

LAST CHANCE FOR TAMAR IRRIGATORS

Tasmanian Irrigation has re-opened Water Sales for the 24,500 megalitre Tamar Irrigation Scheme after a lower-than-expected response from landowners to contractually apply for water entitlements.

Water Sales for the \$290 million Tamar Valley infrastructure project opened on 22 April for six weeks, enabling landowners across an area of 89,000 hectares spanning Westwood, Legana, Beaconsfield, Rowella, Hillwood, Pipers River, Lilydale and Pipers Brook to apply for water entitlements.

A Water Sales viability threshold of 14,700 megalitres was set by Tasmanian Irrigation prior to the commencement of Water Sales. However, as of today, local farmers only applied for 6,000 megalitres.

Tasmanian Irrigation Chief Executive Officer Andrew Kneebone said this result put the scheme at risk of not proceeding or being subjected to a major re-design.

“During the Expressions of Interest phase, landowners submitted EOIs for 15,499 megalitres, prompting Tasmanian Irrigation to commit a huge level of resources into designing a scheme to meet irrigator demand,” Mr Kneebone said.

“The Australian Government has committed \$180 million and the Tasmanian Government \$60 million toward this massive infrastructure project, so it was up to Tamar Valley landowners to put their contribution on the table through the purchase of water entitlements to make their \$50 million contribution.

“This public / private partnership has proven to be a huge game changer for 15 other irrigation schemes already completed around Tasmania, as well as Don that is now under construction.

“Unfortunately, the Tamar Valley is on the verge of missing out on this investment and the guarantee of high-surety irrigation water to give farmers the confidence to expand, diversify, increase rotations and boost production.

“Tasmanian Irrigation has decided to give Tamar landowners one more opportunity to apply so will re-open Water Sales for a further four weeks in the hope that those farmers who initially expressed interest in the scheme, as well as new landowners, will commit to the project.”

It is estimated that the Tamar Irrigation Scheme, once completed, will generate approximately 411 full-time jobs and 205 indirect jobs, and provide an economic benefit to Tasmania of \$589 million.

Mr Kneebone urged all Tamar landowners to reach out to Tamar Project Manager Josh Marshall to discuss the Water Sales process and seek assistance in completing the application forms.

“The Tamar Irrigation Scheme is a once-in-a-life-time opportunity and we sincerely hope that farmers get behind the scheme so that we can progress the project to detailed design, permits and approvals, and construction – hopefully in late 2023,” he said.

Application forms can be downloaded from <https://www.tasmanianirrigation.com.au/schemes/tamar> until Water Sales close at 2pm on 15 July.