

Guy Barnett MP

Minister for Trade
Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction
Minister for Resources
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Liberal Member for Lyons



Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

27 March 2022

Barnaby Joyce, Deputy Prime Minister
Gavin Pearce, Federal Member for Braddon
Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Getting on with building an irrigation scheme for the Don

The Don Irrigation Scheme has received a boost on the eve of construction commencing.

Through the 2022-23 Budget, the Australian Government has committed an additional \$13.7 million toward the 4,750-megalitre project, which will increase the Don and Barrington areas' agricultural productivity and capability.

The \$54.4 million project, jointly funded by the Australian and Tasmanian governments, will construct two separate distribution networks to improve water access and security and increase opportunities for farmers in the region.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Barnaby Joyce said water supports wealth, jobs, and prosperity.

"The Australian Government is committed to delivering the water infrastructure regional Australia needs to grow and get stronger," the Deputy Prime Minister said.

"Not only will this project support local irrigation and production, it will support around 60 jobs during construction and 50 direct and indirect jobs once the scheme is operational.

"Water infrastructure is vital to strengthening regional water security, growing agriculture and primary industry sectors, supporting jobs, and diversifying local economies – and this is how our nation becomes as strong as possible as quickly as possible."

The scheme will strengthen the National Water Grid and enable the distribution of stored water so it is more readily available when needed, especially during droughts and in response to changing climate patterns.

Tasmanian Primary Industries and Water Minister Guy Barnett said increasing the water supply will also encourage long-term planning and investment.

“The scheme will help build resilience and confidence for our farmers,” Mr Barnett said.

“The Don area is one of the state’s most productive agricultural areas, which is why this scheme will play an important part in reaching our target to sustainably grow the annual farm gate value of Tasmanian agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050.

“Businesses are reliant on water certainty and this scheme will position the region so access to reliable water sources is not a limiting factor to growth.

“This project is an excellent example of our State and Federal governments working with industry and private landholders to encourage regional development and support, which will benefit the entire community.”

Tasmania has been leading the nation with 16 of the last 19 major irrigation projects across Australia built in Tasmania and this reflects the Tasmanian Government’s vision for water and agriculture.

Federal Member for Braddon Gavin Pearce said the scheme is fantastic news for local producers, renowned for their high-value vegetables, berries, other crops and dairy.

“I am thrilled to see shovels are set to hit dirt on delivering this vital project for the region,” Mr Pearce said.

“The scheme design will be able to deliver water over a 180-day irrigation season, and have capacity to supply during the winter months as well, ensuing access to the high-surety irrigation water producers need to grow and diversify their operations.

“The Australian Government is thinking big and acting locally when it comes to water, with this just one of many projects in Tasmania under the National Water Grid Fund, the Australian Government’s long-term plan for water infrastructure.

“We know that water supply and security form the backbone of so many of our north-western communities, as it underpins local agricultural and primary businesses, jobs, economies and the home-grown food and fibre much of Australia and the world enjoys.

“That’s why we are getting on with the job of delivering water infrastructure for the state, with this building other projects in northern Tasmanian such as the already operational Scottsdale Irrigation Scheme, a \$57.3 million joint investment to support more higher-value irrigation agriculture and dairy.

“Since 2013, we’ve committed more than \$155 million towards 13 water infrastructure projects in Tasmania.”

Construction is expected to be finished in late 2023, with the 2023–24 summer set to be the first full water delivery season.

The Don Irrigation Scheme is a private public infrastructure partnership, funded by the Australian and Tasmanian governments and irrigators who have purchased irrigation rights in the scheme. Construction and operation of the scheme will be managed by Tasmanian Irrigation.

For more information on the National Water Grid projects, visit www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au.