



Water Security Scheme Business Case gets underway

Lockyer Valley Regional Council has moved forward on a regional water security strategy by awarding a contract to Jacobs Group (Australia) Pty Ltd to develop a detailed business case, with work expected to start almost immediately and be completed by June 2020.

Brisbane-based Jacobs is one of Australia's leading water infrastructure consultants with a combined experience of 250 years in water infrastructure development, which has delivered 25 similar business cases over the past 10 years.

Acting on behalf of the Lockyer Valley & Somerset Water Collaborative, Council secured a \$1.4m grant from the Queensland Government Department of State Development to prepare the Lockyer Valley & Somerset Water Security Scheme Detailed Business Case.

Lockyer Valley Regional Council Mayor Tanya Milligan said the Business Case was a vital step in securing a potential additional supply of sustainable rural water for the two council areas, and especially for the communities that depend on strong farming and business sectors.

"Now that Jacobs has been appointed, the first stage demand analysis will get underway involving face-to-face meetings with irrigators and other water users to determine exactly how much water they want and at what prices they would be willing to pay.

"This is a make or break opportunity for irrigators to make their preferences known. Without knowing how much new water is needed at what prices users are willing to pay, the full Business Case would not be able to proceed," Mayor Milligan said.

Chair of the Water Collaborative, Stephen Robertson said the Collaborative would stress to Jacobs the importance of getting the consultation with farmers and other users right in order to validate demand.

"The Business Case must get the most accurate projections possible from the region's water users and consider how that could leverage SEQ's potential purified recycled water capacity.

"Water security for the Lockyer Valley and Somerset regions requires the recommissioning of the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme by SEQWater and Mayors Milligan, Lehmann and other members of the Collaborative will meet with SEQWater to discuss their plans and timelines in the near future.

"As the drought continues it is expected the Queensland Government and SEQWater will start planning to activate other water security infrastructure, just as they have done recently with the Gold Coast Desalination Plant.

"Continuing to provide the nation with the highest quality produce from Australia's Salad Bowl will need strategic support from other levels of government and securing new reliable water supplies is the key component of that," Mr Robertson said.

Lockyer Valley Regional Council established the Lockyer Valley & Somerset Water Collaborative in 2018 as a cooperative partnership between relevant stakeholders, including local governments, Queensland Urban Utilities, Locker Water Users Forum, Lockyer Valley Growers and the Lockyer Valley Chamber of Commerce.

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