



Media Release

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Irrigators support bid to own Eton irrigation channels

Around 100 irrigator customers attended meetings in Eton last week in a show of support for a 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, Mr Geoff Kavanagh said water users saw ownership of the channel scheme as the best way to secure certainty into the future.

"Water users who attended the two meetings could see the advantages of having control over the costs, being able to make decisions on matters that impact locals but most of all being able to plan for the future," Mr Kavanagh said.

Over the past nine months the 5-member interim board has prepared a business case for government which anticipates that 20 per cent savings can be achieved from running the scheme locally. A summary of the Business Proposal was posted to all scheme customers and was made available on the web at www.lmairrigation.com.au. The Business Proposal will be finalised in the coming weeks.

"The response from water users was fantastic and the complexity of the questions they posed demonstrated the commitment Eton irrigators have to the formation of a local entity that could own and operate the schemes in a similar way to irrigators in other states, such as New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania." he says.

"Water users have until Thursday (10 April) to get back to us with further feedback on our draft."

Eton 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, Lower Mary, Mareeba-Dimbulah, St George and Theodore.

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

"I am impressed by the work of these two boards and extremely encouraged by the response of customers to their proposals," Ms Bouilly said.

"Over the next few weeks, irrigators in the other schemes will have the chance to comment on their board's proposal and I urge all to take this opportunity for local management seriously and have their say."

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