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MEDIA RELEASE

It's all happening at Wah Wah: Gunbar Water Pipeline works commence

It is full steam ahead for the much-anticipated Gunbar Water Pipeline, with Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI) officially launching the commencement of the works this week.

The pipeline is part of the Wah Wah Stock & Domestic Pipeline Project that will supply pressurised piped water to 62 properties in the Wah Wah district, which covers 310,000 hectares from Carrathool to Hay in the south, and from Gunbar to Booligal in the north.

Chairman of the Gunbar Water Steering Committee, local farmer Don Low, said it was pleasing to reach this significant milestone in the project.

"This is a once-in-a lifetime opportunity to receive filtered Murrumbidgee river water," he said.

"In a couple of years we will look back and believe the pipeline is the best thing to happen to this area."

Mr Low thanked members of the Committee for volunteering their time to work closely with MI, the contractor Comdain, and other local stakeholders, in the lead up to this point.

"We have always looked at what was best for the community, not the individual," he said.

"We wanted to end up with something that we could be proud of and look forward to Comdain completing the project to a great standard."

MI Chairman, Frank Sergi, explained that project works will include the construction of a 270km Gunbar Water Pipeline and private pipelines, as well as pumping stations and outlets.

"The current supply system is inefficient with water conveyed from Barren Box Storage along the Wah Wah main channel and into 1,590 km of earth channels, to fill more than 600 in-ground tanks on the properties," he said.

"With the new pipeline Wah Wah customers will benefit through improved levels of service, with year-round access to the river and bores, pressurised water supply and measured water use, which can be remotely monitored."

Mr Sergi also thanked Hay and Carrathool Shire Councils for their cooperation in the lead up to the works.

Comdain have set up an office at the main pump station site, with over 40 people being employed once the pipe laying starts.

"At Comdain, we take pride in doing things well," said Comdain CEO Peter Coen.

"We believe best practice construction delivers value on multiple levels that includes delivering projects safely, on time, to the required quality, on budget and with excellent environmental, customer and community stakeholder outcomes."

The community is set to benefit with Comdain using local subcontractors for substantial elements of the project.

"We will contribute significantly to the local economy throughout the Wah Wah project duration," Mr Coen said.

"Our people will be based in Hay and we will use local suppliers and subcontractors for much of the work."

Wah Wah farmers have already commenced, and in some cases completed, on-farm works ready for connection to the Gunbar Water Pipeline in late 2018.

The \$48.7 million Wah Wah Stock and Domestic Pipeline Project forms part of MI's major modernisation being funded under the Australian Government's Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program in New South Wales, with total funding of almost \$348 million going to MI under three rounds of the Program.

ENDS

Photo: Cr Jasen Crighton turns the first sod at the site of the main pump station.

Media Contact: Peter Duncan, Communications Officer, phone 0427 235 646 or 02 6962 0200.