

**CUSTOMER WEBINAR
WATER EFFICIENCY PROJECT
FRIDAY 14 AUGUST 2020
11AM**

Background

The Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) Water Efficiency Project is a proposal to recover water for the environment by investing in efficiency measures to reduce water losses from the water delivery infrastructure, through which GMW delivers water to its 20,000 customers. The proposed works will provide 15.9 gigalitres (GL) of water savings at a total cost of \$177.5 million.

The scope of the Water Efficiency Project includes treating channels and meters throughout all six Goulburn Murray Irrigation Districts (GMID) areas. The initial scope of works has been identified using the 'efficiency optimisation approach' which was developed under the Connections Project's Reset Delivery Plan. This approach seeks to determine the best fit-for-purpose solution for the existing assets.

Delivery of this project is consistent with the Victorian Government's commitment at the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council, which agreed to a package of environmental works and measures.

The resulting agreement ensures no further water can be taken from irrigators and farming communities as part of Victoria's contribution to the 62 GL of water to be recovered. These water efficiency projects will not take water from the consumptive pool instead they will be removed from the loss provision. Water savings under the proposed Water Efficiency Project will contribute to the 62 GL target.

GMW is currently engaging with its customers and stakeholders to seek feedback on the above proposal with two customer webinars held on 14 August and 17 August 2020.

Below is a summary of the customer webinar held on 14 August 2020.

GMW representatives

- Managing Director: Charmaine Quick
- Project Director, Connections Project: Frank Fisseler
- General Manager, Strategy and Services Planning: Daniel Irwin
- ECI Executive Manager, Connections Project: Dan Arnold
- Engineering and Interface Manager, Connections Project: Peter Egglestone
- Land Liaison Officer, Connections Project: Guy Duncan

A presentation was given at the start of the webinar covering the following detail:

- Victorian position
- Proposal
- Context with the Connections Project
- Indicative works
- Project delivery
- Benefits
- Socio-economic assessment
- Feedback and discussion

A copy of the presentation can be found on the ['Your Say'](#) page of the GMW website.

After the presentation, there was a general discussion around the following questions and feedback:

Is the environment assessed under the socio-economic criteria?

Yes. In December 2018, the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council agreed to implement socio-economic criteria for additional water recovery under the Basin Plan. Under this criteria environmental outcomes are assessed.

The Connections Project was established on very detailed environmental conditions and assessments are conducted for each package of works to be undertaken.

It is proposed that a similar framework will be used for this proposal.

Channels that have not been modernised under the Connections Project – will these now be part of the proposal being outlined today?

Under the proposal, these channels will be targeted – to modernise and rationalise channels and meters across the GMID. Previously, these channels did not fit the Connections Project Reset criteria which focused on value for money requirements.

This proposal has a significantly higher value for money proposition that would see the majority of these channels treated.

There is strict criteria around market impact and if this cannot be met then the proposal cannot proceed.

The Government sets the criteria for market impact. The key elements of the socio-economic assessment are:

- the validity of water savings
- potential impacts on water prices
- community and industry engagement
- the future viability of proponent businesses and irrigation districts
- socio-economic, environmental and cultural outcomes
- third-party impacts on irrigation districts, water market and regional communities
- integrated implementation opportunities
- improving drought and climate resilience

Water Minister Lisa Neville confirmed that without the project, there was a risk for further buybacks, in the GMID: "The projects do not have any negative socio-economic impacts and will actually deliver positive outcomes for regional communities, through upgraded water delivery systems and regional investment." Ms Neville said. (Stock and Land article, 1 August 2020)

Will outlets be retained on channels that use less than 10 ML?

There are a number of factors that determine if an outlet will be retained:

- Where an outlet is on a channel that is decommissioned, that outlet must be treated and rationalisation is preferred for low use outlets.
- Where an outlet is on a retained channel and has low use, it will not be upgraded unless the landowner has development plans for the area serviced by the outlet.
- Wherever possible (and in consultation with the landowner/s), low use outlets on retained channels are rationalised.

Does the proposal outline recover of water from the consumptive pool?

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These water efficiency projects will not take water from the consumptive pool instead they will be removed from the loss provision.

Water savings under the proposed water efficiency project will contribute to the 62 GL target.