

WATER RESTRICTIONS ON SOUTH EAST IRRIGATORS SET TO EASE

Irrigation water restrictions in Tasmania's South East are on track to be eased this Friday following the stabilisation of dam buffer storages resulting from increased inflows, reduced irrigator usage and much-needed rainfall.

Tasmanian Irrigation today sincerely thanked all irrigators who have worked cooperatively and proactively to reduce water usage, which has assisted in stabilising dam levels and building up an essential buffer to minimise ongoing supply issues.

Both the South East Irrigation Schemes Stages Two and Three are supplied with water from the TasWater drinking supply. Recent increases in usage resulted in demand outstripping supply by up to six megalitres per day.

Tasmanian Irrigation Chief Executive Officer Andrew Kneebone said TI was continuing to best manage the available irrigation water supply to enable irrigators to water time-sensitive crops, while advancing pre-feasibility and engineering design for the South East Irrigation Schemes' supply augmentation project as part of the Tranche Three Pipeline to Prosperity initiatives.

"We are working around the clock to manage the current available South East irrigation water resource sustainably so that farmers can have as much surety as possible around supply. We don't want to ease restrictions one day, followed by four days of hot weather and increased demand that result in restrictions being imposed again.

"This is all about protecting the water resource and preventing the yo-yo impact of farmers being on and off restrictions, which makes it extremely difficult for them to do what they do best – grow food and fibre that is the envy of the world."

The South East Irrigation Scheme Stage Two provides irrigation water from Daisy Banks Dam to landowners around Richmond and Cambridge. The South East Irrigation Scheme Stage Three relies on water from Rekuna Dam and feeds irrigation water to farmers in the Sorell district.

Tasmanian Irrigation is providing daily updates on its website (www.tasirrigation.com.au) each day around 4pm on inflows, dam levels and EC (salinity) levels.

Mr Kneebone said Tasmanian Irrigation continues to work collaboratively with TasWater to ensure supply and he was confident that restrictions would ease by the end of this week.

"We are out of immediate danger, but we need to continue to act responsibly," Mr Kneebone said.

“We are very appreciative of all irrigators who turned off their pumps after up to 13mm of rain fell on Friday night, and those who immediately moved to irrigating one day on and one day off in a bid to assist us stabilise dam levels.

“Extended dry periods require a true team effort – and that’s what we have seen from irrigators, all Tasmanian Irrigation team members, TasWater and other key stakeholders.”

Tasmanian Irrigation has invited South East irrigators to attend a meeting at 10am tomorrow (Tuesday 3 December) at TI’s Offices at 701 Richmond Road, Cambridge to discuss the easing of restrictions, an update on negotiations to secure additional water and ongoing strategies to manage water demand.

NOTE: Tasmanian Irrigation Chief Executive Officer Andrew Kneebone will be available for interview this afternoon at 3pm at St Georges Square adjacent to High Street in Launceston.

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