

Working with Farmers to Grow the Wealth of Tasmania

REPAIRS TO EXISTING SCHEME ASSETS

SWIS Irrigator Meeting

Key points:

- A meeting was held with SWIS irrigators in July to discuss the plan to part fund repairs to the ex-Wesley Vale Paper Mill assets through the sale or lease of winter entitlements. A follow-up meeting is planned for August;
- There are no changes to the current scheme for the coming summer and winter seasons;
- General Availability water will be available until at least end of 2024;
- Winter Water Entitlements would be available for lease or purchase from early 2025

Tasmanian Irrigation (TI) met with SWIS irrigators this month to discuss the funding of major repairs to the existing scheme. Around 40 irrigators attended the meeting, at which presentations were made by CEO Andrew Kneebone and SWISA Project Manager, Andy Corbould.

Engineering condition assessments of the 50-year-old ex-Wesley Vale Paper Mill assets have found that:

- The Great Bend Pump Station is structurally sound. However, concrete surface protection work is needed to ensure the reinforcing steel does not begin to rust. TI plans to repair the concrete as with ongoing maintenance the building's life could be extended for 100-years. The original power supply transformers and switchboards will also need to be replaced.

- The Reservoir's reinforcing steel has already begun to corrode, so TI plans to build a smaller new tank nearby and retire the existing reservoir; and
- The buried Wesley Vale main pipeline is 11.5km long and made up of more than 1,000 individual cement lined steel pipes, coated with asbestos felt, which are rubber ring jointed together. Corrosion was found at the joints, and this corresponds with previous leaks found at pipe joins. TI plans to install a new HDPE (poly) pipeline beside the existing main, but going around any residential areas, and retire the existing pipeline.

While the assessments found only one pipe location requiring urgent repair, which TI has plans to address, they did indicate that within three to five years, the main pipeline could require increasingly frequent repairs. And, in the medium term, the pump station and reservoir would need to be replaced. This could lead to increased annual charges and possibly lengthy unplanned scheme outages during the irrigation season.

To avoid these issues, TI plans to undertake the repair and replacement work now. The expected cost is in the order of \$12 million and TI is working with the State Government to co-fund the repairs.

TI intends to recover the private contribution through the sale and lease of winter water entitlements. Winter Water Sales would be conducted after commissioning of the works, around November 2024. It may take several years for all entitlements to be sold.



Sassafras Wesley Vale Augmentation Newsletter

From April 2025, general availability water would no longer be available and if you required winter water, you would need to lease or purchase winter entitlements.

TI has a range of options for leasing and purchasing winter entitlements, including annual lease; lease-to-buy; and purchase contracts.

SWIS Augmentation - Preferred Design Option and Water Sales Timing

The TI project team aims to have a Preferred Design Option, including capital and operating cost estimates approved by the Board by October 2021, with public consultation on the design to progress shortly thereafter.



This has been postponed from August to allow public consultation on the SWIS repair funding. The first full irrigation season is anticipated to commence in November 2024 (2024/25 irrigation season).

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If you have any queries about the project, please feel free to contact Project Manager Andy Corbould on 0417 341 141 or andy.corbould@tasirrigation.com.au or one of the IRC members.

Tasmanian Irrigation looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively and cooperatively with all Sassafras Wesley Vale area farmers and other key stakeholders to deliver an augmentation designed to last at least 100 years and deliver water at an average annual reliability of more than 95 per cent.



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