

Branch Out

Tasmanian
Irrigation

SHARING TASMANIA'S IRRIGATION STORIES

Message from the CEO

By Andrew Kneebone

I write this column in your first edition of Branch Out for 2025 and my last as CEO of Tasmanian Irrigation.

As I vacate my desk today, and welcome incoming CEO Mike Sylvester, I have barely had a moment to reflect on the incredible achievements of the Tasmanian Irrigation team, which I have had the privilege to be part of since mid-2018.

Perhaps that's because we have been so busy already this year with water delivery, working on new projects and launching a second round of water sales for the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme (GSEIS).

Now that funding is locked in from both the Tasmanian and Australian Governments, there is certainty regarding the GSEIS and we are proceeding with all the work necessary to secure environmental and other approvals, and engage our construction partners.

When pondering how many water entitlements to apply for, we urge all landowners and investors to consider how much high-reliability water they need, not only for today but for future generations who will own and manage agricultural businesses in one of the driest regions of Australia.

On page seven of this newsletter you'll find details of upcoming Drop in Days, where to download application forms for water entitlements and more information about this \$301 million project.

Thank you again to all landowners, commodity groups and TasFarmers for their ongoing support and advocacy for the GSEIS.

The Hazell Bros team is doing a fantastic job on the Northern Midlands Irrigation Scheme, with almost 40 kilometres of pipeline now in the

ground. It was fantastic to be able to take the Tasmanian Irrigation Board to site in February to inspect progress, and meet our contractor and some of the farmers who will benefit from the scheme. We remain on track for this 25,500-megalitre project to be completed in time for the 2026/27 irrigation season.

With such dry conditions in many areas of the State this season, there is no doubting the value of Tasmanian Irrigation water. Demand on some of our irrigation schemes has been 27 per cent above budget, and I'm pleased to report that dam levels around the State are holding up well and are currently not presenting any issues for the remainder of the season.

Getting water where and when it's needed only happens with the efforts of many members of the Tasmanian Irrigation team.

Our customers and community stakeholders see Scheme Operators and Project Managers on the frontline.

But their work, and the delivery of new schemes and water in existing schemes, wouldn't be possible without our employees around the State who keep the business operating.



In all my working life, I have not found a more dedicated, supportive and wonderful group of colleagues — all focused on delivering game-changing water to farmers.

I'm proud of the team and will miss enormously the daily interaction with them when I retire.

I'm also proud of the way I've seen irrigation water transform our agricultural sector, from individual farm scale to the positive contribution to the State economy.

I've loved meeting so many farmers, hearing from them how irrigation water will enable growth and expansion, and then watching that take place.

Highly reliable irrigation water gives farmers the confidence to expand, invest, diversify, value add and employ more people. And that means regional communities thrive.

Will Eddington (see his story on page four) is another great example of what irrigation water coupled with innovation and vision can deliver.

We continue to work on implementing community management, which will enable groups of irrigators to take on a greater role in managing and operation state-owned irrigation schemes. I'm delighted to tell you we have started a trial of the application process in collaboration with the Winnaleah Irrigation Scheme Limited Board. You can read more about that below.

I'm certainly excited about my retirement! I've shared more detail about my time at Tasmanian Irrigation and my future plans — you can read about that on page 12.

I feel confident that not only am I handing over to a well qualified incoming CEO in Mike Sylvester (see story on page 15), I am handing over an organisation and a great team who have the vision and passion to continue to deliver excellent customer service and to navigate the coming decades.

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In closing, I want to thank the many customers, stakeholders, partners, suppliers and my management team and all our employees who've been part of my working life for the past six and a half years, the Tasmanian Irrigation Board and our Shareholder Ministers. Together, we've faced challenges, delivered success and collaborated to benefit all Tasmanians.

Thanks for your support, and I look forward to crossing paths with many of you during my retirement.

Cheers,

Andrew



Message from the Minister

The Hon. Jane Howlett, Primary Industries and Water Minister



Well, 2025 is off to a flying start.

I know it's been a busy time both on farms and at Tasmanian Irrigation to deliver water when and where it is needed, enabling crops to be finished, vines and pastures to prosper and livestock to reach target weights.

I say it time and time again, access to reliable irrigation water is a game-changer for Tasmania's agriculture sector.

Last season, Tasmanian Irrigation delivered a record 100,593 megalitres of irrigation water to our farms and agricultural businesses.

I look forward to getting the statistics for this year. Access to reliable irrigation water is key to meeting this Government's ambitious target to grow the farmgate value of agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050.

It is pleasing to see construction progressing on the Northern Midlands Irrigation Scheme to bring this \$218 million project to life for irrigators in the region.

The Tasmanian Government has committed funding for a preliminary business case for the Tamar Irrigation Scheme considering a combined agriculture and commercial industrial proposition as an important next step for this project.

The Tamar scheme could deliver 8,500 ML per season of highly reliable irrigation water to Beaconsfield, Legana, Rowella, Hillwood, Pipers Brook and Pipers River. A combined industrial scheme could deliver up to an additional 12,000 ML per annum of water to Bell Bay for use in hydrogen production.

It's expected that the business case will be finalised by the end of the current financial year.

In other news, the second round of water sales is open for the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme. This scheme is a part of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future when it comes to growing agriculture. I am intending to get along to one of the drop-in days in March and I hope to see some of you there.

I also look forward to welcoming new CEO Mike Sylvester to Tasmanian Irrigation this month.

While he has big boots to fill, I'm confident that he will continue to pursue our irrigation agenda. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Andrew Kneebone for his leadership over many years and I wish him all the best in his retirement.

Good luck to all those who still need to finish their crops. I hope the conditions remain favourable.



Great to catch up with Will Eddington from Richmond Park to discuss his exciting agri-tourism plans and how it's a pivotal time for farmers to secure water entitlements as part of the water sales process for the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme. See Will and Clare's story on page four of Branch Out

Will and Clare Eddington



Photo by Jasper da Seymour

A 450mm annual average rainfall may deter some farmers from investing millions of dollars into high-value viticulture.

But not Will and Clare Eddington.

The southern Tasmanian farmers are successfully combining irrigation, ideas and innovation to intensify and diversify on their 1,000-hectare Richmond Park property.

For generations, Merino sheep have roamed the dry rolling hills, producing super fine wool for global fashion houses.

Since the Eddington family purchased Richmond Park in the 1980s, much has changed.

Will and Clare are not only value adding to their wool business through the production of high-end woollen blankets, they are about to launch their first wine label.

Four years ago they planted nine hectares of Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Shiraz.

Now they are planning to increase the area of vines to 60 hectares.

And they are about to submit a Development Application to Council to construct a cellar door.

It's an estimated \$10 million investment and expansion plan.

While market research, vision and hard work have been pivotal ingredients in achieving their goals, Will says there is one underlying factor that has enabled them to progress their plans.

"Water," he said.

"Without Tasmanian Irrigation water, none of this would be possible.

"If you are investing at least \$100,000 a hectare to establish a vineyard and waiting three to four years for a commercial crop, then you need to make sure you have a good and reliable water source for that intensive agricultural operation.

