

## Media Release

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### Irrigators submit proposal to own Lower Mary irrigation channels

The Lower Mary Interim Board has submitted its proposal to transfer ownership of the SunWater irrigation channel scheme to a local irrigator-owned company.

Chair of the interim board, established in June last year to investigate options for managing the channel scheme locally, Ms Sarah Lang said owners of the majority of irrigation water in the scheme support the further investigation of local management.

“The Interim Board really appreciates the time customers have taken to understand the issues involved in local management of the scheme,” Ms Lang said. “Irrigators have told us that they see the path to local management as a good option and would like to investigate the matter further,” she said.

At the time of submission of the LMA proposal, irrigators holding approximately 70 per cent of the total allocation for water in the scheme provided support for the further investigation of local management arrangements for the Lower Mary.

The move also received support of the Maryborough Canegrowers and the owner of the sugar mill, Maryborough Sugar Factory, which also has a substantial water entitlement in the scheme.

Lower Mary’s Business Proposal was submitted last week to the Independent Chair of the LMA project team, Leith Bouilly who will provide the proposal to government at the end of the month, followed by her recommendations on whether local management of SunWater’s eight schemes should proceed.

Of the eight SunWater channels schemes being considered for transfer to irrigator owned companies, Bundaberg, Burdekin, Eton, Emerald and St George, Theodore have secured majority support for their interim board’s bid, while a majority of water users in Mareeba also supported further investigation of the option.

“We are expecting Cabinet to consider our proposal toward the end of this year but irrespective of government’s decision, this investigation of local management has provided Lower Mary irrigators with information about the condition of the scheme and the costs associated with running it,” Ms Lang said.

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