

31 July, 2024

## Projects over buybacks

Following the release of the *Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Act 2023* in December 2023 Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI) has been working hard to ensure that our customers and our region achieve the most benefit possible under the new legislation.

Since the commencement of the Restoring our Rivers Act, we have been working with fellow irrigation infrastructure operators (IIOs) Murray Irrigation (MIL) and Coleambally Irrigation Cooperative Limited (CICL) to discuss options to minimise impacts of further water recovery in our regions with the Commonwealth and NSW Government.

MI, MIL and CICL have applied for funding under the Resilient Rivers Program for a feasibility study to explore what is required to bolster the efficiency and resilience of our irrigation networks amid this environment of water recovery and find a pathway forward that will minimise resultant harm on irrigators and communities. This is the first step in our joint bid to secure government funding to offset the worst effects of water recovery.

Completing this feasibility does not involve the transfer of any water entitlements to government.

If the feasibility application is successful, external consultants will be engaged to work with MI, MIL and CICL to provide the government with an evidence base that builds the case for meaningful local investment to support the long-term resilience of each of the IIOs. The study will further seek to identify the service cost impacts of further water recovery in the southern Basin on MI shareholders.

Our goal ever since the announcement of water buybacks has been to complete as many infrastructure projects as possible to offset the ramifications.

We have recently been successful in being allocated \$62.2 million in funding for the Urban Channel Pipeline Project under the Resilient Rivers Water Infrastructure Program, to replace inefficient aging channels around Griffith and Leeton with 47.5 kilometres of new pipeline.

We have submitted funding applications for further projects to make sure that our area can make the most out of the available water in the future including:

- Projects to enable the construction of further surge reservoirs for the Murrumbidgee River. These reservoirs would enable all river users to be even more flexible, efficient and responsive to irrigators' and town water needs,
- Feasibility reviews looking for additional seepage and evaporation improvement projects, and
- Supporting the Griffith Golf Club to replace their current inefficient watering system.

We have also been collaborating with Griffith City Council and Leeton Council about further opportunities for projects to offset the worst effects of water recovery.

The NSW Government has announced on-farm water savings projects are eligible for funding under the Resilient Rivers Water Infrastructure Program. The application and assessment process are the same as for the larger infrastructure programs and can be quite complex. If you are looking for more information contact [winsw.programs@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:winsw.programs@dpie.nsw.gov.au) .