



Media Release

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Interim board for Eton channel irrigation scheme announced

Water resources specialist Geoff Kavanagh will bring more than 20 years of irrigation experience to chair an interim board investigation into the options for the local ownership and management of Eton's channel irrigation scheme.

Geoff Kavanagh has been invited by the Minister of Energy and Water Supply, Mr Mark McArdle, to establish an interim board to undertake the necessary due diligence of SunWater's channel irrigation assets and develop a business proposal for local management of the scheme.

"This is the chance to convince the government that locals can own and operate the Eton channel scheme," Mr Kavanagh said. "I believe that this LMA process has huge potential to deliver better sustainable outcomes for scheme irrigators, the community that relies on the irrigation area and the state as a whole."

Mr Kavanagh, an irrigator on property based in Emerald, said local irrigators, John Muscat and Jo Prior, as well as irrigator/accountant Tony Bartolo and engineer/manager of the Pioneer Valley Water Board, John Palmer, will join him on the Eton Interim Board.

"The interim board has intimate knowledge of the channel scheme and the business skills we need to build a compelling case for a local legal entity to own and manage the assets and provide certainty for the future," Mr Kavanagh said.

Eton is one of eight SunWater channel schemes being considered for local management. The others are Bundaberg, Burdekin-Haughton, Emerald, Lower Mary, Mareeba-Dimbulah, St George and Theodore.

The boards are required to develop a business proposal for submission to government in November this year and will be supported by an independent project team led by irrigator and water commissioner, Ms Leith Bouilly.

"I am encouraged by the quality, experience and skills of the candidates who nominated to take on interim board positions across Queensland. It shows that local communities are keenly interested in finding a way to make local management work," Ms Bouilly said.

To be part of the process, contact the board on eton@lmairrigation.com.au or find out more information about local management for channel irrigation schemes at www.lmairrigation.com.au.

Media Contact: LMA Communication officer Maria Ceresa 0417 222 529.

Level 3, 41 George Street
BRISBANE, QLD 4000
E: info@lmairrigation.com.au
W: www.lmairrigation.com.au
P: (07) 3405 0356