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NEW MOKOAN PIPELINE TO SAVE WATER

A new pipeline in Victoria's north-east - part of the Lake Mokoan decommissioning works program - will save 4800 megalitres a year and improve the security of regional water supplies.

Opening the \$20.4 million Tungamah Pipeline, Water Minister John Thwaites said the infrastructure would benefit the region economically and deliver significant environmental benefits for the Murray and Snowy Rivers.

The Bracks Government provided \$17 million to the project while \$3.4 million was provided by customers of the water authorities.

The pipeline will supply stock and domestic water to about 450 individual farmers and customers in the Tungamah Water District over a 63,000 hectare supply area.

"The old domestic and stock water supply system for Tungamah was inefficient, unsafe and had reached the end of its useful life," Mr Thwaites said.

"In its place we have built a new, 370 kilometre pipeline distribution system, a 140 megalitre winter storage and a dedicated pump station.

"It is pleasing to note that the project, which commenced in February 2006, was completed and operational in December 2006, an extremely short period given the size of the project."

A related pipeline, also assisted by the Bracks Government and being built by North East Water, will supply water from Yarrawonga to the towns of Tungamah, Devenish and St James.

"Secure water supplies and better quality water will result in a more efficient service for local communities and also boost the regional economy," Mr Thwaites said.

The Tungamah Pipeline will provide one-third of the savings required to ensure reliable supply to Lake Mokoan irrigators.

"We are making a major investment in decommissioning Lake Mokoan to transform the Broken irrigation system from being the most inefficient in the state to something worthy of the 21st century," Mr Thwaites said.

"With the ongoing drought and challenges of climate change, we cannot sustain a water storage that loses 50,000 megalitres of water a year."

Mr Thwaites congratulated the local community and Goulburn-Murray Water, which completed construction of the Tungamah pipeline within a year.