

Media Release

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Landholder meetings enlighten 4% exemption options

The recent community meetings held throughout the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District enabled landowners considering trading water shares in the Commonwealth Government environmental water purchase tenders, to discuss their options and suitability.

Victoria has maintained a 4% annual limit on permanent trade of water shares out of irrigation areas to ensure communities had time to adjust to the economic and social changes that occur following the permanent trade of irrigation water.

Recently the Victorian Government agreed to allow up to 300,000 megalitres to be sold for environmental purposes outside the 4% annual trade limit.

A set of criteria was established and at the meetings landowners were seeking answers concerning their eligibility to sell water following the newly announced exemption zones. These yellow and green zones were indicated in a letter they had received from NVIRP.

“Landowners in an eligible zone and wishing to participate in any Commonwealth buy-back must obtain an exemption to the 4% limit from NVIRP and an exemption will only be issued where the sale complements our modernisation program,” Executive Manager Modernisation, David Kent said. The other option landowners have is to sell water within the 4% annual limit when that becomes available.

“Many landowners who attended these meetings were considering offering water entitlement for sale to the Commonwealth in the tender that closed last week and wanted to know if they were in a zone where the 4% exemption rule could facilitate a sale.

“As I said at these meetings, I want to encourage landowners not to self-assess their own eligibility but to make contact with NVIRP and request an Application for an Eligibility Assessment even if they have already filed a Commonwealth tender application. NVIRP’s Modernisation staff will visit your property and assess all your water delivery outlets and options to determine if you meet the criteria.

“Over the 12 meetings I noticed some consistent questions recurring and I have included a question and answer page on our website www.nvirp.com.au (4% exemption information) or a hard copy can be mailed to you by phoning the Exemption Hotline on 1300 068 477.

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“Although the first Commonwealth tender has closed there will be another in early March and also late April 2010. Landowners considering selling their water entitlement to the Murray Darling Basin Authority or Water for Rivers can also do so under the exemption criteria so I urge them to contact NVIRP to determine their eligibility,” Mr Kent said.

The recent meetings conducted by NVIRP’s Modernisation Executive Manager David Kent and his staff were held in Cohuna, Kerang, Swan Hill, Boort, Pyramid Hill, Cobram, Numurkah, Shepparton, Tatura, Kyabram, Rochester and Lockington.

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