"We've had various cracks at joining different water schemes and have moved from irrigation channels to soft hoses to hard hoses and now pivots and drip irrigation. We have grown peas, small seed crops and cereals in the past, and are now focused on a livestock production system under irrigation, as well as vines.

Meet the Irrigator continued...

"But now we have funding for the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme, we have the confidence to further invest, expand and employ more people."

Will and Clare have more than 300 hectares under pivots.

They utilise about 500 megalitres of water from existing irrigation schemes and have applied for a further 150 megalitres from the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme.

"We are farming in one of the driest places in Australia so reliable water is everything to us," Will said.

"The spin off effect from this water is not only on farm. It is instrumental in creating vibrant communities, adding tourism businesses, attracting tourists and locals for day trips and to stay, keeping our young people employed, and ensuring the whole region benefits.

"It's incredible to see the changes in the Coal River Valley since irrigation water became available. We are close to Hobart and to the airport, so the area is attracting so many people who want to see, taste, purchase and experience what we have to offer.

"And it's all driven by water."

The Richmond Park cellardoor is set to be a true paddock to plate experience. As well as tasting their premium wines and local produce, such as Richmond Park lamb, visitors will be able to enjoy the Eddington family's first value adding enterprise — woollen blankets.

They spent years researching the market and talking to downstream processors to ensure their Richmond Park Merino wool could be spun and woven into the finest blankets. Will and Clare are delighted to be partnering with Waverley Woollen Mills to produce four blankets — each representing a season on Richmond Park.

"We have one in reds and oranges, representing the turning of the vine leaves in autumn. One in charcoal tones, reflecting the farm's views of Kunanyi (Mount Wellington), for winter. Summer is all about blue skies. And we have a lovely vibrant green blanket representing spring.

"Through our cellardoor, we will be telling the story of what the farm has done historically and how the wool industry operates from the sheep in the paddock to being shorn to baling the wool and then processing and weaving the blankets. We run about 10,000 sheep and our focus is all about keeping it local and value adding what we do here at Richmond Park."



Will and Clare are looking forward to receiving their first bottles of labelled wine in the coming weeks.

"You put so much work, time and money into an idea and while it seems like it is taking forever at the time, suddenly we are drinking the wine and celebrating the whole vision coming together," Will said.

"It's not often that you take a moment to realise how proud you are of what you have achieved.

"But now, with construction of the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme a certainty, we can start planning for the next plantings and opening our cellar door.

"Many farms have a history of farming practices that don't suit the environment. With the addition of water we are able to take advantage of the fact that it's pretty dry and tough, and irrigate at the times it is important."

An example of this is being able to irrigate vines when they need water most, such as flowering and fruit development, instead of constantly worrying about the impact of long dry autumns that are regularly endured in the Coal River Valley.

Will thanked all the farmers in the region who worked tirelessly to champion the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme, as well as Tasmanian Irrigation, the State Government and the Federal Government.

"Many people only focus on the on-farm benefits of these irrigation schemes," he said.

"But there are so many other benefits for the region and the State.



Photo by Jasper da Seymour

March 2025

"Irrigation water has enabled us to employ about eight Full-Time Equivalents, and we expect to engage an additional four to six when our cellar door opens. More cellar doors have opened, fruit businesses are direct marketing produce and farmers are thinking outside the square about new opportunities, such as agri-tourism ventures."

Will also highlighted the importance of landowners preparing their farm businesses over the next five years for the GSEIS water.

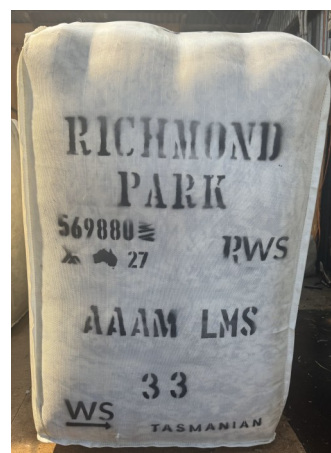
"I have been thinking of what might my business look like in five years time when we get the water and then in 10 or 20 years once we've implemented our plans for the water," he said.

"We need to have a long term approach to the process and start planning and developing for it now so that when the water is available we can really utilise it.

"For me as an example, we want to spend the next five years investing in, building and developing an agri-tourism business based around our current planting in the hope that we have an active and successful cellar door and wine business that's ready for and financially capable of using the new water to increase our vineyard plantings to support the growing wine business.

"I see the next five years as a really important opportunity to add to what we've started and prepare for the new water."

"There is no doubt irrigation water is a serious game changer and we are incredibly thankful that we live in an area that has access to a Tasmanian Irrigation scheme."



Water Sales Now Open

South east farmers and investors are encouraged to apply for water entitlements as part of a second round of water sales for the \$301 million Greater South East Irrigation Scheme (GSEIS).

More than 30,000 megalitres of new high-reliability irrigation water will be delivered to landowners around Gretna, Campania, Richmond, Tea Tree, Sorell and Forcett areas as part of the project.

The GSEIS will serve more than 300 irrigators, both existing and new, integrate three existing irrigation schemes in the region, and increase the overall irrigation reliability and capacity.

Tasmanian Irrigation Chief Executive Officer Andrew Kneebone said landowners can apply for new or additional water entitlements until 17 April.

"This is more than just a water supply project; it is about economic growth, job creation, and building resilience for the future of agriculture in Tasmania," Mr Kneebone said.

"Analysis shows the scheme will deliver a net economic benefit of \$291 million to the State, while also helping reach the Tasmanian Government's goal of growing the farmgate value of Tasmania's agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050.

"In addition to that, the scheme will provide a significant employment boost, creating 225 construction jobs and an additional 468 direct and indirect ongoing jobs.

"Access to highly reliable water for irrigation will significantly enhance productivity, help farmers adapt to climate challenges, and provide long-term water security for the agricultural sector."

The Greater South East Irrigation Scheme will be the 19th irrigation project constructed by Tasmania Irrigation, and also the largest in terms of kilometres of pipeline — totalling 160 kilometres.

Landowners and investors can purchase water entitlements and also convert existing entitlements on South East Stages One, Two or Three to the new scheme.

The purchase price is only guaranteed during the water sales period.

Accepted applicants from the first round of water sales do not need to re-apply.

Tasmanian Irrigation is hosting a series of Drop In Days where people can talk directly to the GSEIS project team and seek assistance with completing application forms (see dates, venues and times below).

Tasmanian Irrigation anticipates that the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme will be operational by mid-2030.

The GSEIS is funded by the Australian Government (\$150 million), the Tasmanian Government (\$75 million), and Tasmanian irrigators through purchase of water entitlements (\$75 million).

For more information or to download application forms, please visit:

www.tasmanianirrigation.com.au/schemes/greater-south-east-irrigation-scheme.

Drop In Days

Date	Venue	Time
6 March	Richmond Supper Hall	10am-3pm
13 March	Pontville Memorial Hall	10am-3pm
20 March	Pontville Memorial Hall	10am-3pm
3 April	Richmond Supper Hall	10am-3pm
10 April	Richmond Supper Hall	10am-3pm
17 April	Richmond Supper Hall	10am-3pm

For more information about the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme, please contact Project Manager Lorrienne Lyte on 0418 846 369 or lorrienne.lyte@tasirrigation.com.au

Water Delivery

By David Skipper, Chief Operating Officer



Tasmanian Irrigation's Water Delivery Team is responsible for the operation of 19 irrigation schemes around Tasmania, and the delivery of irrigation water in an efficient, economically viable and environmentally sustainable manner to more than 1,000 irrigators.

