

Goulburn Broken CMA involved in Australia-China AusAID partnership

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Ties between the Goulburn Broken region and the Shanxi province in China have been strengthened following an Australian delegation's eight-day visit to the Asian giant.

The group, including Shepparton's Wayne Tennant, were sent to provide support and direction for the Shanxi provincial water resources department.

Mr Tennant, the Strategic River Health Manager at the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, was called on to provide expertise on ecological matters of Chinese waterway management.

The Shanxi tour had two main aims:

- to strengthen the capacity of the department and involve staff in sustainable water resources management and irrigation modernisation and explore opportunities for future collaboration; and
- to establish an Institute of Water Excellence in China.

Mr Tennant said the trip was beneficial for the Chinese and the Australian contingent. "The trip was about establishing relations between Australia and the Shanxi water bureau," he said. "It gave us an opportunity to work together and learn from one another."

Mr Tennant said Shanxi's water resources were facing different challenges to our own region, but there were also many opportunities to apply similar strategies to meet those different needs. "The main problem they're dealing with that we don't have is population pressure on their water resources," he said.

"There are over 500 million farmers relying on water in some form in China." "We discussed their

groundwater and surface water strategies, but they're just starting to find their way with their ecological management."

Mr Tennant said a visit to the \$10 billion Fenhe river ecological restoration project was a highlight. "The project's aim is to control the river into a narrow, low-flow channel. It is the largest environmental project being undertaken in Shanxi province, with the ultimate aim; to have fish back in the river."

Mr Tennant said the project presented opportunities for paired research on channel restoration between Australia and China, with the director of the Fenhe River CMA, Hontong Wang set to visit Australia later in the year. The tour also visited the Qingxu groundwater irrigation scheme, featuring real-time monitoring of water use.

Entitlement holders use a swipe card to access water which monitors power use (related to the type of pump and depth) and water use.

Mr Tennant was joined on the tour by Thierry Facon (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), Dr Paul Taylor (University Melbourne), Dr Hugh Turrall (Consultant Irrigation), Dr Brian Davison (UOM) and Terry Flynn (Southern Rural Water).

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