

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **Q1. What is the Ord-East Kimberley Expansion Project?**

The Ord-East Kimberley Expansion Project (Expansion Project) is a visionary program to build a viable economy in the East Kimberley region based on agriculture and eco and cultural tourism. It will increase the size of the Ord irrigation area to about 22,000 hectares. The State Government will focus on developing off farm agricultural infrastructure while the Commonwealth has committed significant funding to develop the social infrastructure of the region (subject to a joint State/Commonwealth feasibility study).

### **Q2. How many hectares will the Expansion Project irrigate?**

The project will deliver about 8,000 hectares in the Weaber Plains in 2012. This area has already received many of the necessary statutory and other approvals to proceed. The project is also progressing the scoping work required for three additional land releases in Packsaddle (1,380 hectares), Mantinea (4,000 hectares) and Ord West Bank (1,300 hectares) which is likely to occur post 2011.

### **Q3. What is the scope of the Expansion Project?**

The expansion project will deliver sustainable economic growth and generate employment opportunities in the East Kimberley Region. The direct benefits to the East Kimberley Region will be delivered in areas including:

- agricultural development
- water, roads and other infrastructure
- education and training
- health and housing
- indigenous economic development
- transport
- community facilities.

The Western Australian Government's Royalties for Regions program invested \$220 million for the delivery of agricultural infrastructure, including roads, irrigation channels and other off-farm irrigation infrastructure.

The Australian Government's Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan invested \$195 million for the delivery of social and common use infrastructure in the areas of health, education and training, housing, transport and community infrastructure.

### **Q4. Will the Expansion Project include different stages?**

Yes, the expansion of the Ord irrigation area has been progressing since the initial development of the Ord irrigation area in the 1960s and 70s.

Also known as Stage 1, it included the construction of the major water-supply and drainage infrastructure which provided for the development of 13,000ha of

agricultural land and underpinned the development of the town of Kununurra.

Stage 2 involves the scope of works outlined in the questions above.

Stage 3 involves the renewal of interest from the Northern Territory and the development of an initial 14,000 ha around the Keep River region. The timeline and funding for this stage is yet to be determined..

**Q5. How much will the Expansion Project cost?**

With the Commonwealth commitment of \$195million, the Expansion Project is estimated to cost around \$415million, with the State contributing \$220million under the Royalties for Regions program.

**Q6. What are the plans for the land in the newly irrigated region?**

The land releases have been earmarked for agricultural use.

**Q7. What will be grown and are there any restrictions on crop types?**

No, there are no restrictions for the types of crops however it is virtually impossible to determine what types of crops will be grown in four years time as farmers respond to local and international market trends. Current data shows crop types change on a yearly basis.

**Q8. What types of soils are in the development area?**

The soils of the Stage 2 M2 area are 30 per cent Kununurra clays and 70 per cent Aquitaine clays. Both soil types are common in the M1 area and are successfully cropped.

**Q9. Is there enough water for the proposed expansion of the irrigation area?**

The 2007 Ord River management plan identified 350 GL/y allocated for Ord Stage 1 (14,000 ha) and 400 GL/y available for the Ord Stage 2 M2 supply area (30,000 ha). (A preliminary investigation by the Department of Agriculture and Food and the Department of Water has concluded the current irrigation allocation to Ord Stage 1 exceeds requirements).

**Q10. Who is managing the subdivision and sale of the newly developed land?**

The State Government's land development agency LandCorp is responsible for land sales to the national and international market. Expressions of Interest (EOI) will be invited over the coming months where interested parties will have the opportunity to register their interest. This will help to determine what types of crops potential investors are considering and the likely market price of the land.

### **Q11 . Who is steering this program?**

Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls heads the project in his capacity as Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development. Implementation of the project is being carried out by the Department of Regional Development and Lands.

Governance of the project is held with the Ministerial Council which includes the Premier, the Minister for Regional Development, the Minister for Water and the Minister for Agriculture and Food. The council is responsible for identifying the project's priorities and acting as the peak decision-making body.

The Steering Committee, comprising senior officials from each agency as well as the Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley and the Kimberley Development Commission, guides the project at agency level.

