

Media Release

Date: Thursday 9 April 2009

Relationship agreement signed

Australia's largest rural water corporation and a major project manager have agreed on the cooperative working principles by which the irrigation renewal project in northern Victoria will be undertaken.

The Chairman of the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) Richard Guy and Goulburn-Murray Water (G-MW) Chairman Stephen Mills signed the agreement establishing the governance framework and cooperative principles for the duration of the modernisation works. The agreement highlights the allocation of responsibilities in respect of all project works undertaken during the largest irrigation infrastructure renewal project ever in Australia's history.

NVIRP's Chairman Richard Guy said "upgrading and renewing the irrigation infrastructure on an operational system is a challenge that G-MW and NVIRP have been undertaking since last year when the Early Works program was commenced and we then agreed on twelve basic operating principles.

"Having this formal commitment signed by both organisations enables us to continue with the planning, design and delivery of this major infrastructure project," Mr Guy said.

Initially the two organisations developed the operational requirements for the project works including access to the irrigation network taking into account the need to deliver the project while working with local communities and irrigators to achieve the best solutions individually and for their regions.

"NVIRP is currently working with our G-MW customers and its own Modernisation Consultation Committees to consolidate the best irrigation infrastructure upgrade delivery arrangements to secure the future of irrigation in this region and to strengthen the economic wellbeing of these communities and our whole region," G-MW Chairman Mr Mills said.

The Victorian Government's contribution has underpinned the \$2 billion irrigation modernisation project along with substantial contributions from Melbourne Water and its customers G-MW and its customers and the Commonwealth.

From the water saved by the infrastructure upgrade, 80 per cent of the water will stay in northern Victoria to be shared by irrigators and for use as environmental flows and the remaining 20 per cent will be available for Melbourne via the Sugarloaf Pipeline.

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At the relationship agreement signing between NVIRP and G-MW are, left to right (front) G-MW Chairman Stephen Mills, Water Minister Tim Holding, NVIRP Chairman Richard Guy, (standing) G-MW Managing Director David Stewart with NVIRP Director Barry Steggall.

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