

# Drought-proofing region

## Farmers rest easier thanks to irrigation scheme

By **CAITLIN HEATHCOTE**

A **SECURE** water supply for irrigation will help to drought-proof the Central Coast after the Kindred-North Motton Irrigation Scheme was officially opened yesterday.

The scheme will ensure 2500 megalitres of water a year will be available to farmers during particularly dry years.

Central Coast Mayor Jan Bonde said the scheme was “absolutely vital” for the region and said it would help to drought-proof the area for years to come.

While the Central Coast was not in dire need of such a scheme, Cr Bonde said it would help to attract more niche markets to the area.

“Agriculture is the [main] industry here,” Cr Bonde said.

Former dam owner and farmer Luke McCannon said that while this year hadn't been too bad in terms of water, the scheme would definitely help during drier years.

Mr McCannon will directly benefit from the scheme with an outlet on his property at Stubbs Road.

“It will definitely be needed. You don't know what's going to happen each year. I mean this



**RELIEF:** Farmer Luke McCannon checks out the new Kindred-North Motton Irrigation Scheme dam at Sprent at the scheme's official opening yesterday. **Picture:** Katrina Dodd.

year wasn't too bad, but you don't know what it will be like next year,” he said.

The scheme was officially opened by Agriculture Minister Bryan Green and Tasmanian Irrigation chairman John Lord.

“We have 8.5 hectares of some of the best agricultural farming area in the world, not just in Australia,” Mr Green said.

“We are part of the global market and we have the unique advantages in good soil and now good water.”

Mr Green said the scheme was testament to how farmers and governments could work together to build their industry and create “wealth development” opportunities for the state.

## IRRIGATION SCHEME FACTS

■ **Cost:** \$10.6 million — \$5.7 million from the federal government, \$3 million from the irrigators and \$1.9 million from the state government.

■ **Areas covered:** Kindred, Sprent, Abbotsham, Forth, Gawler, Clerkes Plains and North Motton.

■ **Water source:** Forth River.

■ **Construction:** Started on October 12, 2012, completed in 16 months.

■ **Annual volume of water delivered:** 2500 megalitres.

■ **Irrigable area:** 8483 hectares.