators.

How long have you been in the industry?

Since 1984.

Do you have A CID Speciality?

Yes, Agriculture Drip Micro. The interesting thing is that our business has changed a fair bit. Back when I did the CID I was an Agricultural Marketing manager for Toro Australia, but now my current business is primarily focussed on urban irrigation through councils and parks & gardens. This means that within our business we will have to re-specialise our CID's so we can be up-to-date and relevant with our current work. It is good that there is specialties within the CID program that enable focus on specific fields. This is a good advertisement for the breadth of the CID program.

Is there a job you'd never do again?

No, I've enjoyed everything I've done.

What's the best thing about your involvement with irrigation?

I think the irrigation industry has tremendous potential because it deals with the effective use of water, one of the true commodities that is under ever increasing demand. It has environmental consequences, so it can be good for the environment, or if done poorly it can be bad for the environment. From a skills point of view, to be involved with irrigation design you have to understand agronomy, hydraulics and also electronics where automation occurs. So there are lots of disciplines to understand in this industry.

What's your favourite source of information?

I do a lot of my research on the Internet, through the portals. I've used the IAA one, water industry sources and some chat groups in the micro irrigation type areas. I'm always looking for innovative ways of irrigation and are particularly interested in the human and social implication of irrigation. Efficiency of irrigation will be the major driver for the industry this century and needs to be addressed if we are to have a truly sustainable industry.

If you had one more design left to do, what would it be or who would it be for?

To be involved in the design of a totally closed catchment water use system. An example would be an urban area, where the design would be across the whole catchment, and include the pipeline and irrigation systems, so they are self-sustaining. Harvesting the water and reusing it on the same area would be a real challenge.

Could you describe an ideal client, or are there any?

Yes they are around. They are the clients who are prepared to be innovative and who take calculated risks in their enterprises. An example is one of my current clients, who is looking at waste water re-use, harvesting and investing in things that when you looked at them from a purely accounting point of view they don't stack up on paper. But, if you consider the environmental impacts and looking at the long term, they do.

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