

Groundwater pump incentive and drainage – Tapping the benefits



In a drought-stricken landscape it might seem odd to be encouraging groundwater pumping to reduce high water tables. But farmers have long memories and it was only 20 years ago there was widespread concern about the creeping groundwater level and the threat of salinity to orchards and farms.

In August 2009, Goulburn Broken CMA celebrated the installation of the 300th groundwater pump at Ross and Yvonne Crawford's farm in Harston. The pump was the 300th to attract a government incentive and was a celebration to mark the progress since the mid 1990s.

The groundwater pump incentive is part of the Goulburn Broken CMA's Regional Catchment Strategy in the Shepparton Irrigation Region and is provided through the Australian Government and Victorian Government through Water Smart Farms, Our Water Our Future, the National Resource Investment Program and Caring for Our Country initiative. The spear-point system delivers about 2 ML/day and offers two benefits—a supplementary water supply and protection from higher ground water.

Groundwater pumping improves downward drainage through the soil profile. This means salt does not build up in the rootzone as it is regularly flushed downwards.

The Groundwater Pump Incentive is a percentage rebate, paid upon receipt, up to a maximum of \$20,000 for installation of new or upgrading of existing groundwater pumping systems.

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Photo: Ray Sizer, Shepparton News