Tasmanian Irrigation employs skilled and dedicated Scheme Operators to manage and administer the schemes.

The team also manages a range of inherited infrastructure, including Lake Leake Dam, Rileys Creek Dam, Togari Water Scheme and the Montagu and Welcome River Improvement Schemes.

Regular routine maintenance, compliance and ensuring the schemes are delivering water at the most efficient curve is paramount to a successful scheme and ensuring water costs to irrigators are controlled and appropriate.

For more information about Water Delivery, please contact Tasmanian Irrigation on (03) 6398-8433 or watertrading@tasmanianirrigation.com.au

Australia has just recorded its second warmest year since national records began in 1910, again highlighting how important reliable irrigation water is to underpin future agricultural profitability.

Rainfall was below average for most areas of Tasmania in January, and temperatures soared into the 30s in February.

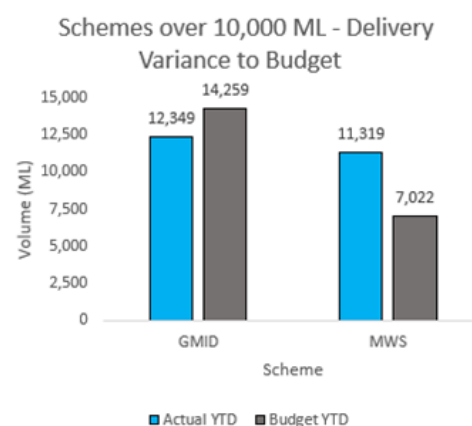
This fluctuating weather caused peaks and troughs in irrigation demand this season from one region to another.

While the Midlands Irrigation Scheme has seen significantly higher demand — delivering 27 per cent above budget in December and 79 per cent above budget year-to date — water demand across the State has been lower than the previous year.

Tasmanian Irrigation delivered 13,362 megalitres in December, and a further 8,615 megalitres in January. This is approximately 2,000 megalitres below the three-year moving average.

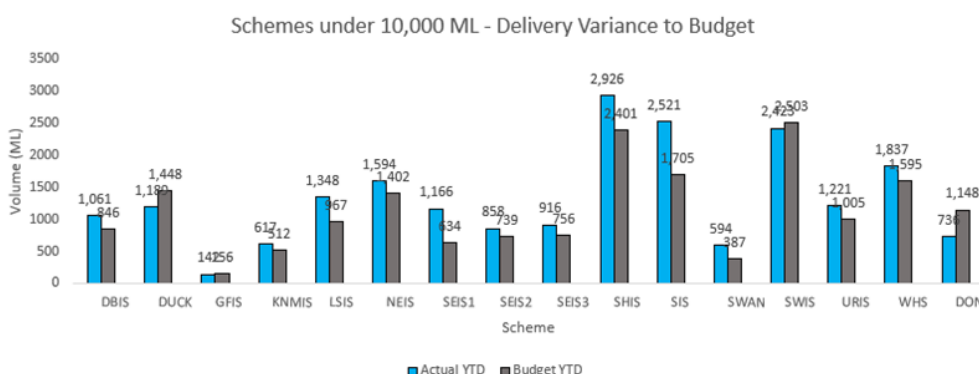
The bar graph below illustrates the actual water demand on a scheme-by-scheme basis so far this season, compared to budget, for schemes under 10,000 ML capacity.

This table shows the delivery variance for schemes with a capacity of 10,000 megalitres or more:



The upcoming autumn period could see an increase in water demand if rainfall is below average and temperatures remain high, as forecast. Weather predictions indicate above average rainfall, but intermittent high temperatures may still drive short-term spikes in demand.

All water storages remain at healthy levels and at this stage there are no concerns regarding the availability to deliver water from these dams in line with irrigator entitlements.



Tasmanian Irrigation is pleased to report that all irrigation schemes are functioning well, with only minor, routine disruptions due to equipment faults and power trips. These incidents are a normal part of operations and have been promptly addressed by our field teams to ensure minimal impact on water delivery.

Importantly, there have been no significant irrigator complaints during this period. Where minor concerns or disruptions have arisen, they have been effectively managed by scheme operators and the operations team through a combination of:

- Timely responses to irrigator inquiries;
- Proactive monitoring of system performance; and
- Clear and prompt SMS communications to keep irrigators informed of any necessary adjustments or temporary outages.

Tasmanian Irrigation thanks landowners for ongoing support and communication to ensure we can deliver water as efficiently and cost effectively as possible.

Asset management

December and January have been busy for the assets and operations team with continued focus on preventative maintenance and numerous asset reliability challenges.

Pipe leaks and power quality filters are the main equipment instabilities.

In the Scottsdale Scheme, the focus was getting the scheme back into operation after storm and lightning damage and the replacement of stolen electrical components.

Root cause analysis is being done for increasing frequency of variable speed drive trips in the Midlands pump station.

The assets team and projects team have been focusing on stabilising the Meander Irrigation Scheme following completion of the augmentation with numerous pump and scheme control challenges.

Career Opportunities at Tasmanian Irrigation

As Tasmanian Irrigation continues to progress new irrigation schemes progress toward construction, make sure you keep an eye on our website for new job opportunities.

One of the upcoming positions about to be advertised is to project manage the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme (GSEIS).

Lorrienne Lyte, a consultant with Sugden and Gee, was engaged by Tasmanian Irrigation in 2021 to lead the GSEIS project through feasibility studies, business case development and public funding approval.

Now the project has successfully achieved these milestones, Tasmanian Irrigation will recruit internal resources to key project roles. Several positions will be advertised over the coming months to build out the project team.

Lorrienne will continue as interim project manager in the short term, to ensure a smooth transition. It is expected that a new GSEIS project team will be in place by May, as well as the establishment of a Hobart-based project office.

Please keep an eye on our website for these and other Tasmanian Irrigation career opportunities at www.tasmanianirrigation.com.au/careers.



“Working every day on infrastructure projects that help Tasmanian farmers develop and grow their businesses gives me immense job satisfaction.”

Jacob Gerke, General Manager —
Program Development and Delivery

Program Development and Delivery

By Jacob Gerke, General Manager Program Development and Delivery



Tasmanian Irrigation's Program Development and Delivery Team is proud to deliver irrigation projects from concept to water delivery, ensuring schemes are designed to be in operation for the next generation of farmers and beyond.

There are a number of important steps incorporated into developing a new irrigation scheme, including:

- Community consultation;
- Expressions of interest;
- Launch of preferred option design;
- Water sales;
- Contracts with landowners;
- Business case;
- Detailed design;
- Permits and approvals;
- Construction; and
- Commissioning.

Along the way, risks are continually evaluated as the design progresses in terms of environment, social acceptability, cost and economic outcomes.

As these schemes rely on a unique public / private partnership and funding model, all stakeholders are engaged and consulted to ensure key needs are met.

