

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for the Coordination of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning – COVID-19
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Water



Thursday, 25 June 2020

CENTRAL GIPPSLAND IRRIGATION FUNDING

The Victorian Government is investigating ways to ensure agriculture in central Gippsland has a strong and resilient future.

Minister for Water Lisa Neville today announced \$500,000 for a study to scope potential development of further irrigation in the region.

The feasibility study will examine potential infrastructure options for expanding irrigation development in Central Gippsland - based on customer demand and willingness to invest, and water availability.

The study builds on pre-feasibility work undertaken by Southern Rural Water in 2018 to identify potential development opportunities in the Latrobe, Thomson, Macalister and Avon catchments.

Once complete, the study will assist informed decision making for any future strategic investment in rural water infrastructure.

Key stakeholders will help identify preferred infrastructure options based on demand and water availability.

Southern Rural Water will conduct the study and Gippsland communities will have an opportunity to provide their feedback and expertise in helping shape the work.

The work will feed into the Government's Sustainable Water Strategy to be conducted over the next twelve months in Central Victoria including Gippsland – which is a regular examination of the water resource and its management in a given region.

The study aligns with the objectives in *Water for Victoria*, the Government's water plan, to support regional development, invest in infrastructure and help irrigation districts adapt to a drier climate.

The farm gate value of Gippsland's food is \$1.5 billion a year with the industry generating more than 16,000 jobs.

Quote attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"We have modernised irrigation systems and expanded the water grid in regions across the State and this work will help give us a sound basis for any further decisions."

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes

"We know the Gippsland region has faced several tough years with drought and bushfire – that's why it's vital to support these farmers by looking at how to adapt to a drying climate."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Region Harriet Shing

"Gippsland farmers have been advocating strongly for their region and I'm pleased we can support them in investigating ways to potentially further boost their output."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Jane Garrett

"This is about protecting our rural communities against the harsh effects of climate change."

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