

Irrigation benefits to flow for farmers

By ROSEMARY BOLGER

NORTHERN Midlands farmers now have access to a reliable source of water thanks to the completion of the fifth major irrigation scheme.

Water will now flow from

the \$15 million Lower South Esk irrigation scheme near Conara, which was officially opened by Primary Industries Minister Bryan Green yesterday.

"This will provide water surety and new opportunities for farmers in the area from

Longford to Conara," Mr Green said.

The project is fully subscribed, with farmers and investors spending \$6.2 million to buy water from the scheme.

Water from the South Esk River will be held in the 6000

mega litre Milford Dam near Conara and piped across an irrigable area of more than 15,400 hectares.

The scheme is part of the state government plan to increase the area of new irrigated land in Tasmania by 40 per cent.



Lower South Esk Irrigators committee chairman Michael Chilvers at the opening of the scheme.

Picture: NEIL RICHARDSON

Nine schemes set to deliver in stage 1 of program

By JULIAN BURGESS

THE state government set up the \$80 million Water Infrastructure Fund with access to \$140 million from the federal government in 2008.

Tasmanian Irrigation has nearly completed construction of nine schemes in stage 1 of its planned development program.

The sale of water rights is expected to generate nearly \$90 million.

The biggest scheme costing \$104 million is the Midlands Water Scheme, which is due for completion next year.

The schemes:

● Whitmore Irrigation Scheme — A 5500 megalitre

scheme drawing water from the Poatina Power Station tailrace to service an area of around 12,000 hectares.

● Sassafrafs Wesley Vale Irrigation Scheme — Comprises 75 kilometres of pipes based around the trunk main of the former Tas Paper mill at Wesley Vale to deliver 5460ML of water to an area of 10,650 hectares.

● Great Forester Irrigation Scheme — Based on a dam in the headwaters of the Great Forester River to deliver 1980ML of water a year to an area of around 1800 hectares between Scottsdale and Bridport.

● Winnaleah Irrigation Scheme Augmentation —

Supplies an additional 3700ML a year to the existing Winnaleah Irrigation scheme.

● Meander Valley Irrigation Scheme — Based on the Meander Dam and four pipelines to supply up to 36,000ML of water.

● South East Irrigation Scheme — Based on the 12,600ML Craighourne and Daisy Banks dams to provide 4486.5ML of water a year to commercial irrigators and 1674.5 to hobby farms and gardens.

● Lower South Esk Irrigation Scheme — Based on an off-river dam at the Milford property, near Conara. The dam will deliver

5298ML of water to an area of 9000 hectares stretching from Conara to Longford.

● Midlands Water Scheme — Based on Hydro Tasmania water from Arthurs Lake, the scheme involves 134km of pipeline providing 38,500ML of water a year to 55,884 hectares from Ross and Oatlands to Kempton. Expected to be completed early next year.

● Kindred North Motton Scheme — Will deliver about 2500ML of water sourced from the Forth River (below Palooa Dam) to 1000 hectares of farm land. It is nearing completion.