All Tasmanian Irrigation schemes are designed to last at least 100 years and deliver water at an annual average reliability of more than 95 per cent.

Updates on current projects:

Sassafras Wesley Vale Irrigation Scheme Augmentation (SWISA)

Augmentation: 9,200 ML

Total scheme capacity: 14,860 ML

Area serviced: Sassafras, Harford, Thirlstane, Moriarty, Wesley Vale, Northdown, Pardoe and East Devonport

Preliminary documentation for assessment under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) was submitted in mid-December.

Field studies have identified that the project will potentially impact the habitats of threatened species during construction so the SWISA project has been classified as a Controlled Action under the EPBC Act, meaning any approval will include conditions to mitigate impacts.

We have received formal review from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). In response to that we will provide an update to our submission in early March.

In the meantime, the DCCEEW assessment team will complete a site inspection of the scheme, including the Great Bend pump station, balance tank / Sassafras booster pump station sites and other key elements of the scheme where activity will be undertaken that will require approval.

We have released a Registration of Interest to contractors who may undertake construction of the scheme. Tenders are scheduled for release on 2 April.

Subject to the finalisation of all approvals and permit conditions, Tasmanian Irrigation anticipates being able to announce the successful contractor in late July in preparation for starting construction in spring 2025.

Tamar Irrigation Scheme

Capacity: 8,500 ML irrigation, industrial demand to be confirmed

Proposed Area: Beaconsfield, Dilston, Hillwood, Legana, Rowella, Pipers Brook and Pipers River

An agreement is now in place with Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania (ReCFIT) to progress the development of a business case for the Tamar Irrigation Scheme, due mid-June 2025.

Preliminary results for the economic assessment indicate that the scheme could provide a significant benefit to the region if it proceeds to construction. Work is continuing to verify this analysis, determine pathways for funding the required capital expenditure and develop the design and approvals pathways for this scheme.

ReCFIT has undergone an expressions of interest (EOI) process to engage prospective proponents for the development of the Tasmanian Green Hydrogen Hub.

Tasmanian Irrigation will continue to update landowners regarding the progress of this project for the Tamar Valley region.

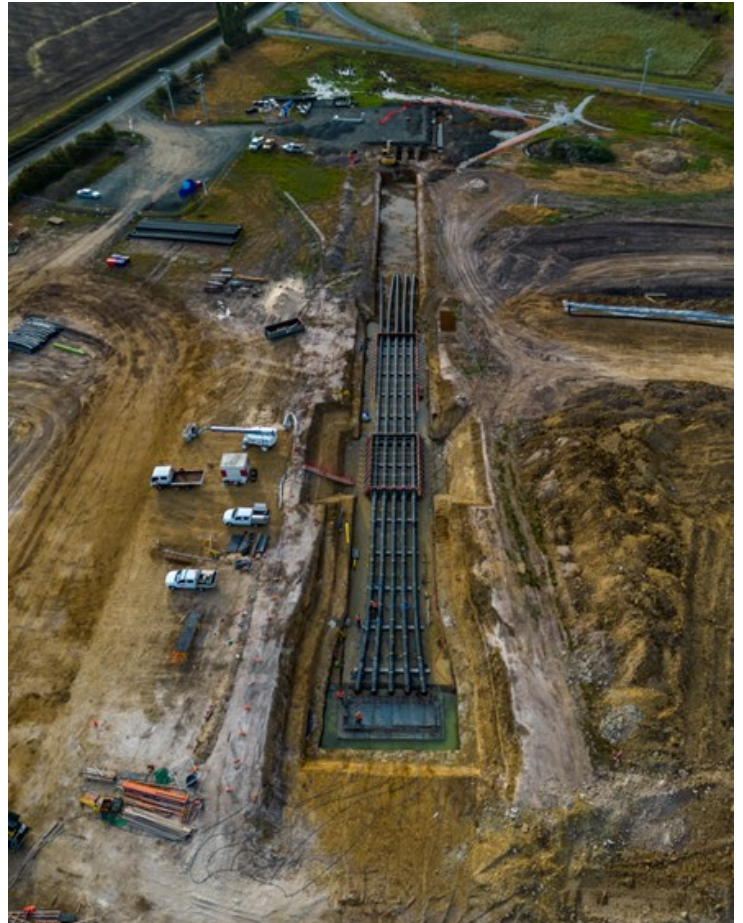
Northern Midlands Irrigation Scheme

Capacity: 25,500 megalitres

Area serviced: Macquarie, Barton, Conara, Campbell Town, Ross and the Lower Isis Valley

Construction of the Northern Midlands Irrigation Scheme continues to progress well. Almost 40km of pipeline has now been installed. Construction of the Valleyfield balance tank and Poatina pump station has commenced. Construction is also well underway on the Poatina buffer dam, a key component of the scheme. The ring interception trench is now completed, and bulk earthworks are underway. Progress remains on track to deliver first water in October 2026.

During February, the Tasmanian Irrigation Board toured the project, getting a first-hand look at pipe laying, and construction of the buffer dam. It was also an opportunity to meet representatives of our head contractor Hazell Bros. Thanks to David Skipper, Jake Gerke, Jacob Tierney, Josh Clark and the NMIS project team for making this possible and giving the Board an up-to-the-minute picture of the progress of construction.



Pictures

Top: Outlet pipes at the Poatina buffer dam

Above left: Interception trench construction, Poatina buffer dam

Above right: Rock removal, Valleyfield balance tank

Left: Pipe unloading, Valleyfield Road

A Chat With The Retiring CEO

Andrew Kneebone



Q: You started work with Tasmanian Irrigation in July 2018 with more than 25 years of senior and executive management irrigation in the water and electricity utility sectors. What attracted to you to apply for a position at TI at that time?

A: I had moved away from Tasmania for work reasons, but we were always looking for options to get back. Tasmanian Irrigation presented itself as an ideal opportunity given my water background, and one where I felt I could make a real difference.

Q: When you were appointed CEO the following year, what were your immediate and longer-term priorities?

A: My initial priorities were to rebuild the reputation of the business, particularly with irrigators and stakeholders. My ongoing priorities were to focus the organisation on providing services to our customers, improving the quality and transparency of information provided to irrigators, updating the approach to developing and delivering projects and to overhaul internal processes to ensure the Tasmanian Irrigation team worked together toward our goals.

Q: During your time as CEO, you have overseen the development of five new irrigation schemes and augmentations (Duck, Scottsdale, Don, North Esk and Greater Meander Augmentation) with a capacity to deliver an additional 34,230 megalitres of water to landowners. Describe the moment when you commission a new project that will deliver exceptional economic benefits to regional Tasmania?

A: I am always immensely proud of Tasmanian Irrigation and what our relatively small team delivers in collaboration with landowners, the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government. Standing with our government partners and irrigators to mark the first delivery of water on a new irrigation scheme is the culmination of great work by our team and contractors, and the community in which the scheme has been developed. It's also an exciting moment to reflect on the fact that every megalitre of water that flows onto agricultural land will create jobs, inject millions of dollars into the local economy and enable farmers to diversify and intensify. Tasmanian Irrigation has an incredibly simple purpose: to improve Tasmanian agriculture through developing and delivering irrigation — and we are excited to make this happen every day.

