Construction commences at Wrights Road Storage Ponds

Construction of the Wrights Road Storage Ponds began today at a 120-hectare property located at Wrights Road, near Burnt Hill. The ponds are expected to be operational for the 2029/2030 irrigation season.

The water storage ponds will hold 8.2 million cubic metres of irrigation water which will provide a reliable supply of irrigation water for farmers who are shareholders in Burnt Hill Storage Limited (BHSL). The ponds store consented water from the Waimakariri River for supplementary use when water from the run-of-the-river supply is restricted or unavailable.

The $60M project is expected to provide a positive boost to the local and regional economy over its three-year construction period. The Government is providing up to $15.6M of loan funding from the Regional Infrastructure Fund for the construction of the storage ponds.

BHSL would like to acknowledge its longstanding partnership with Rooney Earthmoving Limited (REL) and the important role REL has played in achieving this key milestone. We look forward to working together during the construction period.

Burnt Hill Storage Limited (BHSL) Chairman Hugh Martyn says having access to stored water will increase reliability for farmers' businesses while also providing BHSL with the opportunity to pursue environmental and climate change adaptation initiatives.

"It's important to be able to store water so that we can use water efficiently during the irrigation season to grow food for New Zealanders and to contribute to our export market. Agriculture is hugely important to Canterbury and plays a vital role in New Zealand's economic resilience.

"We are all too familiar with the economic and environmental impacts of drought and climate change is already accelerating this process. Investing in water storage helps Canterbury withstand prolonged drought conditions while ensuring a more consistent and reliable supply of water for farming and environmental initiatives."

Irrigation New Zealand's CEO Karen Williams says that the realities of climate change mean that as a country we need to be smarter about capturing, storing and using water efficiently.

“Water storage projects such as the Wrights Road Storage Ponds play an important role in enhancing the resilience of infrastructure services that are crucial to New Zealand’s economy and communities dealing with climate change. Resilience infrastructure assists with community and business adaptation while safeguarding the well-being of future generations.”

Ends

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Note: The Regional Infrastructure Fund is administered by Kānoa – Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.