

Media Release

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\$2 Billion buys northern Victoria an irrigation system to be envied

Members of the Country Press Association were told at their annual conference today that the \$2 Billion modernisation of the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID) would enhance and ensure the growth of regional business opportunities in the Goulburn Murray region well into the future.

Chairman of the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP), Richard Guy speaking at the conference, said the irrigation modernisation would not only underpin the productivity and water security of the region it was also the catalyst for boosting regional economic growth.

“System efficiency gains will produce savings, 80 per cent of which will stay in the region and we cannot afford to delay because water lost to the system is happening at a time when northern Victorian irrigators are facing unprecedented uncertainty, and low water availability. So losses must be minimised and modernising the system will achieve this,” Mr Guy said.

“However, Stage 1 of the modernisation would not be possible without the contributions from the Victorian Government (\$600 Million), Melbourne Water (\$300 Million), Goulburn-Murray Water (\$100 Million) and discussions are in progress with the Commonwealth Government for a further \$1 Billion for Stage 2.

From the savings, irrigators will receive more water through extra entitlements and the rivers and streams and wetlands will gain as well. Twenty percent of the savings will go to Melbourne via the Sugarloaf Pipeline.

“Already the capital works undertaken this year installed over 1000 channel regulators. This work was carried out by more than 425 people, 80 per cent of these contractors from the local area, and we have designs to install the same number of gates in 2009 and 2010.

“This is the largest ever irrigation infrastructure project in Australia being undertaken on an operating system, and we know it will transform the whole region,” Mr Guy added.

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