Q: What do you see as the key challenges and opportunities ahead for Tasmanian Irrigation?

A: The challenges of the future are set out in our strategic plan. We need to remain customer and stakeholder focused, we have to continue to develop as a financially and environmentally sustainable organisation and we need to have really good people who work with and for us.

Q: What are you most proud of in terms of Tasmanian Irrigation's achievements?

A: My most proud achievement is the team I have developed around me. The current Senior Leadership Team is just that, a great team. With them, and our entire workforce, we have been able to address some really intractable issues and find really good solutions.

The Greater South East Irrigation Scheme is a prime example of this. We inherited a range of unsustainable and problematic situations.

We have worked through them and developed excellent long term solutions and improved stakeholder and customer relationships along the way.

Q: On a personal level, what have been your greatest learnings during your time at Tasmanian Irrigation?

A: Three big things: That there is always a second right answer. That just because you are a small organisation doesn't mean you can't have big ambitions. It always pays to invest in your people.

Q: Who would you like to thank for supporting your journey at Tasmanian Irrigation?

A: There are too many to mention.

I have been fantastically supported by my wife and family, my team, my Board, and some really key people through some really tough and challenging times.

I must mention Chris Thompson from Pinion, he has always been a great supporter.

The various State Ministers and their advisors have provided great advice and support as well.

There are so many amongst our Irrigator Representative Committees who have also been much appreciated sounding boards for ideas and initiatives.





Q: Please share a few details about retirement Andrew Kneebone style...

A: Retirement to me is practicing not working full time. I don't know if I will be good at it or not. My plan is to remain active and engaged.

I really want to use my retirement to continue to contribute to the Tasmanian community, whether that be through volunteering or being on Boards, who knows.

My wife and I plan to travel and see more of Australia and hopefully the world. This isn't a very original thing for retirees to say, but there is a lot of this country to see and experience.

I have a home workshop to set up and make a lot more use of.

There will always be things to do, I'm sure.

Q: The three travel destinations on your retirement bucket list...

A: We want to go back and look around the Kimberly and see a lot more of Australia, including the Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales.

We also want to explore more of Tasmania and spend more time just getting to know more about our State.

Apart from that, Canada and Vietnam are on the list.

Thank you so much Andrew Kneebone for your dedication, passion, energy and professionalism at Tasmanian Irrigation. You have made a great difference to the organisation, people and Tasmanian agriculture. We wish you a wonderful retirement.

Welcome to the New CEO

Mike Sylvester

Driving transformational change in Tasmanian communities is what gets Mike Sylvester out of bed in the morning.

Pausing to reflect on his career before stepping into the role of CEO at Tasmanian Irrigation, Mike notes that he's long held an interest in the Company.

"My first exposure to Tasmanian Irrigation was in my time with Hydro Tasmania more than a decade ago. The two organisations worked together to ensure the needs of irrigators were met.

"What sticks in my mind is seeing the transformation of the agricultural sector through reliable access to water at the lowest sustainable cost. And I'm reminded of that every time I drive up the Midland Highway.

"Bringing the landscape alive, turning it green, enabling productive farmland where it was previously marginal, that's the legacy of Tasmanian Irrigation."

Mike has most recently led Blueline, an organisation whose purpose is to create rewarding career opportunities for people who are marginalised from mainstream employment.

"That might sound a long way from agriculture and irrigation, but there are many similarities," he said.

"Both organisations exist to deliver community impact, are purpose driven and have many varied stakeholders. The 'what' and the 'how' are different but both are focused on creating inter-generational change on the frontline of communities.

"When you support farmers and farms, they are in turn able to support their community. What that looks like is supporting local school leavers by creating new jobs, spending more in the local supply chain that helps sustain small business, attracting families to stay or move to a regional centre that's thriving.

"Those are the outcomes I will be focused on, where economic and social impacts meet."

Mike says he's delighted to take up the role of Chief Executive Officer at a time when reliable and sustainable access to water is more critical than ever.



"My experiences as a civil engineer have opened a privileged door and taken me all around the world to work on large-scale projects – power stations, dams, roads, bridges, water conveyance systems.

"I'm excited to bring that experience to bear in the place I've always called home, regardless of where I've been living.

"I look forward to working with the Tasmanian Irrigation team, customers and stakeholders to deliver sustainable economic growth that will yield benefits to the State for decades to come.

"The Company's 19 operational schemes will be progressively supplemented by new schemes that are now in the planning and construction stages. Collectively, these schemes will build resilience against climate variability and drive inter-generational sustainability for farming in Tasmania."

Building Water Use Efficiency Skills

TAS Farm Innovation Hub | Pinion Advisory



A new project is supporting Tasmanian producers to build confidence and skill in on-farm water management.

The Water Use Efficiency project is being delivered by Pinion Advisory with support from the TAS Farm Innovation Hub through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

The project will run until the end of 2025 and includes free extension activities for producers across Tasmania.

Project Manager Jo Jones said a co-design phase captured the needs of producers and preferences for training.

"It was a really valuable exercise, gathering producers in small groups to hear firsthand what their water-related pain points are, and what their key needs are in terms of extension and training," Jo said.

"We are now forging ahead with the activities and resources producers asked for.

"Topics such as stock water infrastructure design, pre-season irrigation maintenance and performance checks, and financial modelling and investment decision making for irrigation development were amongst the highest needs."

TAS Farm Innovation Hub Director Sandra Knowles said the project was an important element in the Hub's remit to support on-farm drought and climate resilience.

"This key hub program is designed to build confidence and capacity in on-farm water use and management, including soil and landscape health, and be focused on adoption of best-practice methods," Sandra said.

"It is great to see the roll out of activities to the farming community marking the culmination of a mountain of work in partnership with producers."

Between February and May, Ag Logic, a delivery partner for part of the project, is delivering irrigation scheduling workshops across the State in five regions.

Producers can register here: [Registration: Workshop 1 - Irrigated Soils - Soils 101/basics you should know](#)

[Registration: Workshop 2 - Irrigated Soils - Data driven irrigation decision making](#)



Farmer Focus

Will Bowden is a farmer in Bothwell and a member of the project reference group.

He sees great value in the Water Use Efficiency Project.

"This project is about helping to educate and upskill farmers and provide information across a wide range of water related topics," Will said.

"I think all the activities will answer a lot of the common questions that farmers have.

"Often if I'm unsure about something, I'll google it, be bombarded with results and still be left in the dark.

"Having the project website means all the relevant information can be in one place too."

All resources developed for the project are housed on the Hub's website here:

www.tasfarmhub.com.au/water-use-efficiency-project/

Water Offer to KNMIS Landowners

By Cody Townend, Corporate Services Manager

Landowners in the Kindred North Motton region are invited to purchase water entitlements at a discounted price of \$1,200 per megalitre.

As part of Tasmanian Irrigation's program to sell unsold water on existing irrigation schemes, 550 megalitres of water entitlements have been offered for sale on the Kindred North Motton Irrigation Scheme at a 23.5 per cent reduction from the \$1,570 per megalitre price previously in effect.

The Kindred North Motton Irrigation Scheme was commissioned in February 2014 and has the capacity to deliver 2,500 megalitres of high-surety water to the Kindred, Sprent, Abbotsham, Forth, Gawler, Ulverstone and North Motton areas.

