

Ord River Irrigation Scheme



The Ord River Irrigation Area (ORIA) is the product of a bold and imaginative plan to develop part of the nation's tropical north for intensive irrigated agriculture by harnessing the waters of the Ord River.

The main features and benefits of the Ord Scheme are:

Lake Argyle

A massive storage reservoir, Lake Argyle formed where the Ord River enters the Carr-Boyd Ranges just south of Kununurra. Lake Argyle is now the largest fresh water storage in mainland Australia. Its storage capacity is 10,760 million cubic metres of water or about 9 times the water volume of Sydney Harbour.

Ord Stage 1 - 14,000 ha of irrigated farm land

The Ord River Irrigation Area includes approximately 14,000 hectares of developed land, which has access to considerable water resources from Lake Argyle on the Ord River. This land is harvested to produce a diverse range of crops including: chickpeas, sorghum seed, melons, pumpkins, mangoes, bananas, citrus, irrigated pasture, tropical forests and sugar cane. Sugar production accounts for approximately on third, by area, of the cultivated land in the ORIA.

Ord-East Kimberley Expansion Project

The Western Australian Government has committed \$220 million from the Royalties for Regions program towards the expansion of the current Ord irrigation area. 8,000 hectares of land is being developed with the first release in 2011. The development includes off-farm infrastructure such as irrigation, drainage and roads. Approvals for an additional 6,000 hectares are also being progressed.

The Australian Government has committed \$195 million to deliver social and common-use infrastructure in the East Kimberley region through the East Kimberley Development Package. The Package includes key investments across the areas of health, education and training, housing, transport and community infrastructure.

\$53.6 million gross value

In 2004/05 the gross value of production from ORIA was estimated at \$53.6 million. The highest value crops in 2004/05 were melons (\$12.2 million), sugar (\$16.1 million), mangoes (\$1.9 million), hybrid seeds (\$3.6 million), pumpkins (\$3.6 million) and bananas (\$0.5 million).

Lake Kununurra

A diversion dam, 50km downstream from Lake Argyle at Kununurra. Water is released from Lake Argyle into Lake Kununurra which then supplies irrigation channels needed by the farms nearby.

The generation of power

The generation of power from a 30 MW hydroelectric station constructed in 1995/96.

Kununurra township

The establishment of the Kununurra township and the development of ancillary community services.

To read more visit <http://www.biostim.com.au/sustainable-agriculture.html>