



Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



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Government support provides confidence

Government support for investigations into how water storage could provide a reliable water supply to Wairarapa was welcomed today during a visit to the region by the Minister for Primary Industries, Hon Nathan Guy.

Wairarapa Water Use Project chairman Bob Francis said the idea of storing water for irrigation and community uses had been explored in the region for decades.

“The reliable supply and management of water in the catchment through storage is an opportunity that has been carefully and thoroughly investigated over the last five years,” Mr Francis said.

“Support from the Ministry for Primary Industries through the Irrigation Acceleration Fund (IAF) has been critical in enabling this idea to progress. We now have two proposed schemes that aim to boost regional prosperity while supporting environmental and community uses.

“The IAF’s latest contribution has provided the confidence to move ahead with the feasibility study and expand discussions with farmers and the community about the opportunities and challenges of the proposal.”

Martyn Dunne, Director General of the Ministry for Primary Industries sees the project as a valuable investment for the Wairarapa community.

“Through the IAF, we have committed \$804,000 towards advancing the Wairarapa Water Use Project,” Mr Dunne said.

“IAF is a mechanism we use to support sustainable primary sector growth in the regions; helping to achieve the government’s goal of doubling the value of primary industry exports by 2025.”

Next month the project will be talking with farmers about possible irrigated land uses at a series of farm field days, followed by an independent survey to understand farmers’ interest in water and in investing in irrigation and scheme ownership.

Other feasibility work included geotechnical, environmental and social assessments, along with consideration of options or future scheme ownership structures.

Later this year, an assessment would be made about whether to proceed to the next stage – the creation of a new commercial entity that would raise capital to develop the scheme.

Investigations since 2010 have been led and funded by the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

The IAF helps support the development of irrigation infrastructure proposals to the stage where they are investment ready, which means they must be commercially robust and demonstrate a high level of community support.

The Government also supports these projects through Crown Irrigation Investments Ltd (CIIL), which acts as a bridging investor for regional water infrastructure development.

Environmental opportunities offered by water storage include more consistent river flows in summer and reduced pressure on ground water sources. Water storage can also support urban water management.

More information on the Wairarapa water use project is available here:

<http://www.wairarapawater.org.nz/>

More information on the IAF is available here: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/funding-and-programmes/farming/irrigation-acceleration-fund/>

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