

NORTHERN MIDLANDS IRRIGATION SCHEME ANOTHER STEP CLOSER

Up to 25,500 megalitres of high-surety irrigation water is set to flow to Northern Midlands farmers after the Tasmanian Government today confirmed approval of the business case for the \$146.88 million project.

This vital milestone will enable Tasmanian Irrigation to progress detailed design, referrals and approvals in a bid to commence construction in approximately September 2022, with first water forecast to flow in October 2024.

Tasmanian Irrigation Chief Executive Officer Andrew Kneebone said the Company had redesigned the project after irrigator demand increased from 13,000 ML to 25,500 ML during the water sales process.

“This is a fantastic problem to encounter,” Mr Kneebone said. “Having to effectively double the capacity of the scheme to meet landowner demand once again demonstrates the high value that farmers place on reliable irrigation water. Tasmanian Irrigation is delighted to hear that farmers in this region south of Cressy, including Macquarie, Barton, Isis, Conara, Campbell Town and Ross, are finalising plans to invest in additional pivots, expand the area planted to high-value crops, diversify into new enterprises and employ more workers.”

The Northern Midlands Irrigation Scheme design incorporates three pump stations and 157.3km of pipeline to deliver water via gravity feed out of the Poatina Tailrace and a short offtake channel to a buffer dam. The 25,500 ML of summer irrigation water is available at a peak flow rate of 170 ML/day.

The project is estimated to provide up to 90 full-time jobs during construction and up to 222 direct and indirect full-time employment positions once fully operational. The private on-farm investment undertaken by farmers is estimated at about \$81.98 million, including the cost of water entitlements.

Mr Kneebone said the scheme had the potential to deliver a similar volume of winter supply should water become available from Hydro Tasmania for winter use.

“Tasmanian Irrigation sincerely thanks the Tasmanian Government for approving the business case for this important Tranche Three project, as well as providing \$40.51 million, and the Australian Government for its \$69.65 million contribution.

“This public / private funding model is delivering real on-ground benefits to Tasmanian farmers and the State’s economy, and Tasmanian Irrigation looks forward to continuing to work with the State and Federal Governments, as well as farmers, to deliver infrastructure designed to last 100 years and deliver water at an average annual reliability of greater than 95 per cent.”

Tasmanian Irrigation is continuing to advance the Tranche Three irrigation projects, including Don, Tamar and the Sassafras Wesley Vale Augmentation, as well as progress planning on an additional five projects – the South East Integration Project, Southern Midlands, Gretna, Detention and Flowerdale.