

John Forrest, MP

Mr Pipeline

Piping the entire Wimmera Mallee Stock and Domestic Supply System has been Federal Member for Mallee John Forrest's career ambition.

Extending the pipeline system was a major election platform when he was first elected as the National Party's member in 1993 and has been a major passion for him ever since.

During years of lobbying for pipeline funding Mr Forrest drew on his knowledge as a consulting engineer and a long association with water issues. He has continued to lobby consecutive ministers including Prime Minister John Howard to obtain approval for funding.

"This involved having to often explain and re-explain the history, open channel system, topography and water losses of the region, as well as arguing that the enormous contribution to the export market of the Wimmera Mallee region made it worthy of funding of this magnitude," he said.

As a result of Mr Forrest's continued persistence and determination, he is often referred to as 'Mr Pipeline' by his colleagues in the halls of Parliament House in Canberra.



"It has been a long journey and well worth the effort now that we have the funding commitment for the completion of piping in the Wimmera," he said.

Completion of the Northern Mallee pipeline was a career highlight for Mr Forrest. He believes this stands as tangible proof of the success of pipelining the region.

"The immense amount of water saved through pipelining will have huge long-term benefits for environmental water releases for the natural streams, lakes and rivers and for townships along the pipeline system," he said.

"I sometimes think that the issue of security of supply gets lost in the politics of this project. There is no doubt that the remaining sections of the Wimmera and Mallee region to be pipelined will be able to better manage their farming enterprises through such times as drought. Proof is in the experience of the Northern Mallee where users did not have to de-stock through the drought because of the assurance of supply," he said.

Mr Forrest is now looking forward to completion of the Wimmera Mallee pipeline.

"Only then will I finally know that the job is done and the water can flow again to Hindmarsh and Albacutya," he said.

"Watch our rain come back when those terminal lakes again have water in them."

Further information is available by contacting the Horsham Piping It Office on 1300 659 961 or dropping into the office at 42-44 Kalkee Road.