

Murray Irrigation develops a pathway for the future

Murray Irrigation is developing a pathway to help deliver its priorities over the next five years.

Its Board of Directors held two days of positive meetings last week, including its regular Board meeting, as well as a strategic planning day.

Shareholder and independent directors travelled to Deniliquin for the meetings, and their activities included a dinner with Member for Farrer and Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley, and Nationals Senator for NSW Perin Davey.

The Board meeting included a presentation from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA), with an update on the Barmah Choke Feasibility Study, which received \$3 million Federal Government funding in August last year.

“The issues around the Barmah Choke and its limited capacity are presenting challenges for the MDBA, but it is also presenting opportunities for our region,” Mr Fawns said.

There were also discussions with the MDBA about optimisation and how it can work as part of Murray Irrigation’s Murray Reconnected Floodplains project, which would rehabilitate and connect thousands of kilometres of riparian systems and wetlands throughout the Murray floodplain landscape. Murray Irrigation wants it to be recognised as a Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) project.

“Murray Irrigation believes it is important that we engage effectively with the MDBA so we are part of building solutions, and that every step is taken to ensure we work towards more flexibility with the SDLAM process,” Mr Fawns said.

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28 February 2022



He added they were delighted to host Ms Ley and Senator Davey in a social atmosphere, and it was significant that this was the first time the Environment Minister has met with the full Murray Irrigation Board of Directors.

“There was constructive dialogue around the future of Murray Irrigation and our shareholders with these local politicians, who are our connection to key decision-makers in Canberra,” Mr Fawns said.

“We have some important projects in the pipeline for which we need Federal Government funding, and we are encouraged by the support we have received from Ms Ley and Senator Davey.”

At the strategic planning day there was discussion around the company’s Regional Recovery Prospectus and its priority projects that are designed to support the regional community, protect local food production, and deliver significant environmental outcomes.

They include the aforementioned Murray Reconnected Floodplains project, for which \$204 million is required. It is hoped funding can be obtained to start the project this year, with anticipated completion by 2024.

Mr Fawns said the strategic planning day focused on developing the company’s business strategy for the next five years, and work on these future objectives will be further discussed at a meeting in May.

He emphasised the company’s strategies and commitment to delivering for its shareholders with collaboration and transparency remain “front and centre”.

The Board defined its priorities around securing the company’s financial future and discussed its direction in corporate relations and how it can best advocate on behalf of shareholders.

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“A priority is also the recruitment of a new Chief Executive Officer to drive the next phase for Murray Irrigation, which will include a focus on shareholder engagement and doing everything in our power to deliver maximum volumes of water so our farmers can do what they do best –grow food and fibre by utilising the best gravity-fed irrigation system in the world.

“We worked on the ‘success profile’ to ensure we get the right person to lead our company, ensuring we have financial stability while delivering on the key objectives,” Mr Fawns said.



Photo caption: Pictured at the dinner were Senator Perin Davey (left) and Member for Farrer and Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley (right) with Murray Irrigation Directors (back, from left) Lachlan Marshall, Phillip Snowden, Ryan Gleeson; (front from left) Noel Baxter, Robert Burbury, Trisha Gorman and Chair Steve Fawns.