A number of other agencies are contributing to the delivery of this significant project. They include LandCorp, Water Corporation, Office of Native Title, Horizon Power, Department of Water, Department of Main Roads, Department of Planning, Department of Mines and Petroleum and Department of State Development.

A Community Reference Group (CRG) has been established to facilitate the flow of feedback to and from the community and to act as a point of clarification. Three community task groups have also been established to deal with specific components of the project and provide advice to the CRG.

### **Q12 . What is the Ord Final Agreement (OFA)?**

The OFA is a Native Title agreement between the State Government and the Miriwung and Gajerrong (MG) people. It was signed in 2005 and includes a \$57 million package for the MG people. They receive a range of benefits including land, employment and training opportunities in exchange for the voluntary surrender of Native Title.

The package includes the provision of freehold land in and around Kununurra and the proposed agricultural areas, as well as funds for the establishment and management of the MG Corporation, conservation areas, and some social services for the Indigenous population of the East Kimberley.

### **Q13 . What opportunities will the Expansion Project present for the local communities, in particular the local Indigenous population?**

The Western Australian Government has partnered with the Miriwung and Gajerrong (MG) people who are the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which the agricultural lots will be released as part of this project. This partnership provides a framework in which the MG people can benefit from the development of the Ord River Irrigation Area by delivering better health, education, training, employment and direct ownership opportunities. The partnership is based around the Ord Final Agreement (OFA).

A condition of the Ord Final Agreement (OFA) is that an Aboriginal Development Package must be negotiated before substantial development of the Ord agricultural area commences. The Office of Native Title, the Department of Regional Development and Lands and the Kimberley Development Commission

have worked closely with the MG Corporation to complete the package, which focuses on young people and includes Indigenous job opportunities, education, training and apprenticeships. A Heads of Agreement for the package was signed between the Government of Western Australian and the MG Corporation on 1 September 2009.

**Q14 . Do the proposed land releases have Heritage and Native Title clearance?**

Heritage and Native Title approvals have been obtained for land releases within the OFA area, including Weaber Plains, Ord West Bank and Packsaddle. Mantinea is yet to obtain Heritage clearance.

**Q15 . Have environmental approvals been achieved for the land releases?**

Certain areas of the proposed development have already been given conditional environmental approval. The initial land release contained in the Weaber Plains region has already gone through a rigorous environmental approvals process in 1997 when a Joint Venture to develop nearly 30,000ha was entered into by Wesfarmers and Marubeni Corporation. Despite the project being abandoned in 2001, the Conditional Environmental Approval for these areas still stands. Further environmental investigations are currently underway for this area.

The areas of land contained in the Ord West Bank, Mantinea and Packsaddle regions are at an earlier stage of the environmental approvals process but will undergo thorough investigations in accordance with the Environmental Protection Authority and Department of Environment and Conservation guidelines.

**Q16 . What is being done to ensure the ongoing conservation of the land surrounding the new irrigation area?**

As part of the rigorous environmental approvals process, the affected areas will be subjected to extensive and ongoing environmental management and monitoring in accordance with the relevant statutory guidelines.

**Q17 . What is the construction timeline?**

Work on Phase 1 commenced in May 2010 and will conclude in mid-2011. This includes the delivery of 19 kilometres of water channel, 14 kilometres of road, hill side drains, syphon structures and a 150 person accommodation village. Phase 2, which consists of the construction of secondary roads and irrigation and drainage structures, will commence in 2011 and conclude in 2012. The three year construction period provides optimal opportunity for the social and economic benefits of the Project to accrue for the East Kimberley community and the Miriuwung Gajerrong people as Traditional Owners.

**Q18 . Will the construction works impact on me?**

Yes, there may be short term impacts on traffic and access as construction proceeds. This will be of short duration. You will be consulted by the contractor to

minimize the inconveniences. Traffic management plans will also be in place to minimise any disruption to traffic flows.

**Q19 . What processes are in place to engage the community?**

A Community Reference Group (CRG) has been established to facilitate the flow of feedback to and from the community and to act as a point of clarification. Three community task groups have also been established to deal with specific components of the project and provide advice to the CRG.