

Media Release

Date: Wednesday 19 August 2009

Swan Hill modernisation planning underway

An implementation strategy to modernise the Swan Hill region's irrigation infrastructure will be finalised by the year's end.

Strategy objectives include:

- removal of the number nine channel running through the Swan Hill township
- decommissioning of the Little Murray weir
- modernisation of the Tyntynder Flats channel system (number 10).

Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) have set-up a project reference group (PRG) and engaged URS Australia to independently prepare strategy options.

NVIRP CEO Murray Smith said the strategy would provide the community with long-awaited answers on the future of the town's irrigation infrastructure.

"The strategy objectives complement NVIRP's goal to modernise the region's irrigation system which will in-turn help achieve water savings," Mr Smith said.

"We will work closely with Goulburn-Murray Water and DSE to ensure that all stakeholders complement the Mid-Murray Storage Project wherever possible.

"A vital part of this project is to engage the diverse range of stakeholders affected by the potential works through the project reference group.

"All feasible options will be investigated and the environmental, economic and social impacts of those options weighed up.

"The strategy will form part of an overall Swan Hill Modernisation Project plan to create a productive, efficient and modern farming region that is able to compete on a global stage.

"Investigations will also include a coordinated program of farm irrigation assessments and surveys of customers on the number nine and 10 channel systems."

URS will create a short-list of options for the next PRG meeting expected to be held in mid-September. The PRG's inaugural meeting and the project's inception meeting were held on 17 July, 2009.

The PRG consists of representatives from the irrigation community, Swan Hill Rural City Council, Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Department of Primary Industries, Goulburn-Murray Water (G-MW), North Central Catchment Management Authority, Torrumbarry Reconfiguration and Asset Modernisation Strategy group and NVIRP.

-end-

Media Contact:

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