



Shepparton Irrigation Region

Why investing in the
sustainability of the
Shepparton Irrigation
Region pays dividends.

February 2006



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Some facts

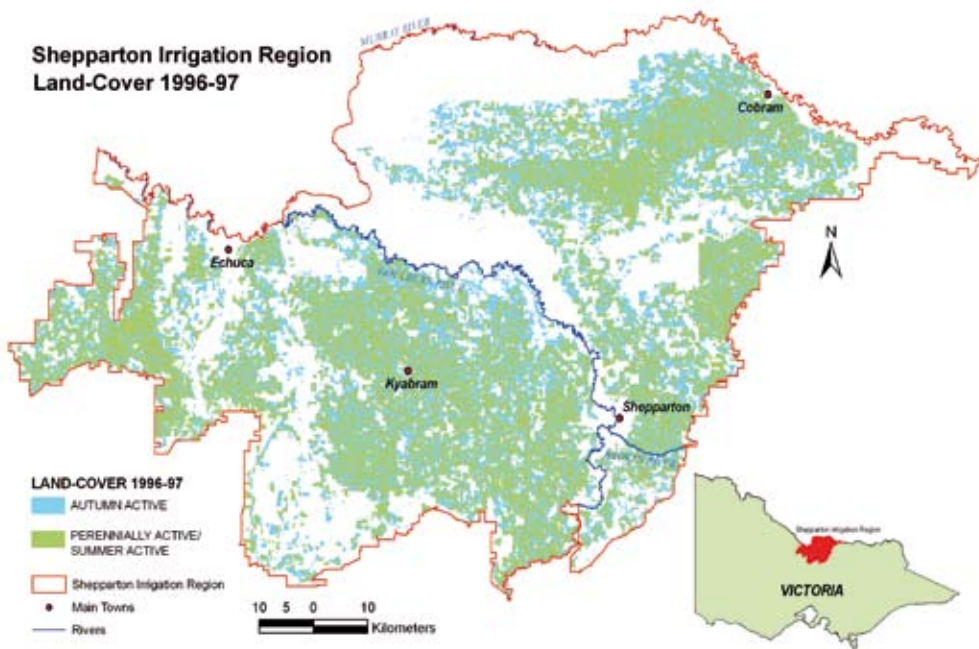
The SIR is intensively irrigated with approximately 317,000 of its 500,000 hectares (ha) being irrigated. The major agricultural industries are dairying, and stone and pome fruit production, which support a large food processing industry. The SIR uses around 1.5 million megalitres (ML) of water annually, depending on seasonal allocations.





The Shepparton Irrigation Region (SIR) is located in Northern Victoria across the municipalities of the Greater Shepparton City Council, Campaspe Shire Council and Moira Shire Council (See Figure 1). It has a population of 115,296.

Figure 1: **The Shepparton Irrigation Region**



Note: This map shows the area of land within the SIR which is irrigated. Summer or Perennially Active includes crops such as horticulture and pasture which are irrigated throughout the summer and autumn periods. Autumn Active includes crops such as grains, lucerne and some pastures.

Introduction

The SIR irrigators have responded rapidly to the changes demanded of irrigated agriculture. This has included widespread adoption of improved irrigation technologies and best management practices such as Whole Farm Planning, automatic irrigation and reuse systems.

The SIR is the irrigation region which contributes most to the Victorian economy. Employment in the SIR is largely dependent on a profitable irrigated farm sector.

It is therefore essential to the economic prosperity of Victoria and the social fabric of the region that irrigated farming continues to prosper within the SIR.

In turn, the future of the SIR depends on a healthy natural resource base to support agriculture, and continuing increases in production efficiencies.

Any money invested in the region in either protecting and improving the natural resource base, or in improving production efficiencies, is money wisely invested.



Other Irrigation Areas

Irrigation occurs in other areas of Victoria (see Figure 2), the main areas being:

- Pyramid–Boort (around the Swan Hill, Kerang and Boort townships), administered by Goulburn–Murray Water (G-MW)
- Macalister Irrigation District (centred around Maffra in Gippsland), administered by Southern Rural Water Authority (SRWA)
- Werribee Irrigation District (on the western outskirts of Melbourne), administered by SRWA
- Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District (west of Melbourne), administered by SRWA
- Sunraysia (centred around Mildura, including Red Cliffs, Merbein and Robinvale), administered by Lower Murray Water Authority (LMW)
- First Mildura Irrigation Trust District (centred around Mildura)

