

## CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON \$28 MILLION BURRENDONG DAM UPGRADE

Thursday 8 April, 2010

Premier Kristina Keneally today officially kicked off construction on the **\$28 million upgrade of Burrendong Dam** – to secure a water supply for the region's 300,000 people and to protect them from floods.

Ms Keneally went on-site today at Burrendong Dam with Water Minister, Phil Costa, to officially inspect the works.

The dam is a vital part of the water security for the region from Wellington to Warren and the more than 1,500 water licence holders in the region.

The dam is located on the Macquarie River, 30 kilometres south east of Wellington and has a storage capacity of 1,188 gigalitres of water – or three times the capacity of Sydney Harbour.

The wall is 76 metres high and the dam is currently 11.8 per cent full. It has a surface area of 7,200 hectares or nearly 10,000 football fields.

Work on the dam commenced in 1946, but was not completed until 1967. The main purpose of the dam is to supply irrigation, stock and household needs in the Macquarie Valley and to provide environmental flows to the Macquarie Marshes.

The construction project is expected to create **at least 20 local jobs**, including from the purchase of supplies and hiring of subcontractors.

Improvements to the dam include:

- Raising the height of the main dam wall from 76 metres to 77.8 metres;
- Modifications to the existing spillway, which diverts water, as a safety measure, in cases of extreme flood; and
- Construction of a 100 metre auxiliary spillway and fuse plug to protect against the risk of extreme flooding.

The \$28 million upgrade will provide:

- **Improved dam safety** - in the event of extreme flooding this work will make the dam able to withstand the most extreme flood event likely in the area;
- **Improved environmental outcomes** - including a new fish passage downstream of the dam to give native fish access to larger stretches of the river to migrate and spawn; and
- **Improved flood management** – raising the height of the dam wall enables the dam to hold back a greater amount of water in the event of an extreme flood.

Macmahons Contractors will carry out the construction works, and have been onsite since Monday, March 15 preparing to raise the main wall and two saddle dam walls by 1.8 metres.

The first stage of construction is expected to take 12 months, and will be completed by early 2011.

Improvements to the spillway are in the investigation stage and are expected to be completed by 2014.

This project is one of eight dam upgrades the NSW Government is funding across rural and regional NSW.

Water Minister, Phil Costa, said providing water security to Dubbo and surrounding areas was very important.

“Burrendong Dam contributes significantly to the surrounding area through the supply of water for industry, agriculture, town water supplies and recreation,” Minister Costa said.

“The NSW Government is pleased to deliver on this project, which will ensure the dam continues to serve this region and meet international standards on dam safety.”

Mr Costa said this was an important piece of infrastructure for the central west.

“This upgrade will ensure the dam continues to protect local communities in the event of an extreme flood,” Mr Costa said.

“This project will provide a welcome economic boost and a key safety improvement for the area.”

The road across the dam wall was closed to the public from March 15 and will remain closed for the duration of construction.