

Connections Project

Fact sheet

Connections Project Reset Delivery Plan

The Connections Project Reset Delivery Plan has been finalised following extensive consultation across the Goulburn Murray Irrigation System.

The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments have agreed that this Plan is the best way forward and meets agreed objectives and principles.

The main features of the Plan are:

- a publicly available channel-by-channel assessment involving local input
- a new engagement model with clear steps outlined and communicated
- an improved procurement methodology for contracting work that will ensure value for money at a system and landowner level, and
- use of reconfiguration plans.

Why was Option 4 chosen?

Option 4 was adopted after customer consultation because it was seen by customers as a practical, common sense approach.

The community consultation sessions in June 2016 were an important opportunity to hear from irrigators.

The consultation report shows landowners strongly supported Option 4. It was considered the best way forward to complete the Connections Project and create a sustainable future for irrigators, communities and Northern Victoria.

The Reset Delivery Plan was developed based on Option 4 being the preferred option.

What was considered in developing the Plan?

The Reset Delivery Plan was prepared in response to the Mid Term Review (MTR) and addresses a number of subsequent external reviews and analysis undertaken by the Project:

- Mid Term Review (November 2015)
- The Primary Agency Report (February 2016)
- PwC baseline financial report (April 2016), and
- Community consultation (June 2016).

These can be found on the Connections Project website www.connectionsproject.com.au.

What is the financial status of the Project?

The financial baseline for the Connections Project as at 29 February 2016 (as per the PwC baseline financial report) confirms that:

- \$359.1m or approximately one third of funding has been expended
- \$360.4m of funding is required to deliver against committed works, and
- \$351.1m is available to deliver against uncommitted works.

What does the Plan cover?

The endorsed Plan contains:

- documentation of the issues encountered by the project to date and the outcomes of a number of independent reviews into the project
- the current status of the project
- a fully costed scope of works
- a revised methodology to deliver the project and the associated water savings, and
- risk management strategies, project governance

and the proposed process to engage and communicate with stakeholders.

What are ‘committed works’ and ‘uncommitted works’?

The project has segregated the total scope of works into committed and uncommitted works.

- Committed works: include all connections works, both on-farm and off-farm, associated with channels having at least one signed legal agreement with a landowner.
- Uncommitted works: include all connections works, both on-farm and off-farm, associated with channels having no signed legal agreement with a landowner.

Due to the existence of a large number of signed landowner agreements, the project has a principle that wherever possible, existing commitments will be honoured.

How has the Reset Delivery Plan addressed the issues around planning and project delivery?

One of the key changes associated with the Reset Delivery Plan is the establishment of a central planning group to control the planning, prioritisation and scheduling of works.

This is a new initiative for the project and will ensure ongoing alignment with project objectives and principles and target works to those delivering the best value-for-money water savings.

The central planning group will work with local staff and the community (through forums such as the Connections Project Stakeholder Consultative Committee and Water Services Committee) to ensure local knowledge and input continues.

What is the new engagement model?

The Project will be using a streamlined and more efficient delivery model to roll out the remainder of works.

The new engagement model incorporates a new process to guide landowners through the connection process.

The process will involve working closely with landowners from the outset on planning, implementation and completion of works.

The Plan outlines the use of statutory reconfiguration, how will this affect me?

Statutory reconfiguration and other tools are incorporated into the project’s new engagement model.

A Reconfiguration Plan allows the project to proceed with work on GMW assets even if agreement cannot be reached with all landowners associated with a proposed modernisation solution.

Under the Reset Delivery Plan, no one will be disconnected from their water service unless they choose to do so.

The service may be reconfigured, but the Connections Project will ensure anyone who uses water currently will continue to have access.

More information is available on the Connections Project website www.connectionsproject.com.au.

What information can you tell me about my channel?

A new web portal - My Connections Update - has been launched that allows landowners to view the details and status of work for their respective channel.

The portal operates in ‘real time’ which means any landowner is able to log on and get up to date information about the assessment process and timeframes associated with the proposed work.

Where can I go for more information?

For more information visit the Connections Project website www.connectionsproject.com.au.

Or visit your local GMW office and talk to local staff.