MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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NEW CULTURAL PARK OPENS

The Griffith and surrounding community is invited to attend the opening of Three Way Bridge Cultural Awareness Park on Wednesday 31 March at the Three Ways Bridge, Kennedy St, Griffith.

The concept of the park originated in 2006 as a result of concerns over the removal of the Three Way regulator as part of Murrumbidgee Irrigation's (MI) infrastructure upgrade, the general state of the channel reserves and Crown land surrounding the area, as well as the increasing outbreaks of fire in the grasslands surrounding the homes. These concerns were first raised by Griffith City Council's Aboriginal Advisory Board and a subcommittee was subsequently formed with key stakeholders to look at ways to address these concerns.

Later that year, members of the local Aboriginal community together with MI, Griffith City Council, Griffith Local Aboriginal Lands Council and the Three Way community commenced plans to transform the original degraded site into a place the entire community can enjoy.

MI's Wetland's and Biodiversity Officer, Karen McCann said there has also been a strong public involvement with over 60 people assisting to plant trees throughout the park.

A number of cultural and environmental objectives have been achieved through the completion of the project in December 2009.

"The project celebrates the rich heritage of the Indigenous community," said MI's Cultural Heritage Officer, Stephen Johnson. "The site features several Wiradjuri elements and local materials have been used to create some of the structures," he said.

Designed in a goanna shape, the park also features a boomerang shaped shelter made from expanded metal mesh and a symbolic fire pit created using local rocks. The need for watering has been reduced by using a low water requirement native plant species.

Visitors can also expect to enjoy the bush tucker garden featuring local native plants as well as the BBQ facilities and multi-use grassed area.

The opening will commence with a traditional Wiradjuri smoking ceremony at 9.30am, followed by a free BBQ lunch and cultural activities in the afternoon including didgeridoo and dance performances. All members of the public are invited to attend this significant cultural event.

Ends –**PHOTO ATTACHED**

For further information regarding this media release, please contact Rob Kelly Executive Manager Environment, Murrumbidgee Irrigation on 02 6962 0200.