The Hybrid Surface Water Management System (SWMS) sub-program is part of the renewed Surface Water Management Program (SWMP) in the Shepparton Irrigation Region (SIR).

The review of the SIR Drainage Strategy in 2015 identified the need for a new approach to surface water management due to continuing changes to the region, including a reduced irrigation footprint and less funding available for new drainage works.

These changes led to the development of the Hybrid SWMS concept, which utilises a combination of Drainage Course Declarations (DCDs) over natural drainage lines and constructed SWMS where necessary.

The intent of the Hybrid SWMS model is to link fragmented drainage lines and ensure unimpeded flow by removing artificial obstructions. The Hybrid SWMS model also incorporates natural environmental features such as wetlands into the hybrid SWMS design process.

Each hybrid SWMS will meet construction and flow standards for drainage, however each system will be unique to meet the individual needs of drainage sub-catchments and make best use of existing local features including constructed channels, natural depressions and environmental features.

This picture (below) shows how an environmental feature can be incorporated into a Community SWMS. These kinds of techniques may form the basis for Hybrid SWMS design.

In coming months, the Goulburn Broken CMA, in partnership with Goulburn-Murray Water, Agriculture Victoria and the SIR Drainage Working Group, will be developing criteria to identify which sub-catchments will be prioritised for provision of Hybrid SWMS service through the renewed SWMP.

This aim of this prioritisation process will be to ensure that the best outcomes for the region are secured with the funding available.

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