



# Media Release

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## Green light for NVIRP's environmental plans

NVIRP today welcomed State Government approval of its environmental management processes which will help improve the health of rivers, wetlands and soils across northern Victoria.

CEO Murray Smith said NVIRP's report to the Planning Minister, Justin Madden, addressed the project's potential environmental impacts and proposed management plans, including the protection of 10 high-value wetlands and up to 16 streams.

"We included environmental watering plans for wetlands and streams of high environmental significance and their associated watering regimes to address any local impacts relating to our modernisation works.

"Our investigations found that in many cases, reduced channel outfalls due to modernising the system would lead to a watering regime for wetlands and streams that more closely resembles the natural wetting and drying patterns.

"These wetlands and streams are being further investigated, and environmental water will be provided to offset reduced outfalls and assist in protecting their ecological values," Mr Smith said.

NVIRP's Environmental Watering Plans will allow deliberate, precise provision of water to wetlands and streams to achieve planned environmental outcomes, rather than relying on incidental spillages from an inefficient irrigation system.

"We know that leakage and seepage from channels and even some poor irrigation practices associated with the current system have led to increased soil salinisation and waterlogging, as well as adverse impacts from the irrigation delivery system itself.

"Modernisation will save 175 gigalitres each year on average to meet the environmental needs of northern Victoria.

This will have a very positive benefit for the health of the region's wetlands, rivers and streams and this will ultimately flow on to benefit the Murray River", Mr Smith added.

NVIRP is also working closely with the Department of Sustainability and Environment and local Catchment Management Authorities to address any potential environmental concerns that may arise during the irrigation modernisation construction activities in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District.

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**Media Contact:**

Merrill Boyd  
Executive Manager Communications  
Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project  
T: 0438 678 323  
E: merrill.boyd@nvirp.com.au