

Tasmanian  
Irrigation

# Sassafras Wesley Vale Augmentation Project

John Wright, Project Manager



*Hi everyone — John Wright here, Project Manager for the Sassafras Wesley Vale Irrigation Scheme Augmentation (SWISA) project.*

The project is starting to gain momentum with the tender for construction works opening on 11 July with great engagement from the industry. The tender period will close 2 September, and the project team will then move through the tender evaluation process. Construction is expected to commence later this year.

Public comments were invited on preliminary documentation for the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) in July, with no comments received. The documentation moved through to the statutory assessment period, with final approval received from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on 15 August, putting the project in a strong position as we move towards construction award.

Various state permits have been submitted and are currently under review, including State Flora and Fauna, Aboriginal Heritage, Department of State Growth, and Parks and Wildlife. Now with three other smaller tenders for principal supply items closing, the project team is looking forward to putting some pipe in the ground.

# Project stages

## Phase 1 - Prefeasibility (12 to 18 months)



## Phase 2 - Feasibility (12 to 18 months)



## Phase 3 - Approvals & Design (24 to 30 months)



Complete detailed design



Agree land access arrangements with landholders for construction



Community engagement



Secure regulatory approvals



Tender process for materials and construction contracts



Final State Government approval for construction

## Phase 4 - Construction & Commissioning (18 to 30 months)



## Phase 5 - Close-out (6 to 18 months)



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## Planning and design

Design is currently moving from Issued for Tender (IFT) to Issued for Construction (IFC), with only minor updates/changes required based on contractor feedback.

## Stakeholder engagement

During the first few months of construction, contractors will meet with impacted landowners to finalise the Landowner Access Agreements. This will be done in conjunction with Scott, our Landowner Liaison.

During the winter period from 31 March 2026 to 1 November 2026, shutdown works will need to be completed on the Great Bend Pump Station (GBPS) to start the pump station upgrade. During this time General Availability (GA) Water will not be available. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause. If you have any further questions regarding GA Water, please reach out to John Wright.

We are looking to start the Winter Water Sales process for SWISA in the coming months. If you would like to pre-register your interest, please contact John Wright (details below).

## Regulatory and compliance

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC)  
*Approval has been received*

Department of State Growth (DSG) [Roads]  
*The licence application is submitted and under review*

Parks and Wildlife Services (PWS) Reserve Activity Assessment [RAA]  
*The application is submitted and under review*

Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania (AHT)  
*The application is submitted and currently with the Minister for approval*

## Financials

The 8 per cent deposit will be due when the construction contract is awarded. Tasmanian Irrigation will issue invoices once the contract has been signed.

## People Spotlight- Brendan Keep

### From Potato fields to water flows

For Brenden Keep, the transition from potato seeding to water scheme operations more than three years ago wasn't just a career change –it was a natural progression in his commitment to Tasmania's agricultural community.

With more than 20 years in the agricultural industry, Brenden brought a strong foundation of local knowledge and trusted relationships when he stepped into the role of scheme operator for the Sassafras Wesley Vale Irrigation Scheme (SWIS). Those years working closely with farmers across the region proved invaluable, giving him insights that can't be learned from textbooks or training manuals.



"Having those existing relationships with the local farmers really helped," said Brenden.

"I already understood their needs and challenges, and they could trust me to deliver."

Now, with construction on the scheme's augmentation about to commence, Brenden's enthusiasm is palpable. The expansion will significantly increase the scheme's capacity to support the community's agricultural activities.

"The best part is just being able to deliver more water to the community," he says, highlighting what drives him in his role –service to his neighbours and fellow farmers.

Living on the scheme with his two teenage sons, Kyle and Cody, Brenden has a front-row seat to the infrastructure he helps manage. The family property is home to two dogs, a horse, and a small cattle operation, keeping life interesting beyond his professional duties.

When he's not ensuring water flows smoothly to local farms, Brenden can be found pursuing his outdoor passions. Trout fishing remains a favourite pursuit, although time is often at a premium. He's also taken up golf as a beginner, embracing the challenge of learning something new. But perhaps his greatest adventures are in motorbike riding, where he joins a group of mates for epic journeys. An upcoming trip to Mildura promises to be another memorable expedition.

For Brenden Keep, the role of scheme operator represents more than just a job – it's about supporting the agricultural community he's been part of for decades, ensuring the reliable water supply that keeps local farms thriving. With the scheme's augmentation project commencing, he's positioned to make an even greater impact on the region he calls home.

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### **Acknowledgement of funding**

Total Project Cost: \$124.2 million

Federal Government Funding Allocation: \$62.1 million

State Government Funding Allocation: \$31.05 million

Irrigator Funded Portion through the sale of water entitlements: \$31.05 million

