

Murray Irrigation welcomes new technical panel

Murray Irrigation has welcomed the new Modernising Murray River Systems technical panel, announced by federal Minister for Resources and Water Keith Pitt.

The panel, chaired by Dr John McVeigh, will look for water infrastructure opportunities that could improve delivery and reliability of water right across the southern Basin.

Murray Irrigation chair Steve Fawns said the panel was an acknowledgement of unique issues being faced in the southern Basin, including the NSW Murray, and the need to find solutions that can improve delivery of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Murray Irrigation has developed its Regional Recovery Prospectus 2021-2026, which includes a suite of projects that enable smarter use of existing parcels of water to achieve both environmental and agricultural outcomes.

“Discussions on our prospectus have taken place with Mr Pitt and numerous other political leaders, and we believe it can play a role in guiding infrastructure priorities for the new panel,” Mr Fawns said.

Mr Pitt has announced that Dr McVeigh will help establish an independent panel of experts from fields such as hydrology, engineering, infrastructure, and ecology. Together they will conduct a 12-month assessment of the future readiness of the southern Murray-Darling Basin water delivery infrastructure in the new financial year.

“The panel will assess whether existing infrastructure and the significant investments over the past decades are able to meet the needs of a modern, future-focused river system. The panel will develop a priority list of infrastructure opportunities to improve water security for all water users and mitigate the impact of future floods and droughts on Basin communities,” Mr Pitt said.

Under the Federal Government’s 2022 Murray-Darling Communities Investment Package, Murray Irrigation will receive \$35.1 million to improve existing water delivery infrastructure across its footprint.

Mr Fawns highlighted that Murray Irrigation has other “shovel ready” projects that can help improve water delivery efficiency, while providing environmental benefits and increasing the availability of water for food and fibre production.

“Our region can help ease the cost-of-living pressures which Australians are facing, by producing more food and fibre for domestic consumption. All we need is ongoing government commitment to working with us to ensure we maximise the benefits of our available water resource.

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Murray Irrigation

“We look forward to working with Dr McVeigh and his panel of experts as they scope future infrastructure needs in our region and doing what we can to work with governments and bring these projects to fruition,” Mr Fawns said.