

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



Friday, 28 August 2020

CONSULTATION ON EFFICIENCY PROJECTS

The Victorian Government is meeting its legal obligations under the Murray Darling Basin Plan with new irrigation upgrade projects in the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID) that will have positive impacts for communities and the region - with consultation now underway.

The consultation will ensure the projects do not have any negative socio-economic impacts and will deliver positive outcomes for regional communities through upgraded water delivery systems and regional investment.

The large-scale infrastructure projects are designed to save 16 gigalitres of water through reducing system losses – and fulfil Victoria's obligation for water recovery without any buybacks, transfer of entitlements to the Commonwealth or removal of water from consumptive use.

Under the Basin Plan, the States are required to put forward 62 gigalitres of water saving projects in order to receive credit for the 650 gigalitres of environmental offset projects in the Plan.

The projects ensure there will be no water taken from Victorian irrigators – without these projects there is a risk of further buybacks in the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District.

The 16 gigalitres savings will be achieved through infrastructure modernisation – including in backbone irrigation channels and the Shepparton East irrigation system - saving water otherwise lost to system leaks and evaporation.

Goulburn-Murray Water has already been working with its customers to develop the new proposals – known as the GMW Water Efficiency Project.

The projects are separate to, and in addition to, the \$2 billion Connections Project scheduled to finish works in October 2020 – and is on track to meet its water savings target of 425 gigalitres.

The \$177.5 million Project is funded by the Commonwealth through the Murray Darling Basin Plan and will support nearly 1000 GMID irrigators with upgraded and more efficient infrastructure – while creating 1000 local jobs in construction and project delivery.

Ensuring the community has the opportunity to provide feedback on the socio-economic outcomes of any additional water recovery projects is a key component that Victoria fought for when Basin Ministers agreed to the strong socio-economic tests for any water efficiency projects.

Victorians can now have their say on the project including expected socio-economic outcomes - with consultation open until 11 September at: engage.vic.gov.au/gmw-water-efficiency-project.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"I fought hard to ensure the community would have a say on these projects and encourage feedback on these proposals to help achieve the best outcome for the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District."

"The Victorian Government is showing once again that we can meet our obligations under the Basin Plan and benefit the environment without buybacks, without taking water from farmers."

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