

Media Release

Date: Wednesday 18 March 2009

Farm Irrigation Designers Out in Force as \$2 billion investment kicks up a gear

Even with the dry conditions in the north of the state, work has stepped up a notch for Victoria's farm irrigation designers.

Discussions are taking place in farmhouses throughout the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District with landowners assessing the best way to irrigate their farm for optimum returns particularly during low allocation seasons. This is the work of the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project's (NVIRP) irrigation upgrade.

Fourteen Victorian farm design companies along with several interstate companies have answered the call to assist northern Victorian irrigators grasp the opportunities being offered through Australia's largest ever irrigation renewal project.

"Over forty designers will share with farmers through one-on-one discussions the techniques that will underpin their long term viability, NVIRP CEO Murray Smith said.

"Once the \$2 billion investment in the region is completed, these irrigators will have a responsive delivery system suited to modern agricultural needs, Innovation is a key driver of our project, and irrigation design plays a vital role in bringing on-farm innovation to life" Mr Smith said.

Some of the innovations that farmers can expect to see as part of the investment include:

- Alternative supply and delivery options, including a change of delivery point or closing down redundant channel configurations so that the water is directed onto the farm paddocks the quickest and most convenient way.
- New irrigation technology, such as soil moisture monitoring options or the use of centre pivot spray irrigation for pasture or crops. Even flood irrigators are being encouraged to examine opportunities to optimise the latest flood irrigation technologies.
- Sub surface drip irrigation, an irrigation method was once only used on horticultural crops but is gaining more converts wanting to incorporate the technology for growing lucerne.
- Pressurized pumps to lift water directly from internal and external channels onto crops and pastures and matching plant requirements, enables irrigators to be more responsive and make the most of available water in all seasons.

"NVIRP has engaged these farm irrigation design companies because they have the respect of the farming community," Mr Smith said.

"They are assisting landowners to consider and plan their farm's future though this once-in-a-lifetime irrigation upgrade," he said.

-end-

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