

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

WATER FOR WARRILL IRRIGATION PROJECT



Time to “put your hand up” for secure water in the Scenic Rim

Warrill and Fassifern Valley producers have until Monday 15 March to formally register their interest in the proposed Water for Warrill Irrigation Project.

There is a sense of optimism and urgency from water industry experts Jacobs, engaged by the Scenic Rim Regional Council to undertake the feasibility study, because strong data on the district’s current and future demands for water is the first thing they need to move the project forward.

“There were more people than we expected at two public meetings and the feedback has been very positive. We’re at the very beginning of a multi-step process and the critical first step is for all stakeholders to register their genuine interest through an Expression of Interest (EOI),” Jacobs Principal Advisor Angus MacDonald said.

“Jacobs has seen time and time again how farmers turn additional water into more produce, profit and jobs. We also know that typically Australians wait until the second round of consultation before they put their hands up, but that will be too late. We implore you to put an EOI in now.”

This sentiment is shared by local horticultural farmer and member of the project’s reference group, Mitchell Brimblecombe, who describes this as a once in a generation chance to underpin the future of agriculture in the Scenic Rim.

“We have an immediate water issue with low dam levels and restricted irrigation allocations this year but there is also consensus that we have a long-term water problem that requires both innovation and investment,” Mitchell said.

“The EOI forms are non-binding, there’s nothing to lose and everything to gain by getting involved, for your farming business, for your neighbours and for the community at large.

“We want to maintain our competitiveness with other growing regions. Access to a new secure water supply would allow us to increase our growing capacity and market share.”

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“Our family understands first-hand that an opportunity to get three tiers of government working together on new water infrastructure is rare, we don’t want to miss out,” Mitchell said.

Mitchell’s father Linton Brimblecombe was the inaugural chairman of the Lockyer Water Users Forum that lobbied the Howard Government in 2007 on water security issues.

“Our funding bid 14 years ago was unsuccessful but we’re wiser to the process now and while I’m still a keen observer of the progress being made by the Lockyer and Somerset Water Collaborative, it’s time for the Warrill and Fassifern Valleys to step up,” Linton said.

“Local government has done their part to kick things off by funding the feasibility study. They’ve shown us they’re serious about supporting agriculture so now we have to do our part by providing the on-farm information.”

Mr MacDonald explains that the information gathered by Jacobs in the EOIs will be aggregated, meaning individuals and businesses won’t be identified.

“Producers can confidentially record on a sliding price scale the quantity of water their business uses now, and more importantly, they can indicate how much water they’d like to access to expand in the future,” he said.

“There is no financial obligation and no guarantee that the project will proceed, we are simply gauging demand. We are also measuring the upfront capital investment irrigators are prepared to make to access a tradeable water product with 90-99% reliability, in addition to water allocation costs.”

More information about the Water for Warrill Irrigation Project is available on Council’s website www.scenicrim.qld.gov.au/say

If you would like to discuss the EOI in more detail, please contact Jacobs Principal Advisor Angus MacDonald on 0488 444 973 / angus.macdonald2@jacobs.com