

FarmWater

On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program



Program Update – December 2010

Welcome to the second Farm Water Program Update, which aims to provide the latest information to landholders, partners, other agencies and community members.

Round One – good news.

In March 2010, a consortium of key stakeholders across the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District (GMID) secured in principle funding from round one of the Australian Government's \$300 million On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program, referred to locally as the Farm Water Program.

The Australian Government has advised that it will invest \$21 million throughout 2010–11 in the Farm Water Program. Projects funded include those developed by GMID irrigators that met eligibility criteria and demonstrated best management practice according to an Expression of Intent (EOI) process.

Irrigators who submitted EOIs will have received notification regarding the status of their projects. Eighty projects have been approved for funding.

The Farm Water Program was oversubscribed for improved flood irrigation activities. Investment from other sources was therefore sought so that projects demonstrating best management practice could be implemented.

The Farm Water Program's irrigation modernisation objectives and criteria are consistent with those of the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP). NVIRP recognises the opportunity to support landholders to modernise irrigation systems by funding projects that were developed for the Farm Water Program. NVIRP will therefore invest \$16.2 million into on-farm water efficiency projects developed through the Farm Water Program that complement its irrigation modernisation works in return for water savings. This funding ensures that irrigators are maximising the benefits of the modernised water delivery system and strengthens the ongoing viability of the backbone channel system.

As a result of the NVIRP investment combined with that of the Australian Government, all 152 improved flood irrigation EOIs submitted to the Farm Water Program that met eligibility criteria and were best management practice will now be funded. This is an excellent result for both irrigators and the regional community.



Photo: Shepparton News

This investment is seen as a cost-effective option to support landholders who are committed to a long-term irrigation future in the GMID. It will also avoid delays by enabling these projects to get started and, as such, unlock currently stalled new farm connections to the backbone channel system.

NVIRP funding – more good news!



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Next steps for funded projects

Irrigators whose projects will be funded through the Farm Water Program should note the following:

- A Department of Primary Industries project officer will contact you to discuss your contract and project timelines. For many projects, contracts are already underway.
- Encumbrances (i.e. fees and mortgages) on water shares should be discharged as soon as possible by irrigators.

Information about preparing contracts, including example contracts, is available on the Goulburn Broken CMA website (www.gbcma.vic.gov.au).

Round Two

Following completion of the current funding round for the Farm Water Program, including a formal review of the processes involved, further investment will be sought from the Australian Government's On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program for the second round. If investment is secured, Round Two of the Farm Water Program will be undertaken from early 2011. There will be another call for landholders to complete EOIs to participate in round two of the Program. The Commonwealth Government has just announced Round Two of the program and further details will be forthcoming in the New Year.

To be eligible for future funding rounds of the Farm Water Program, a Whole Farm Plan* is required and we encourage irrigators to begin the process for developing one by contacting the Department of Primary Industries (details below). Similarly, if NVIRP is working on connecting your property to the irrigation backbone in the future, irrigators should begin discussions as soon as possible with NVRIP modernisation coordinators.

* A Whole Farm Plan is required for all forms of irrigation

Program benefits

While some people may have concerns about current water reform plans, such as the Murray–Darling Basin Plan, the Farm Water Program will result in many benefits for the Goulburn Murray region. Through the Program, a large investment will be made into the region's irrigation infrastructure, which will save water for both the irrigator and to be used in improving the health of our rivers. There will be additional productivity benefits and flow-on socio economic advantages for the local and regional community. Securing further investment through the 2nd funding round will provide further opportunities for irrigators and increase the long-term benefits for the GMID.

AREA	CONTACT NAME	LOCATION	PHONE
Central Goulburn	Chris Nicholson	Tatura	(03) 5833 5932
Murray Valley	Chelsea Nicholson	Tatura	(03) 5824 5506
North East	Dennis Watson	Rutherglen	(02) 6030 4567
Pyramid-Boort and Torrumbarry	Adam Taylor Michelle Slater Zoe McNair	Kerang Kerang Echuca	(03) 5452 1266 (03) 5452 1266 (03) 5482 1922
Rochester	Samantha Longley	Tatura	(03) 5833 5254
Shepparton	Rabi Maskey	Tatura	(03) 5833 5378

- NVIRP can be contacted on 1300 163 006.
- Other general enquires on the program can be made David Lawler, Vicki Mackenzie or Megan McFarlane at the Goulburn Broken CMA on 5820 1100.

