



MEDIA STATEMENT

8 April 2015

GREENLIGHT FOR VISIONARY AND SUSTAINABLE WATER RE-USE PROJECT

Work will start this year on the \$21.7m Gawler Water Re-use Scheme (GWRS), a key step in a program to unlock new sources of water in the Barossa Valley.

Light Regional Council last Tuesday (31 March) resolved to proceed with its project partners, the Australian Government and Seppeltsfield Wines Pty Ltd in the Barossa Valley.

Mayor Bill O'Brien said Council's initiative to conceive and pursue the Gawler stormwater project would protect and advance the local economy, local environment and local jobs.

"This is a foundation project that takes stormwater and, in the long term, treated wastewater discharge that harms the environment of the Gulf St Vincent and uses it for a productive purpose," Mayor O'Brien said.

"We are now firmly on the path to greater use of 'western water' to reduce our reliance on an increasingly unreliable River Murray in the east. The stormwater re-use in our project will immediately substitute 800ML being taken from the Murray.

"Light Regional Council has a clear vision for this area as a premium domestic and export food bowl and a great place to live."

Council will provide \$11m to the cost of the Scheme through a loan via the Local Government Financing Authority. The Australian Government will provide \$10.7m funding under its National Urban Water and Desalination Plan, which supports investment in desalination, recycling and reclaiming water so as to improve water security.

The Scheme is expected to be completed by May 2016 but be operational ahead of completion so that water captured can be distributed as soon as is practicable.

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Under the agreement, Seppeltsfield commits to buy all water generated by the Gawler Water Re-use Scheme and to operate the Scheme. It also has an option to buy the Scheme's infrastructure outright from Council after six years.

Council will satisfy Commonwealth goals by substituting 800ML of River Murray water to irrigate many of its ovals and reserves. Other benefits include accruing water sales of at least \$1m every year and, after the sixth year, the potential sale of the Scheme for a net \$10m. Further, the potable water currently used will be replaced by non-potable water.

"Council stands to gain financially but the driver for our community is the benefit to our triple bottom line," Mayor O'Brien said.

"First is lower production costs leading to increased economic activity and exports; second, the terrific environmental outcomes for both the Murray and the Gulf St Vincent and; third, socially with more local jobs."

The GWRS will harvest stormwater from the Gawler River at the Wingate dam site. The water is harvested consistent with the Western Mount Lofty Ranges Water Allocation Plan and predominantly is stormwater run-off caused by urbanisation. It will be piped to a holding dam from where it will be supplied via a new pipeline to western Barossa. Construction will include:

- Gawler River flow gauging station
- Gawler River harvesting pump station
- 430ML Wingate storage basin and supply pump station
- Piped supply network, including booster pump stations
- Managed aquifer recharge trial site with one bore
- Micro treatment plant for urban water reuse
- Storage tanks
- 330ML Hill storage dam

The project was only able to proceed with the advent of a private partner, Seppeltsfield. An assured customer for all the water generated by GWRS was needed for the project to go ahead.

Mayor O'Brien said Council continually looks for ways to stimulate water re-use and reclamation to waterproof premium food and wine industries in the region north of the Gawler River. This also will help to offset any impact of climate change, particularly on ripening and vintage.

"Council strongly supports collaboration and collective action to deliver that objective." Mayor O'Brien said.

"The Gawler Water Re-use Scheme fits the bill in every way with collective government action and considered partnerships with the private sector to rejuvenate and nurture our economy. This Scheme can be a significant activator for other irrigation schemes to make more water available to all growers and producers in both the Barossa Valley and the northern Adelaide plains."

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