Purchasing additional water entitlements can be an effective way to secure reliable water supply for your operations.

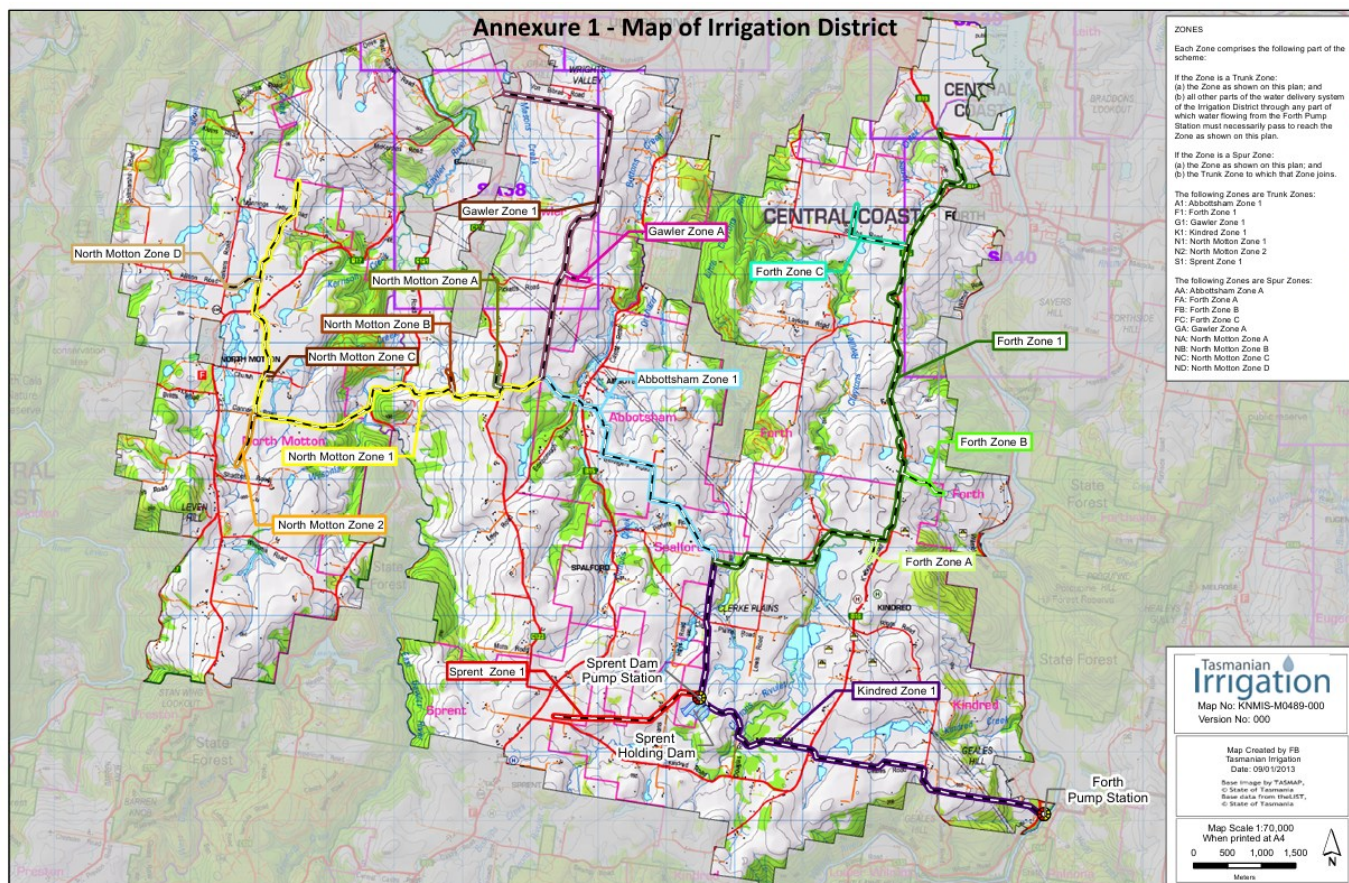
Tasmanian Irrigation also provides various purchasing options such as lease-to-buy and deferred payment options.

The table below provides a breakdown of the available water by zone (please also see map below).

If you are interested in buying water entitlements, please contact Tasmanian Irrigation on enquiries@tasirrigation.com.au or call Cody Townend on 0429 532 016.

Zone	Available ML*
Kindred Zone 1	550 ML
Abbotsham Zone 1	200 ML
Sprent Zone 1	60 ML
Gawler Zone 1	20 ML

** Cumulative zone capacity*



Emergency Management Plans Released

Natural Resource Management

Plans to safeguard natural assets in the event of emergencies, such as floods and bushfires, have just been released by Tasmania's three NRM bodies.

At the request of the Australian Government, NRM North, NRM South and Cradle Coast NRM have each prepared Biodiversity and Agricultural Natural Capital Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery Plans.

Tailored to each of Tasmania's NRM regions, the plans are the first of their kind and were developed with extensive stakeholder and expert input. They aim to better equip biodiversity and agricultural assets to respond to and recover from extreme weather events and biosecurity threats.

The plans identify areas for action, knowledge and information gaps, and opportunities to enhance stakeholder collaboration.

By identifying and assessing risks to priority biodiversity and agricultural assets within each region, the plans will strengthen stakeholder capabilities, capacity building, and strategic actions, alongside existing emergency management and recovery frameworks.

NRM North Corporate Services Manager Jenni Kew said the strategic plans consider not only the environmental impact of extreme weather events and biosecurity threats, but the financial liability as well.

"Investing in robust emergency preparedness frameworks not only enhances the resilience of Tasmania's valuable ecosystems, but also lowers long-term recovery and restoration costs, which strengthens regional economies, particularly in the tourism and agriculture sectors," she said.

Cradle Coast NRM Manager Bonnie Bonneville said the plans will help safeguard the region's natural and agricultural assets.

"These plans aim to mitigate the risk and minimise the damage to our region's biodiversity assets and

agricultural landscapes so they can recover quickly and sustainably from natural disasters. Collaboration across all stakeholders has been key to their development."

NRM South CEO Nepelle Crane said the plans are comprehensive in their long-term approach to natural disasters.

"Through these plans, our long-term goal is to ensure that natural value priorities are part of all stages of emergency management (planning, response and recovery) along with human safety and infrastructure."

The plans are now available on each NRM organisation's website:

<https://nrmsouth.org.au/project/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery-plan/>

<https://nrmnorth.org.au/about-us/emergency-plan>

<https://cradlecoast.com/projects/emergency-preparedness-and-response-project/>

These projects are funded by the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust and delivered by NRM South, NRM North and Cradle Coast NRM, as members of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel.



Regrowth begins following bushfire in central Tasmania. Picture: Karen Dwyer

Field Adventures — AusRivAS Survey Results

By Amy Madsen, Environmental Officer — Compliance

Annual testing to assess the biological health of Tasmanian rivers has again revealed pleasing results.

My colleague Jesse Lewis and I recently braved the elements for three days of spring surveys in the Meander River catchment and Floods Creek.

