

Media Release

Date: Thursday 10 September 2009

Zero work place injuries

Planning, prevention and training are the key to NVIRP's safe work environment with more than 200,000 hours of labour carried out this winter and no time lost due to injuries.

The modernisation works, delivered by NVIRP's managing contractor Transfield Services, included installation of 1021 regulator gates and 15km of plastic lining.

Garry Seaborne Executive Manager Capital Works said about 450 staff, often working in muddy conditions, used excavators, concrete pumps, tip trucks, cranes and a variety of hand tools to carry out the works.

"This sort of work is considered to be high risk for occupational health and safety hazards," Mr Seaborne said.

"But we have stringent processes in place to ensure our guys are prepared and sites as well as workers are kept safe."

All site staff take part in an induction session, which mainly focuses on occupational health and safety. Contractors also have to prove their training meets a high standard.

On top of this, every day before works begin, the supervisor assesses the site and any dangers are identified such as power lines, underground services and wet and slippery conditions. The site supervisor and the workers then devise a plan together to manage these.

"There have been 30 'close calls' where an accident almost happens but has been avoided," Mr Seaborne said.

"When this happens, a report is sent up through the chain of command and a preventative strategy is put in place to remove the risk and inform the other crews working on the project so we learn from each other what risks are out there and how to remove them from the workplace.

"Having zero hours lost to work place injuries is a tremendous achievement; it means we are working not only very safely but also efficiently.

"However, this is also our goal and we will continue to strive to meet this target."

Works still continuing include installation of handrails and walkways on gates. NVIRP is also working with Goulburn-Murray Water to refill the system and wet and dry commission the gates.

During the next eight months contractors working through the five irrigation districts will install another 2000 electronic meters on-farm before May 2010.

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