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Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

## **Irrigation funding to drive regional growth**

The Hodgman Liberal Government is supporting rural and regional Tasmania by delivering irrigation infrastructure, creating jobs and expanding farm production to meet the growing demand for Tasmania's premium produce.

The Hodgman and Morrison Governments are jointly investing \$170 million into our Pipeline to Prosperity - Tranche 3, which will allow Tasmanian Irrigation (TI) to deliver the first phase of at least five new irrigation schemes across the state, whilst Tasmanian Irrigation continues with the planning for other proposed schemes.

The first five projects located in Don, Fingal, Northern Midlands, Sassafras Wesley Vale, and Tamar are progressing through the planning and approvals process and would provide producers in each district with confidence to invest further in enhancing their existing capacity, currently limited by water reliability.

The 2019-20 Budget is also focused on bringing down the cost of doing business for farmers with our \$5.5 million Tasmanian Irrigation Renewable Energy Project.

TI is developing the business case for adding hydro-electric systems into the current irrigation network to generate power – on top of the existing mini-hydro stations located at the Meander, Winnaleah and Midlands schemes.

Generating power this way will help reduce energy costs for TI with savings to be passed on to irrigators.

If the business case stacks up, TI expects to start building the next hydro-electric systems in early 2020.

Irrigation water enables farmers to diversify, value add and expand their existing farming operations, assisting the State Government to reach its target of increasing the farm gate value of Tasmania's agricultural sector to \$10 billion a year by 2050.

Pipeline to Prosperity in total is a \$496 million long-term program which, when fully implemented would deliver 10 proposed irrigation schemes providing an additional 78,000 mega litres of water, creating thousands of jobs and injecting an estimated \$114 million each year into the agriculture sector, and our economy more broadly.