



The Hon . Barnaby Joyce MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

David Littleproud MP
Member for Maranoa

2 April 2017

\$31m for Queensland MDB irrigators to modernise water infrastructure

- **Queensland Murray–Darling Basin irrigators will soon be able to apply for a share of \$31 million in Coalition Government funding to upgrade on-farm water infrastructure, under a new round of the Healthy HeadWaters programme.**
- **The Healthy HeadWaters provides funding to irrigators for more modern and efficient water infrastructure, in return for at least 50 per cent of water savings generated by the project.**

Queensland irrigators in Murray–Darling Basin catchments are encouraged to apply for a share in \$31 million in Coalition Government funding to upgrade their on-farm water infrastructure, with a new round of the Healthy HeadWaters Water Use Efficiency programme, set to open soon.

Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of The Nationals, Barnaby Joyce, and Member for Maranoa, David Littleproud, said irrigators could apply for grants to cover up to 90 per cent of the cost of installing more modern and efficient water infrastructure on their farms.

“The Coalition Government is committed to water saving measures that support triple bottom line outcomes for communities, irrigators and the environment. Since coming to Government in 2013 we have moved away from the indiscriminate open-tender buybacks policy of the former Labor Government and been considering communities first and foremost when implementing programmes to meet Basin Plan targets,” Mr Joyce said.

“Findings from the Northern Basin Review undertaken by the Murray Darling Basin Authority showed that many small towns in southern Queensland had been heavily impacted by the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

“Irrigators who take part in these infrastructure programmes report significant benefits for their businesses, like the ability to grow a greater variety of higher-value crops, and increased farm productivity with greater yields.”

Member for Maranoa, David Littleproud, said he understands how vital this funding is to agricultural communities, particularly along the Northern Basin, and welcomes the new round of Healthy HeadWaters funding.

Mr Littleproud said modern and efficient infrastructure saves irrigators from losing water, and improves the health of the Basin system.

“Through the Healthy Headwaters initiative, irrigators will be able to retain 50 per cent of the water savings generated by their approved project, allowing them to bolster farm productivity and profitability,” Mr Littleproud said.

“Importantly this round of Healthy Headwaters will be more flexible, allowing irrigators to offer water from a different water management area than where their approved project will be undertaken. What this means is that it will be easier for irrigators who hold properties and water across a few regions, such as the Lower Balonne and Condamine, to now to take part and contribute to the sustainability of the Basin.”

A Lower Balonne irrigator, Bill Knights, who took part in an earlier round of the programme used Healthy HeadWaters funding for works to convert 160 hectares of fields to from siphon to a pipe-through-the-bank system and increase on-farm storage capacity by 638 ML.

“The change was about minimal labour and better crop yield. The fields are now better set up to be watered evenly and I can do it by opening a flapper at the top of the head drain. It takes me 10-15 minutes to water that area where before I was spending 45 minutes,” Mr Knights said.

For more information on the Healthy HeadWaters Water Use Efficiency project, including information on how to apply for funding, visit dnrm.qld.gov.au/water/catchments-planning/healthy-headwaters/water-use-efficiency-project, email hhwue@dnrm.qld.gov.au or call 07 4529 1321.

Fast facts

- **The Coalition Government is making more than \$8 billion available for more modern and efficient infrastructure across the Basin as part of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan.**
- **The Coalition Government has committed up to \$154.9 million for the Healthy HeadWaters Water Use Efficiency Project.**
- **Applicants in this round will be able to offer water from a different Water Management Area than contains the land on which they propose to undertake works. The water and works need to be in the same catchment.**

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