

Media Release

Date: Friday 14 August 2009

NVIRP installs another 1000 regulator gates

The installation of the 1000th irrigation regulator gate today near Tatura is a milestone for the irrigation renewal project being undertaken in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID).

CEO of the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) Murray Smith described the occasion as very satisfying for all the contractors involved in the 2009 winter works program.

“Completing the installation of this 1000th gate on the backbone channel during this winter irrigation shut down period is another great milestone for this irrigation renewal project now in its second year.

“The size, complexity and the geographical spread of the irrigation renewal through five irrigation districts in the north of the state has seen this computer based technology installed in record time. Our project had to cope with abnormally wet but welcome rain in May just as we planned to start works,” Mr Smith said.

“The works were carried out over 688 sites and it has been a major logistical challenge for our Managing Contractor Transfield Services Australia and their work package contractors to consult with all landowners who have been in some way inconvenienced by this major civil construction work.

“The cooperation we have received from landowners has been greatly appreciated and highlights that the irrigation upgrade is welcomed by our district irrigators.

“We have also completed almost 15 kilometres of channel lining in the Central Goulburn region.

“During the peak period over 100 crews were working on site with 500 workers engaged. These were mostly contractors and staff from local districts creating a massive stimulus of employment and demand for local services in all the regional towns,” Mr Smith said.

“This work has been achieved in less than ten weeks while the system was shut down and it is testament that NVIRP is delivering the objectives of Stage 1 of the \$2 billion irrigation renewal project.

“The regulator gates which are made in Shepparton by Rubicon Systems are currently being calibrated and tested in preparation for the start of the 2009/10 irrigation season.

“Continued work will be undertaken by NVIRP installing meters throughout the next five months onto farm properties at a rate of 400 a month. So whilst there may be a couple of weeks well earned break for sub-contractors, significant construction activities will continue,” he added.

PROJECT FACTS follow:-

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The Northern Victoria 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 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 the works completed so far represents two thirds of the installation of the regulator gates in the backbone channels. Next year 2010 approximately another 800 regulator gates will be installed to complete the major regulator structures under Stage 1.

1047 total regulator gates installed in 2009 winter shut down period (May- August).

The 1047 automated gates were installed in channels in these regions:

Central Goulburn (155)
Murray Valley (89)
Rochester (378)
Torrumbarry (120)
Pyramid-Boort (305)

14.7 kilometres of channel have been lined with High Density Polyethylene – HDPE

Local contractors were involved in all areas of the work with 1100 workers inducted into OH&S.

On the Western Waranga Channel some regulator structures include 7-9 gate structures ranging in size from 2-3 meters tall. Each of the 3 metre structures cost around \$60,000 each.

Estimated value of the 2009 winter works (May-August) is \$60 million.

Project spend for the calendar year of 2009 will be in the vicinity of \$150 million.

Stage 1 and Stage 2 of this \$2 billion project is to upgrade an aging irrigation system and to save water currently lost in the delivery of this water. Eighty per cent of the savings will stay in the north of the state to be shared with irrigators and to enhance environmental flows for rivers, streams and wetlands and less than 20 per cent of the savings will be available for Melbourne.

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