

# Media Release

Date: Friday 31 July 2009

## Developing criteria for the 4% Water Trading Cap Exemptions

The Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) will seek written submissions from interested parties to assist them to develop the criteria to apply to the 4% exemption rule throughout the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District.

The Victorian Government recently announced exemptions to the 4% annual limit on permanent water trade out of irrigation areas. This is to coordinate the Commonwealth's *Water for the Future* buyback program along with the \$2 billion investment by NVIRP to modernise the irrigation system in the north of the state.

As a result, NVIRP has worked with Goulburn-Murray Water (G-MW) and DSE to agree some initial criteria exempting Commonwealth water purchases from the 4% limit in the current ballot process. These initial criteria were based on areas that are not the focus of NVIRP's modernisation program, or on previous work undertaken through the Reconfiguration Program and were supplemented by a distance from the Backbone channel criterion.

Although criteria for the 4% exemption was established this did not impact on the recent G-MW ballot process. All applications received were included and are currently being processed in ballot order. A working group has recently been established to develop the criteria to apply to the 2009/10 exemptions. Representatives from NVIRP, G-MW, DSE, DPI and both the North Central and Goulburn Broken CMAs are members of this working group.

'It is important that we explore all avenues when setting the criteria and we want to have the irrigation community involved in its development. We are planning to organise various forums and are seeking public written submissions once the draft criteria has been developed,' Murray Smith CEO NVIRP said.

"Our objective is to have the draft criteria released by mid-August and allow a window of opportunity for written submissions to be provided," Mr Smith said.

The draft criteria will be released publicly through the media and will be available on both the NVIRP and G-MW web sites. In addition, community members can telephone 1300 163 006 and register their interest. A 'submission package' will be posted to them as soon as it is available.

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