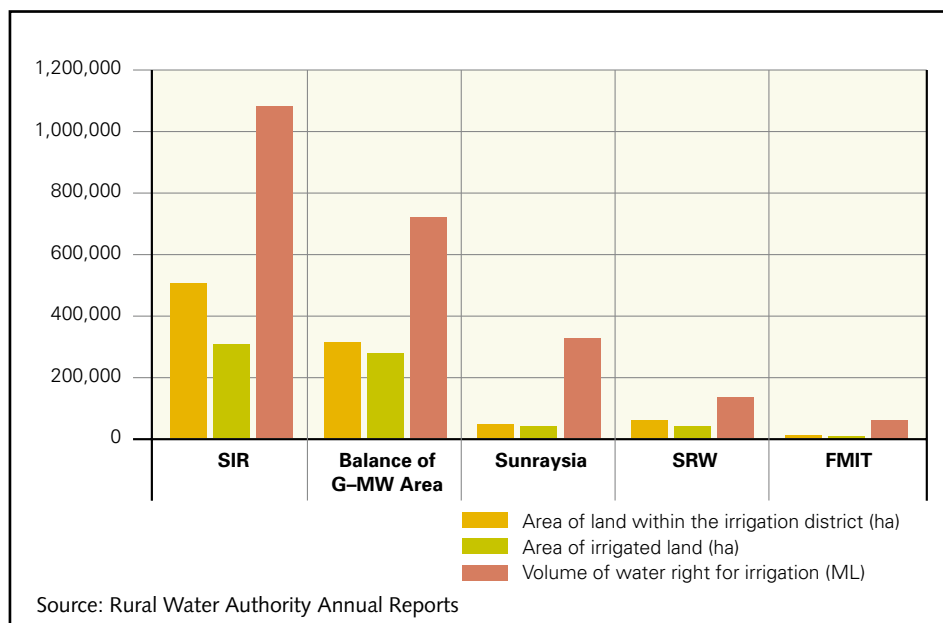


Irrigation also occurs by private diversions from rivers throughout the State and managed by the various Water Authorities. Figures quoted throughout this paper include Groundwater and Private Diversions.



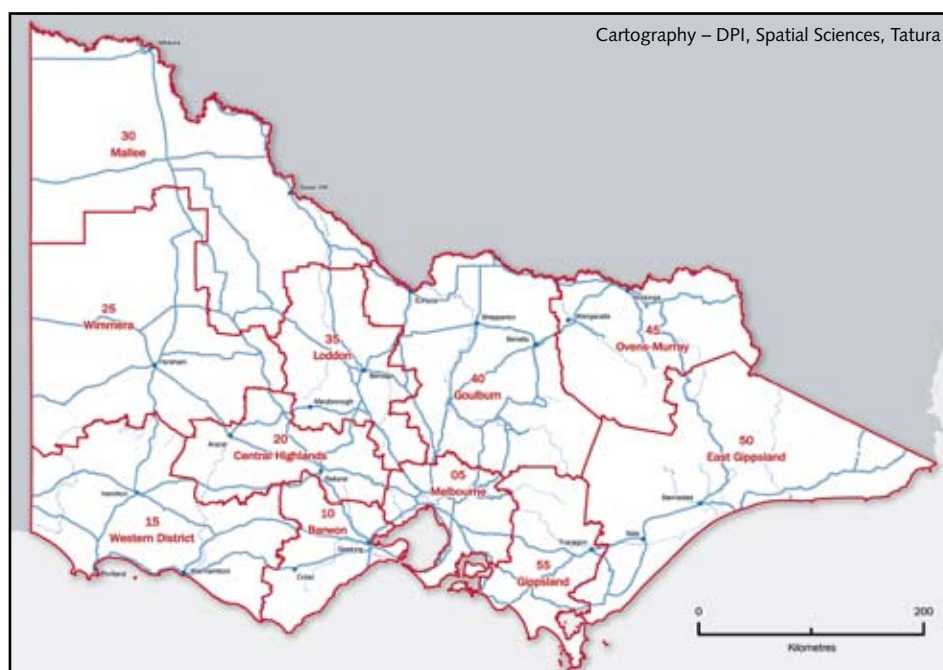


Figure 3: Irrigation Area Compared



The SIR is the largest irrigation region in Victoria in terms of irrigated land area and the volume of water used (see Figure 3).

