

Media Release
Vinyl Council of Australia
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PVC pipes reign in water saving project

PVC pipe is playing a large part in the Wimmera Mallee water saving pipeline project.

Up to 8000 kilometres of PVC pipe will be used in the Wimmera Mallee water saving pipeline project. Australian made PVC pipe will make up the bulk of the small and medium branches off the key trunks of the pipeline.

The \$501 million project is expected to save 103 mega litres of water annually lost by evaporation and seepage and is currently the largest regional water scheme in Australia, requiring 9000 kms of pipeline by completion. The area covered, the North Western region of Victoria is approximately 10 percent of Victoria.

Project Liaison Jo Bourke says the region is currently running at only four percent of water storage capacity due to the drought.

“The last 10 years of draught have been very difficult for locals. For two years farms in some areas have even had to receive water in trucks,” she says.

“The current system of channels means up to 90 percent of water is lost – so this pipeline will make a considerable difference to the amount of water available to farms and townships.”

Jo says the project will drastically improve water supply to 36 towns and 5,500 farmers.

Vinyl Council of Australia Chief Operating Officer Sophi MacMillan says PVC was a logical choice for the project because it is cost effective, reliable and simple to install.

“The non corrosive qualities are also attractive, particularly in a native soil environment such as this one,” she says. “Plus, the lifespan of PVC pipe will mean water can be delivered to these communities for decades into the future.”

The Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) has awarded PVC pressure and non pressure pipe systems a Category 'A' Rating - meaning these pipe systems have a life expectancy of in excess of 100 years.

Ms MacMillan says while the environment benefits from the reduction in water loss, it also benefits from pipe innovations that have occurred in recent decades.

“Unlike PVC pipe of 50 years ago, new pipe requires about half the energy and half the material compared with traditional PVC pipe,” she says. “The newer pipe material, PVC-O or oriented PVC pipe, is double the strength and can withstand 10 times the impact compared with traditional PVC.”

“While this pipe is expected to stay in place for a century or more, if there is ever a reason to dig it up, it can be recycled back into another pipe product.”

The pipe laying commenced in November 2006 and is expected to take five years to complete. So far, a total of 460 kilometres of PVC pipeline has been laid, branching off about 5km of large diameter steel pipe. The first section is due to be completed at the end of October at which time 7 towns will come online.

Jo says the pipeline will have two major benefits; an improvement of security of water supply and improved water quality.

“The current system of channels results in poor water quality, specifically a too high salt content. These problems will disappear with the new ‘closed’ pipeline.”

PVC has been a key material supplying water to Australians for many years. It is expected the PVC pipe will do the job for the next century.

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline is a partnership between the Australian, Victorian Government and GWMWater.

Pic Caption: PVC pipes are playing a key part in the Wimmera Mallee pipeline project.

Jo Bourke – Project Liaison

Overall there are two major benefits of the project to the community

1) Improvement of security of supply

The area is currently running at only 4% of water storage capacity due to the drought. The current system of channels means up to 90% of water is lost – so this pipeline will bring this down to towards zero

The pipeline will benefit both towns and farms in the region

Eventually 36 towns will be supplied on completion

“The last 10 years of draught have been very difficult” “For two years farms in some areas have had to receive water by trucks”

Actual quote – two years of carting water by truck to farms in some areas

The area has been on level 4 water restrictions for several years.

The lack of water impacts business as well as farms and also ceased development in the region as new enterprises are reluctant to set up in a region where water supply cannot be secured

The first section is due to be completed at the end of October at which time 7 towns will come online.

2) The other major impact is improved water quality. The current system of channels results in poor water quality, specifically to high salt content. These problems will disappear with the new ‘closed’ pipeline.

The pipeline will benefit everyone.

Farming – both broadacre cropping and livestock (mostly sheep)

Eg – some farmers have needed to buffer the water, to counteract the salt, for their chemical spraying programs.

I do not have the total population of the pipeline area but we talk about 29,000 urban customers in 36 towns and 5,500 farmers being supplied from the pipeline

Cheers

Jo