



# Media Release

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## **NVIRP: on target and all about the people**

The Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project is on target with significant investment in the backbone channel network and increasing numbers of irrigators connecting directly to the modernised backbone.

NVIRP CEO Murray Smith said the program was on target to secure 225 gigalitres of water savings both on time and within budget.

“However, the project is not just about new infrastructure and water savings; it’s about people,” Mr Smith said.

“It’s about irrigators who want to remain connected to the system and farm into the future. It’s also about families and succession planning, sons and daughters who want to take on the family farm. It’s about communities and ongoing regional sustainability.

“NVIRP is not about shutting down 50 per cent of the irrigation area; it’s about regional sustainability.

“Yes, only 50 per cent of the channel network has been identified as backbone but 92 per cent of all current service points are within three kilometres of a backbone channel and therefore meet NVIRP criteria to be connected to the modernised backbone channel more efficiently .

“It’s easy to understand that less infrastructure will not only save water but will be less expensive to operate providing a secure future for those that want to stay in the irrigation industry.

“Irrigators are choosing to take part in the project and those who do are very happy with the results.

“Already over 600 ML/d of delivery shares have been transferred to the backbone and landowners are now considering transferring another 1 300 ML/d. This means NVIRP is well on the way to meeting the Stage 1 target of 2 258 ML/d with almost three years of the program to go. People are embracing the program and we are working closely with them to facilitate the massive change occurring in the irrigation industry.

“The biggest issue is getting to all landowners who want to see us. With in excess of 30 designers it will still take nearly three years to get to everyone.”

In October, NVIRP plans to release a detailed consultation strategy so that every landowner will know when their channel will be assessed by a farm designer. A series of community meetings will also be held across the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District to ensure all landowners have the opportunity to raise any concerns.

“We ask irrigators to be patient and understand the magnitude of the program we are delivering. Rest assured we are committed to seeing every irrigator in the Stage 1 area of the program albeit we need to secure Stage 2 funding to ensure the vision for the irrigation network across northern Victoria can be fully delivered,” Mr Smith said

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