

# Connections Project

## Quarterly update

September 2016



The \$2 billion Connections Project is creating a world-leading water delivery system and is the most significant upgrade to the region's irrigation infrastructure in its 100-year history.

We know you want to be kept informed about the progress of the Connections Project, when it matters to you.

### Project Director update



Project Director, Frank Fisseler

The Connections Project has completed the Reset review and we would like to share an update on the way forward.

We share a renewed commitment to getting the job done, by working closely with the community and importantly applying a channel by channel fit for purpose approach that many of you discussed with us at the community consultation sessions earlier this year.

I'm pleased to advise that the formal review is complete and the Minister for Water, the Hon. Lisa Neville has approved the Reset Delivery Plan at a recent Victorian Farmers Federation Water Forum in Rochester. The Reset Plan outlines how the project will be rolled out until its completion in 2020.

The Reset Plan can be found on our website at [www.connectionsproject.com.au](http://www.connectionsproject.com.au).

This update provides an outline of what the Reset Plan means and what you can expect over the coming months and years as the Connections Project continues to modernise the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (GMID).

### Our plan for the future 2016-2020

Following extensive community consultation across the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District, the Victorian and Federal Governments have agreed the Reset Plan is the best way forward.

There are many improvements being made to how the project is managed and delivered, but the Reset Plan features four key changes:

- 1. Channel by channel assessment with local input** – you told us this was your preferred approach. We are making the most of local knowledge when exploring and refining solutions for each channel.
- 2. New landowner engagement approach** – we have adopted a new way of doing things that will ensure you understand the process at every stage. We have also launched a new online portal, called My Connections Update that provides access to up-to-date channel specific information.
- 3. Pathway to complete works** – we know delays have caused frustration. Until now, we have sought voluntary agreements with landowners to carry out modernisation related works and provided up-front payments to landowners to carry out their own on-farms works. This has resulted in significant delays. We will provide more certainty for landowners and the project by using statutory reconfiguration powers to do works on GMW assets and directly implement agreed on-farm works rather than provide landowner incentives.
- 4. Improved contracting process** – we have a new process that will ensure value-for-money construction of GMW assets and on-farm works.

# Our new engagement process

We recognise the Reset Delivery Plan will mean different things for different people. The case studies on this page may help you to understand where you fit in our new engagement process. We'll continue to develop case studies and publish them on our website.

## Engagement process

### Phase 1:

- All landowners receive a comprehensive information pack.
- We undertake scoping works and prepare a Concept Reconfiguration Plan (desktop plan) which is a map showing our analysis on reconfiguring channel/s and GMW assets that deliver your water.

### Phase 2:

- We engage with all neighbours and hold a channel meeting to discuss and provide a copy of the Concept Reconfiguration Plan.
- We continue to liaise with all to refine the Concept Reconfiguration Plan (GMW assist) and Connections Agreement (on-farm works)

### Phase 3:

- You receive Draft Final Reconfiguration Plan and Connections Agreement and you have 30 days to review and sign.
- Make a submission on the Draft Final Reconfiguration Plan (optional)
- Independent review (if required).
- Adopt the Reconfiguration Plan.

### Phase 4:

- We carry out the works as agreed.

## Landowner case studies

### All agreements are signed

Everyone on your channel or group of channels has signed an agreement.

- We can move directly to the build phase.
- This is where a contractor working on the project's behalf constructs and commissions the agreed works.

### You've signed an agreement

Your agreement is contingent on your neighbours Joanne and Phil signing their agreements.

- We will honour executed landowner agreements, or withdraw from agreements where the landowner consents.
- In this case, you want to proceed with your proposed solution and it is feasible to do so.
- To do this, we need to take the other contingent landowners through the new engagement process.

- We will consult with Joanne and Phil on a Concept Reconfiguration Plan and the associated on-farm works on their properties.
- This results in a Draft Final Reconfiguration Plan.
- We keep you informed of our progress.

- You have 30 days to make a submission on the Draft Final Reconfiguration Plan but this is optional.
- You choose not to make a submission.
- There are no other submissions made and Joanne and Phil sign their agreements.
- The project finalises and adopts the Reconfiguration Plan.

With an adopted Reconfiguration Plan in place, and you, Joanne and Phil agreeing to your on-farm works component, the project team can carry out the works on GMW assets and on-farm.

### You have received an agreement but haven't signed it

You don't agree with the proposed solution. The only other landowner on your spur channel, Bert, hasn't signed his agreement but would like to.

- As there are no signed agreements, you will be a part of our new engagement process. This starts with a channel meeting, which in this case is just you and Bert.
- You receive an information pack that contains details on the process.

- The project team has consulted with you and Bert on a solution that would see you connected by a bordering backbone channel.
- Bert is happy with the proposed solution.
- The project gives you a Draft Final Reconfiguration Plan and a Connections Agreement for your on-farm works.

- Bert is happy with progress and signs his agreement for on-farm works.
- You make a submission to the Connections Project that proposes a different proposal.
- After internal and independent review, the project considers the submission and adopts the Reconfiguration Plan as originally proposed. This is because the alternative proposal put forward by you in your submission is not fit-for-purpose.

- You opt to complete your on-farm works at your own cost.
- The project gives you reasonable time to complete your on-farm works before it goes ahead with reconfiguring GMW assets and completes Bert's on-farm works.

### Waiting to hear

You are one of five landowners on a channel that is yet to hear from the Connections Project about works on your channel.

- You are invited to a channel meeting when the project reaches your area. You attend, along with three of the other landowners.
- You receive an information pack.

Following detailed research and consultation with you, the project gives you a copy of a Draft Final Reconfiguration Plan, and a Connections Agreement for your on-farm works.

- You have the opportunity to make a submission on the Draft Final Reconfiguration Plan but you choose not to do so.
- You sign your Connections Agreement for on-farm works.

The Connections Project carries out all works as agreed in the Reconfiguration plan, including on farm works.

The new *My Connections Update* web portal is an easy way to get information about your Connections Project works. Simply enter your meter number to find out the proposed solution for your channel and status of works.

## My Connections Update web portal

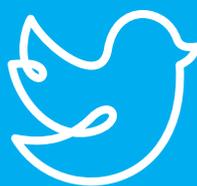
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