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For immediate release

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## **SUPPORT REQUIRED FOR WAH WAH PROJECT**

Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI) has received \$50M from the Commonwealth towards a program of \$270M of works aimed at modernising its service and infrastructure to assist dealing with the withdrawal of water from the district as a result of part of the upcoming Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

“MI welcomes the Government’s decision to roll out funding for water savings projects although we are disappointed with the results from the first round,” said MI’s Managing Director, Mr Brett Tucker.

In discussions after yesterday’s funding announcement, Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water, Senator Penny Wong, encouraged MI to submit a revised application under round two of the Commonwealth Government’s Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators (PIIO) Program in New South Wales. MI announced today that part of its round two application will include funding for the Wah Wah Stock and Domestic (WWSD) Pipeline Project, which did not receive funding in round one.

Mr Tucker said that for the sustainability of the MIA, it is critical that funding is eventually received for the Wah Wah project, which involves replacing the existing 1,500km of open earth channel system with a pressurised and piped system at a cost of some \$54M in total. Currently the Company diverts 12GL to deliver approximately 2GL stock and domestic entitlement to the area. In today’s drying climate, the Company can no longer sustain these inefficiencies.

“The WWSD project has undergone numerous changes in scope and cost as a result of MI seeking to meet the requirements of the WWSD customers. This uncertainty has not assisted the application and the Commonwealth will require more clarity from MI about the nature of works before reconsidering this proposal.”

“What is clear from our discussions is that the only avenue to successful funding of this project is through MI,” said Mr Tucker.

In the coming days, MI will contact individual WWSD landholders to provide more information about the proposed scope of works and discuss specific on-farm needs.

MI’s Chairman, Mrs Gillian Kirkup added that the Company believes the latest WWSD pipeline scheme design meets the future service needs of the WWSD customers and allows for improved water quality without compromising affordability of construction and on-going operational costs.

“The design allows the WWSD community the choice to eventually take over the ownership and operation of the assets of this piping scheme.”

“Therefore, it’s important for the WWSD community to work with MI in supporting the proposal and work with us to secure funding in round two,” said Mrs Kirkup.

Ends

For further information regarding this media release, please contact Brett Tucker, Managing Director, Murrumbidgee Irrigation on 02 6962 0294.