

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Environment, Climate Change & Water



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IRRIGATION UPGRADES FOR WERRIBEE AND BACCHUS MARSH

Werribee and Bacchus Marsh irrigators, Victoria's biggest producers of fresh vegetables, will have their ageing irrigation infrastructure upgraded to increase water security and boost agricultural production.

The Andrews Labor Government will provide \$11.4 million for Werribee \$5 million for Bacchus Marsh as part of *Victorian Budget 2016/17* to ensure the on-going viability of farm businesses in both districts.

These projects will underpin existing jobs in agriculture and related industries, as well as helping to create new on-farm positions through boosting farm production.

The Werribee Irrigation District upgrade will see 39km of open channels replaced with pipelines, saving five billion litres of water a year. This will underpin 660 existing jobs as well as help to create 18 new on-farm positions.

The Werribee Irrigation District covers an area of 3000ha of which 2350ha is used for intensive horticulture, chiefly broccoli, lettuce and cauliflowers, with a farm gate value of more than \$187 million a year.

The Bacchus Marsh upgrade will modernise 43km of irrigation infrastructure, mainly through replacing open channels with pipelines, generating 1.1 billion litres of water savings annually. This will underpin 430 jobs in agriculture and related industries and lead to 42 new positions through boosting farm production.

The Bacchus Irrigation District covers an area of about 1000ha and produces lettuces, tree fruit, turf for commercial home use and other produce generating about \$50 million a year.

Two thirds of the water saved from these projects will be returned to irrigators to boost agricultural production and irrigation system reliability while the remaining third will be provided to the environment.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water Lisa Neville

"Werribee and Bacchus Marsh irrigators have been doing it tough with on-going dry conditions and ageing irrigation infrastructure."

"These projects will give Victoria's biggest producers of vegetables a secure water supply for the future."

Quotes attributable to Member for Werribee Tim Pallas

"This Budget delivers water security for irrigators in Werribee, underpinning hundreds of jobs and boosting farm production."

Quotes attributable to Member for Melton Don Nardella

"This project is a major win for irrigators in Bacchus Marsh not only giving them security around existing jobs, but certainty to boost farm production in the future."