



Media Release

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Irrigators support bid to own Theodore irrigation channels

Around 40 water users attended a meeting in Theodore this week in an overwhelming show of support for the proposal to transfer SunWater's irrigation channel scheme to locals.

Chair of the interim board, established in June last year to investigate options for managing the channel scheme locally, Ms Liz Alexander, said water users saw ownership of the channel scheme as the best way to secure the long-term future of irrigation in Theodore.

"Irrigators recognise that Theodore is an 80-year-old scheme which urgently needs investment and that local ownership is the only way to ensure that assets are modernised and operate efficiently," Ms Alexander said.

"The Board were really pleased to receive the support of almost every irrigator on the channel and the wider support of the community and Council," she said.

Over the past nine months the 6-member interim board has prepared a business case for government which plans to operate without government subsidy within five years. A summary of the Business Proposal was posted to all scheme customers and was made available on the web at <http://www.lmairrigation.com.au/theodore/news>. The Business Proposal, which will be compared with the long-term cost to government of owning the schemes, will be finalised in the coming weeks.

"We are grateful for the trust water users have placed in us and this plan," she said. "Some customers are uncertain about what the future holds, but all have expressed confidence in local management."

Theodore is one of eight SunWater channel schemes being considered for local management, under a process set up by the Newman government to provide irrigators with greater control over factors that impact on their livelihood. The other schemes are Bundaberg, Burdekin-Haughton, Emerald, Eton, Lower Mary, Mareeba-Dimbulah, and St George.

Leader of the independent project team established to manage the investigation process, irrigator and water commissioner, Ms Leith Bouilly, said Theodore had now joined St George and Eton's users in supporting their interim boards' bids for local management.

"It is encouraging to see local irrigators recognise the benefits of controlling their own destiny," Ms Bouilly said.

Ms Bouilly will submit a report to government, recommending whether local management should proceed, on 30 June 2014.

To hear what Theodore said about LMA go to <http://www.lmairrigation.com.au/theodore/news>

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