Between bursts of warming sunshine, steady breezes, and an unexpected downpour, we delved into Tasmania's waterways to fulfill Tasmanian Irrigation's annual compliance commitments.

As part of the Australian River Assessment System (AusRivAS) protocol, we sampled macroinvertebrates at seven sites, upstream and downstream of the Meander and Floods Creek dams.

These tiny water-dwelling organisms serve as excellent indicators of river health.

Using a fine net, we collected samples from riffles — shallow sections of streams where flowing water creates a mosaic of gravel and cobbles, offering diverse habitats.

After completing habitat assessments and in-situ water quality testing, we live-picked samples on-site before preserving them for detailed lab analysis.

By comparing the macroinvertebrate diversity and abundance to reference data, we calculated scores to assess the biological health of each site.

Typically, our sites range from Band "A" (similar to reference) to "B" (slightly impaired).

Natural variations in AusRivAS scores occur year-to-year and season-to-season due to factors such as rainfall, seasonality, and sampler variability.

Despite concerns about potential impacts, the final analysis revealed that macroinvertebrate communities remained stable or slightly improved, suggesting no immediate negative impact on the river's ecological health.



Survey results continued...

However, continued monitoring over the years will help assess any potential long-term effects.

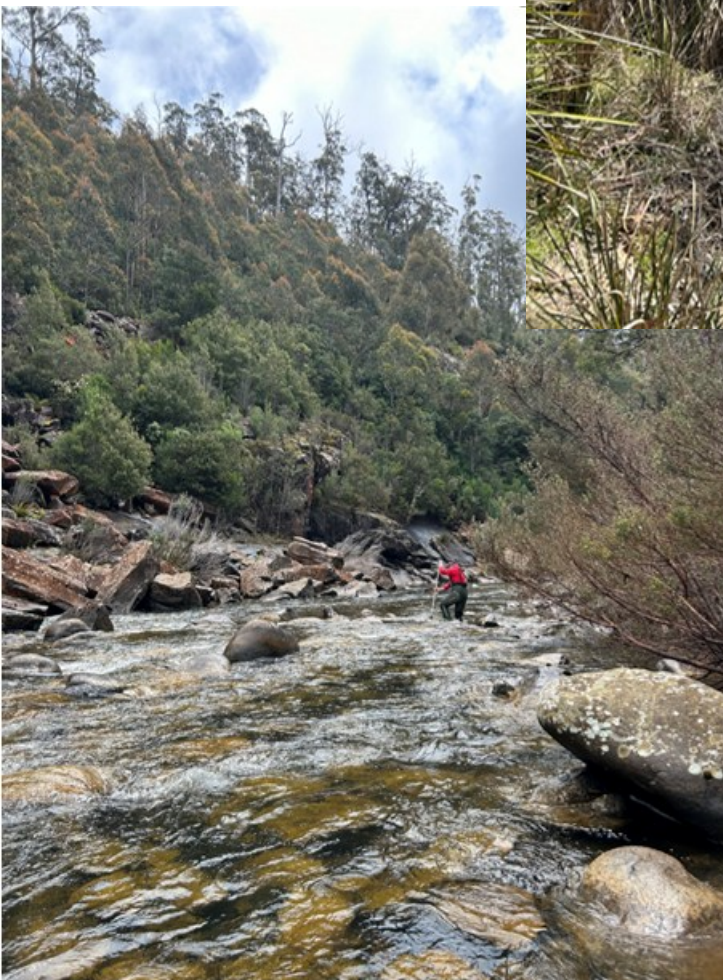
Our results showed:

- Scores at all Meander River sites improved from autumn to spring, with the site directly below Meander Dam increasing from B and C to B; and
- Scores at the Floods Creek sites also improved but remained within the Band B range.

The thrill of spotting families like flatworms, water beetles, mayflies, water mites, and caddisflies among others reminds us of the incredible biodiversity in these ecosystems.



“These surveys provide crucial insights into how dams influence aquatic life downstream and ensure that our operations continue to align with sustainable environmental practices.”





TASMANIAN IRRIGATION — MEET THE TEAM

Amy Madsen

Tasmanian Irrigation title:

Environmental Officer – Compliance.

Snapshot of your work and study history: I grew up on Banwell, a Merino sheep grazing property on the East Coast of Tasmania that has been in my family for five generations. My early education took place at Triabunna District School, with short stints at Bothwell District School and Orford Primary School. For Years 10 to 12, I attended boarding school at Fahan in Hobart.

Initially, I planned to take a gap year for travel, but after receiving the Domino's Give for Good Scholarship, which supported my living expenses, I chose to go straight to university. I studied a Bachelor of Applied Science (Agriculture and Business) at the University of Tasmania, starting in 2018. During my studies, I developed a strong passion for sustainable resource and land management, guided by my father's philosophy of leaving the land better than we found it.

Throughout school and university, I worked at a local café in Orford, on our family farm, and at Hansen Orchards, Reid Fruits and Houston's Lettuce. After graduating, COVID cut short my travel plans so I started work as an Assistant Consultant at AgAssist, gaining experience in soil sampling, GPS farm mapping, vineyard trellis making and data handling.

Brief description of your current role: I joined Tasmanian Irrigation in December 2021. My role involves supporting the implementation of environmental management and compliance systems.

My key responsibilities are:

- Preparing, amending, quality controlling, and auditing Farm Water Access Plans (Farm WAPs) to ensure compliance with environmental and irrigation regulations;

- Environmental Compliance: Assisting in regulatory compliance activities, conducting field inspections, supporting environmental reporting, and ensuring adherence to environmental standards for operational and new irrigation schemes;
- Environmental Handbook for Operations and Maintenance: Assisting in the implementation, documentation, and training of operators on compliance requirements; and
- Stakeholder Engagement: Working with landowners, irrigators, environmental consultants, regulators, and internal teams to support compliance efforts.

What do you enjoy most about working at Tasmanian Irrigation: I enjoy the incredible variety of my work. One moment, I might be creating an irrigation map for a farmer; the next, I'm out in the field taking water samples from a river. I could be on a construction site watching pipes being installed or trekking through dense bushland deploying or retrieving camera traps to study the movement of protected species—an essential part of environmental impact assessments for new irrigation scheme development.

Having grown up on the dry east coast and experienced drought firsthand—helping my dad feed sheep in harsh conditions—I deeply appreciate the role irrigation plays in transforming the landscape. Seeing pivots irrigating green crops instead of dust blowing out to sea and livestock struggling for feed is incredibly rewarding.

What has been your most memorable moment since joining Tasmanian Irrigation: One of the most memorable aspects of my role is conducting Farm WAP audits with farmers.

Many of the farmers I work with are incredibly passionate about environmental stewardship and eagerly showcase their sustainable practices. Farm WAP audits provide a fantastic opportunity to have insightful conversations about conservation covenants, methane emission reduction, revegetation projects, and fencing off waterways to protect riparian zones.

I find it especially rewarding when I meet farmers who take pride in their environmental management efforts—whether it's installing weather stations, implementing precision irrigation, or adopting regenerative agriculture techniques. Their enthusiasm is contagious, and it's inspiring to see firsthand how they integrate sustainability into their irrigation operations.

