

Media Release

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Modern irrigation system on the way

The completion last week of the first component of in-channel regulator gates marks an important milestone for Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) according to CEO Murray Smith.

“The size and complexity of the initial phase of Irrigation Renewal, along with the geographical spread of its delivery channels has presented unique challenges for Goulburn-Murray Water’s FutureFlow Alliance partners,” Mr Smith said.

“An additional challenge was to deliver and upgrade the irrigation structures on an operational system with limited disruption to customers.

“The 1000 new regulator gates located in structures on the main channel, or backbone have been installed over the winter shut-down irrigation period (May-August). This delivery system will deliver water more efficiently than at present – reducing the system operating requirements and improving service to Goulburn-Murray Water’s (G-MW) customers.

“These works were completed by G-MW’s FutureFlow to the highest standard and in record time,” Mr Smith said.

“Installed for the 2008-09 irrigation season these gates fitted with computerised technology will be finetuned over the coming months. The benefits will be the precise measurement of water movement through the system – all we need is a water allocation.

“The completion of these works should give confidence across to the region about the capability of the team with the task of delivering Irrigation Renewal,” Mr Smith said.

NVIRP is now planning the start of the second year of works, much of which will be activated during the off-peak irrigation season commencing May 2009. This will include more channel gate preparation, measurement and design for installing more gates in winter 2009 as well as preparation for lining other channels where the greatest seepage and leakage areas are identified.

“This vital and massive investment of modernising the ageing irrigation channel infrastructure is the largest ever investment of its kind. The benefits will reach far beyond irrigation and will underpin the region’s future prosperity,” Mr Smith said.

Mr Smith added a note of thanks to all those involved in this successful endeavour. This has been the largest body of irrigation works ever carried out in a winter construction period in the G-MW region.

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PROJECT FACTS follow:-

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- **The Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project or NVIRP is both the Project and the name of the organisation tasked with renewing and modernising the irrigation system in northern Victoria.**
- The \$2 billion investment in the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) is jointly funded through \$600 million from the Victorian Government, \$300 million from Melbourne Water, \$100 million from Goulburn-Murray Water, along with an additional \$1 billion from the Commonwealth Government.
- The initial phase of works completed so far represents around 7 per cent in Stage 1 of the total modernisation of the Goulburn Murray irrigation area.
- Goulburn-Murray Water's FutureFlow Alliance partners for the project are: Transfield Services, Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) and Comdain.
- Local contractors were involved in all areas of the work.
- There were two sites, Waranga Basin Minor off-take, Central Goulburn No 6 channel that required significantly larger gates and these were imported from the USA.
- Rubicon Systems Australia manufactured the 1000 automated Flume Gates™ at their factory in Shepparton.
- These 1000 automated gates were installed in channels in these regions:
 - Central Goulburn (762 gates)
 - Murray Valley (134 gates)
 - Rochester (22 gates)
 - Torrumbarry (61 gates)
 - Pyramid (21 gates)
- 5.3 kilometres of channels have been plastic lined to reduce seepage and leakage losses in the Central Goulburn channel and where necessary adjoining fencing has been installed for safety reasons.
- The Murray Valley and Torrumbarry Communications Systems have been upgraded to link with the new technology.
- Over 500 sites have now been measured by G-MW to enable gate design to progress for the 2009 winter works program.
- Installation of over 1000 customer service metres along the newly defined backbone will commence in October 2008 with completion by May 2009. Extensive customer consultation is planned as part of this process.

Media Contact:

For interviews or photographs contact

Merrill Boyd

Executive Director Communications

Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP)

Tel: 0438 678 323

merrill.boyd@nvirp.com.au