

A Message for Irrigators

Mareeba-Dimbulah Irrigation Scheme Decision

The Queensland Government has assessed the business case proposal for transitioning the Mareeba-Dimbulah channel irrigation scheme to local management arrangements (LMA) whereby local irrigators would own and operate it.

The assessment found too much uncertainty as to whether the transition to LMA would deliver the best outcome for the long-term sustainability of the scheme.

This means the most viable option for irrigators and customers at this time is for SunWater to continue the operation and maintenance of the scheme in partnership with the local community.

Assessment outcomes

This decision was based on an assessment of the business case against the principles governing the local management arrangements project, including customer support, value for money and financial viability.

It was unclear whether sufficient benefits to the taxpayer could be achieved from the transition to LMA. There was also uncertainty as to whether there was a strong level of support from customers which is essential for the scheme to succeed under LMA.

The LMA process has been valuable, enabling irrigators to gain a greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the efficient operation of the irrigation scheme.

SunWater is looking forward to continued engagement with its customers to take advantage of the significant knowledge and experience of the local irrigation customers and build on the knowledge generated through the process.

We thank everyone who has contributed to the LMA process and in particular acknowledge the efforts of the Mareeba-Dimbulah interim LMA board established to develop the options presented to government.

Next steps

While the decision concludes this review, the process has identified a range of options for improving the operation of the scheme and strengthened relationships to help deliver these improvements.

The Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation scheme remains a critical part of the economy of North Queensland, an essential contributor to the State's agricultural sector, and a key source of regional employment.

SunWater will continue to own and operate the scheme and will be engaging with customers to establish a new Mareeba-Dimbulah customer engagement process.

For more information call 13 QGOV (13 74 68), email LMA@dnrme.qld.gov.au or search 'LMA projects' on www.dnrme.qld.gov.au



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