Favourite book: One book that really stood out to me was *True Spirit* by Jessica Watson. It's her memoir about sailing solo, non-stop, and unassisted around the world at just 16 years old. Funny enough, I'm not a sailor myself, but I couldn't put this book down. I remember feeling so inspired by her bravery and determination—it really resonated with me at the time since I was also 16 when I read it. It made me feel empowered to take on challenges and be brave in my own way.

Favourite food: It's hard to beat going home to the farm and sitting down to a plate of roast lamb and vegetables with gravy.

Favourite movie: I love watching documentaries about regenerative agriculture, food waste, famous athletes, cooking, and extreme expeditions. That said, as a kid, I really enjoyed *Tomorrow, When the War Began*—it's probably the only movie I've watched more than once!

Favourite holiday location: My favourite holiday location to date would have to be Chamonix, France. I have travelled to Peru, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Croatia, France, Italy, India, and Switzerland, but Chamonix stands out as the most incredible destination.

Best piece of advice for the next generation:

Only take what you need. You might always feel like you want or need more, but as long as you have the necessities, you'll thrive. Less is more. Think twice before buying another dress just to wear once or filling your fridge with food you'll never cook. Don't waste — get creative with flavours and appreciate the effort, resources, and impact behind everything you consume.

If I was Prime Minister for a day, I would:

I would prioritise sustainability, healthcare, education, housing affordability, and stronger support for primary producers. I'd accelerate the transition to renewable energy, invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, and support green jobs.

In healthcare, I'd expand mental health services and improve regional access. For education, I'd boost public school funding and integrate climate literacy into the curriculum. To tackle the housing crisis, I'd increase the affordable housing supply, strengthen renter protections, and support first-home buyers.

I would also prioritise greater support for primary producers by ensuring they receive fairer prices for their produce and fibres, strengthening market stability, and investing in programs that enhance resilience to climate change.

I'd improve water security and access for farmers, increase funding for sustainable agricultural practices, and expand research into innovative, climate-adaptive farming techniques.

The three people you would invite to share dinner with you:

Inspiring Australian ultra-runner Ned Brockman, globally renowned British singer / song writer Adele and British entertainer Robbie Williams. Each guest brings a unique perspective—resilience, artistry, and showmanship—making for an unforgettable evening.

National Water Grid Team Tours Tassie Water Assets

The Australian Government's National Water Grid (NWG) Fund is investing in the nation's next generation water infrastructure.

The NWG team plays a key role in assessing project proposals for Tasmanian irrigation schemes, which are delivered in partnership with the Tasmanian Government and supported by our irrigators.

During February, staff from the NWG visited Tasmania to gain a greater understanding of recently-funded water infrastructure, which will assist them when assessing future proposals – including Tasmanian Irrigation schemes and projects, and TasWater infrastructure.

Over three days the group covered a significant area of the State, taking in the Greater Meander, Don, Northern Midlands, Sassafras, and Greater South East irrigation schemes.

The tour was lead by Program Development and Delivery General Manager Jacob Gerke and Chief

Operating Officer David Skipper.

David said the tour enabled the NWG team to see the impact of investment on the ground.

"The assets we visited illustrated the whole lifecycle of an irrigation scheme – from Northern Midlands which is under construction, to the recently completed augmentation of the Greater Meander scheme.

"Our guests were impressed with the work we've undertaken to continue development of critical irrigation infrastructure in Tasmania and impressed by the passion of our team."

Visiting NWG staff said getting out on site to visit projects firsthand is critical to their work. Being able to see projects at all stages of the delivery lifecycle and meet with stakeholders who rely on reliable water for their businesses was highly valuable. One NWG team member had even been working with Tasmania on some of these projects for more than five years.



Representatives of the NWG, Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, and Tasmanian Irrigation at Pooley Wines in the south east of the State, where they learned about how the local business and region will benefit from the Greater South East Irrigation Scheme

NWG representatives learn about the Northern Midlands Irrigation Scheme at the Valleyfield header tank construction site



Consultation Period Ends for Community Management

Tasmanian Irrigation Schemes

Work continues on paving the way for groups of irrigators to take on a greater role in managing their irrigation scheme.

Tasmanian Irrigation supports community management of publicly owned irrigation schemes where it makes sense.

We are always looking for efficiencies in how we operate schemes, and if there's a more efficient way for irrigators to access the schemes, we support that.

Legislative changes passed by the Tasmanian Parliament in late 2023 enable groups of irrigators to apply to have some powers and functions delegated to them.

During 2024, Tasmanian Irrigation ran a two-stage consultation process to seek feedback on draft application documents and consult on issues related to community management.

Responding to feedback raised during the first stage of consultation required us to seek external advice on a range of matters, and revised documents were issued for feedback in November last year.

The consultation period has now ended, and we thank everyone who took time to provide feedback.

The TI team is reviewing feedback to assess whether any further changes are needed to the application documents.

Once the documents are in final draft form, they will go to the Tasmanian Irrigation Board for approval.

There are several processes that require additional work before applications can open for community management.

In the meantime, we are working with the Winnaleah Irrigation Scheme Limited (WISL) Board on a trial of the application process.

WISL is keen to pursue community management for the Winnaleah scheme, under the provisions of the new legislation.

The trial will 'road test' the application documents and process to fine tune it as needed to ensure it works well in practice.

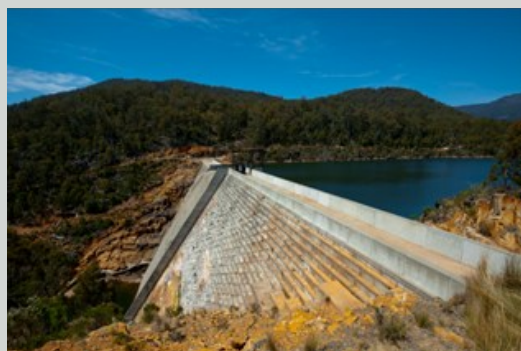
We thank the WISL Board for committing the time and resources needed to run a comprehensive trial, which will no doubt benefit any irrigator groups who want to apply for community management in future.

Tasmanian Irrigation expects to be able to open the application process more widely before the 2025/26 summer irrigation season.

For further information, please contact Tasmanian Irrigation on (03) 6398-8433 or enquiries@tasirrigation.com.au



Upcoming Events



Please visit Tasmanian Irrigation's website at www.tasmanianirrigation.com.au to stay up to date with the latest information. And don't forget to follow Tasmanian Irrigation on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Forecast upcoming events include:

Greater South East Irrigation Scheme Drop in Days

Date	Venue	Time
6 March	Richmond Supper Hall	10am-3pm
13 March	Pontville Memorial Hall	10am-3pm
20 March	Pontville Memorial Hall	10am-3pm
3 April	Richmond Supper Hall	10am-3pm
10 April	Richmond Supper Hall	10am-3pm
17 April	Richmond Supper Hall	10am-3pm

17 April 2025

Greater South East Irrigation Scheme water sales close

April 2025

Planned construction tender release for Sassafras Wesley Vale Irrigation Scheme Augmentation

Late 2025

Sassafras Wesley Vale Irrigation Scheme Augmentation construction commences

For more information about this newsletter, please contact:

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