

Media release

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Murray Irrigation commences PIOP 2013 Early Works

Murray Irrigation's Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program (PIOP) is officially underway, with contractor Comdain Pty Ltd having commenced civil works on both the Mulwala and Berrigan Canals as part of the 2013 Early Works program.

The Early Works program will replace channel offtake structures along the Mulwala Canal from Lake Mulwala to the Edward River Escape near Deniliquin and along the Berrigan Canal down to and including the Billabong Canal offtake.

Works also include the upgrade, relocation or removal of existing Dethridge outlets along these sections of canals to make way for new technology that will allow remote control and/or automation of both the offtakes and outlets. Murray Irrigation has been consulting with customers in the Early Works areas and conducting landholding assessments as part of the rationalisation and upgrade of outlet meters.

PIOP upgrades are expected to be completed by 2017 and will result in a higher level of service to Murray Irrigation customers, whilst maintaining present cost levels. The \$169 million Government funded program has also created new employment opportunities for local people.

"The upgrade to new meters will see a vast improvement in the irrigation service to customers and offer increased flexibility in water ordering", General Manager, Anthony Couroupis said.

Murray Irrigation is currently conducting an extensive data collection program in preparation for the PIOP 2014 works. This includes survey work along channels in Divisions 3 to 8 (east of Deniliquin) and Division 16 (west of Deniliquin), which will be completed by a combination of Murray Irrigation staff and contractors appointed by the company.

"It will involve taking measurements of regulators, bridges and outlets along our supply channels in each of these divisions," Anthony said.

"The work is expected to take approximately eight weeks to complete."

PIOP is a \$650 million Commonwealth Government funded program that supports the irrigation industry, whilst improving water efficiency and also returning water to the environment, both within Murray Irrigation's distribution system and on-farm. Funding is from the Sustainable Rural Water use and Infrastructure component of the Government's *Water for the Future* program.

The adoption of new water distribution technology will result in improved levels of service for customers. Murray Irrigation successfully applied for funds under PIOP to continue with the upgrade of the irrigation system and achieve various strategic plan objectives.

Ends.

For more information contact Murray Irrigation General Manager Anthony Couroupis on T. 03 5898 3300.