

## **Water Bank Moves Closer To Reality**

The establishment of the Community Water Bank to protect Northern Victoria's irrigation regions, is a step closer to becoming a reality following a series of meetings and extensive consultation throughout the past few months involving a candidate contesting next month's state election.

"The Water Bank progress is now in the hands of a steering committee comprising of members of all of the irrigation districts in Northern Victoria," said Country Alliance's candidate for Northern Victoria Region, Danny Lee.

Mr Lee said there is a common belief among the committee, that all sides of Government have supported open water trade at their expense. He said they are united in their opinion that they have to act on their own to stop the destruction of regional Victorian irrigation communities.

"The extensive consultation process has involved irrigators, milk companies, businesses, and regional Shire Councils. There is overwhelming support from all of these sectors for the need to establish the Community Water Bank."

"The Community Water Bank is now moving into the business case phase, which includes legal matters, taxation concerns, equity plans and security issues. The committee is confident that the Bank will be fully operational by July 1st. 2007, when the new water reform legislation comes into force."

"Despite coming up with the Community Bank concept, I have removed myself from the decision making process of the Bank for the duration of the election campaign, so as to not prejudice its' progress. The Bank must be above politics, and must be seen to be. I have absolute confidence that the committee under Mr. Maxted's guidance.

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