



Media Release

Date: Thursday 13 May 2010

Federal environmental approvals through, construction works commence

The Chief Executive of the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project Murray Smith said today he welcomed the environmental approval for the project from Federal Environment Protection Minister Peter Garrett.

“After an extensive public consultation process it is pleasing that the Minister has endorsed our proposed actions under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act* and has approved our environmental steps as we modernise the irrigation system in northern Victoria,” Mr Smith said.

“In our submission to Minister Garrett we looked at the possible environmental impacts on matters of national significance and ways to protect them even though we are working in a significantly changed and impacted network of irrigation channels.

“Along with the care we are taking as we upgrade the system, this irrigation modernisation project is projected to return up to 175 gigalitres (175 billion litres) on an annual long term average to rivers and wetlands including the Murray River and Ramsar Wetlands, delivering the water at the right times for the best environmental outcomes.

“We are confident that the operation of the fully-modernised system, with approved Environmental Watering Plans in place, will not result in significant impacts on wetlands, threatened species and listed migratory species of national environmental significance.

“Environmental watering plans are being developed for sites of high environmental value to make sure they are not adversely affected by the project. This is a major environmental milestone for us and our 2010 Winter Works will commence next week as planned throughout the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District.

“Our work teams are being mobilized right now to commence our winter works which take place during the irrigation shut down period starting from next Monday through to mid August,” Mr Smith said.

Major regulator gates and structures will be installed in the backbone channels of the system and three local companies have been awarded the contracts. J & C Reid Earthmoving Pty Ltd will

undertake the installations in the Pyramid-Hill-Boort and Torrumbarry irrigation areas, Kyabram Excavations Pty works will be in both Central Goulburn and Murray Valley irrigation areas and Ward Bros Earthmoving (Aust) Pty Ltd will install the regulator structures in the Rochester Irrigation Area.

Over 44 kilometres of channel lining will be installed over the next three months in our efforts to capture water savings from water currently lost in the delivery of irrigation water and in most instances the seven companies* contracted are local companies employing regional work teams throughout the Murray Valley, Rochester and Central Goulburn irrigation areas.

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* Seven companies are Armstrong Constructions (Vic) Pty Ltd (Melbourne), Comdain Asset Management Pty Ltd (Shepparton), Ertech Pty Ltd (Melbourne), K & S Marsh Excavations Pty Ltd (Strathallan), Kyabram Excavations Pty Ltd (Kyabram), Northern Constructions Group Pty Ltd (Echuca), and Pearse Earthmoving Pty Ltd (Shepparton).

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