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Media Release

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32 land owners lodge compensation claims

Compensation claims for 32 landowners affected by the Ballarat Link of the Goldfields Superpipe are being lodged with Central Highlands Water (CHW). The major concerns following construction of the pipeline relate to bio-security issues, in particular:

- scour valves
- boundary access gates

The visible elements of the water pipeline are scour valves and air valves. Scour valves enable the discharge of water at irregular intervals and volume along the pipeline. To date CHW has provided no clear guidance on how this discharge is to be handled.

In its current form the water will leak onto surrounding land and in some cases the middle of paddocks, a major concern for potato growers in the Dean district. Not only is there likelihood of crop spoil but potential exists to introduce weed species lodged in sediment from other areas.

Following the construction CHW has installed double gates on external boundaries to effectively create an 'easement inspection highway'. Whilst CHW has powers to enter land to inspect its assets under the Water Act, it is unclear at this point what the protocols of entry entail.

Again this puts high value agricultural land at a bio-security risk. Bacteria surviving in the top few millimetres of the soil are easily transferred from farm to farm without proper decontamination. The devastating affects of ovine johnnes and phylloxera are well known examples.

John Madigan and Chris Robinson who have co-ordinated the farming group have made a number of representations to CHW to seek clarification and has recommended strategies for dealing with both of these issues. To this point no firm response has been provided.

It is envisaged that during the compensation clear answers will be provided.

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