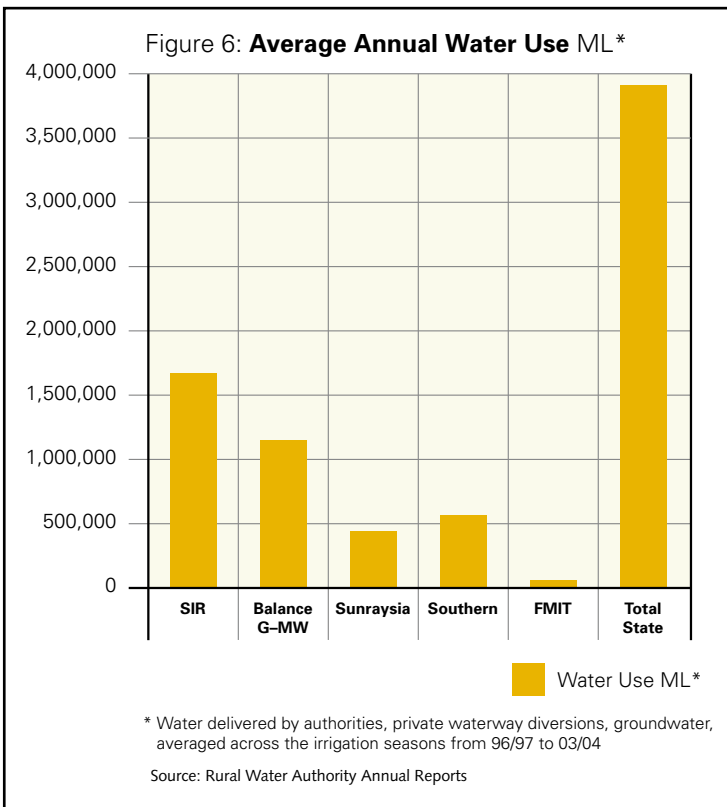
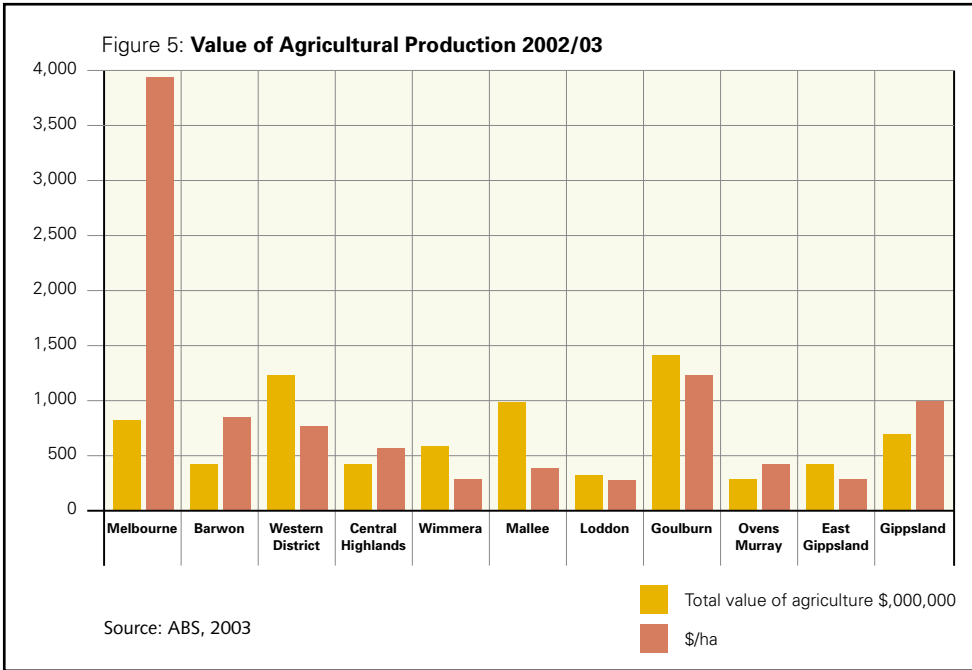
Figure 4: Map of Statistical Divisions



Production

The Australian Bureau of Statistics collects data on the value of production within regions called Statistical Divisions (see Figure 4). The Goulburn Statistical Division includes the SIR.

The Goulburn Statistical Division contributes 19% of the State Value of Agricultural Production, the largest of all statistical divisions (ABS 2003) (see Figure 5). This production is largely driven by irrigation, with 78% of the Division's Farm Gate Gross Value of Production coming from the SIR (Young, 2001).



Water use

The SIR consistently uses between 40 and 45% of all irrigation water. This continued even during the recent drought which severely affected allocation volumes in the SIR (see Figure 6).

Diversity of the region

The region is culturally and linguistically diverse. It includes communities established as a result of migration following the Second World War, primarily from Southern European countries such as Italy and Greece, and more recent settlers to the SIR from countries such as Iran, Iraq, Turkey and India. There are also some 6000 indigenous people living in the region.

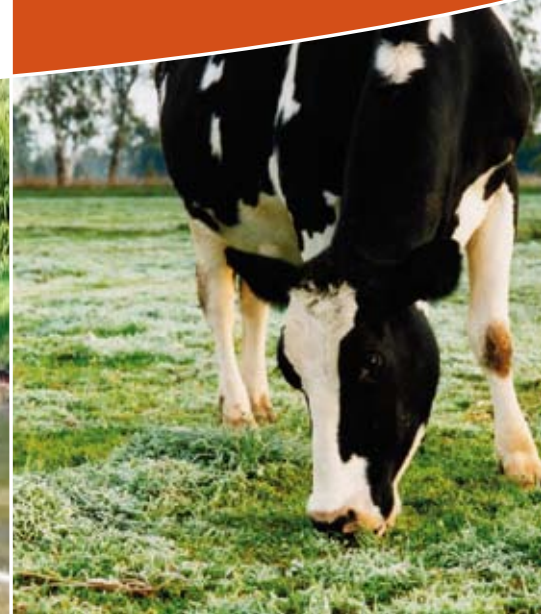
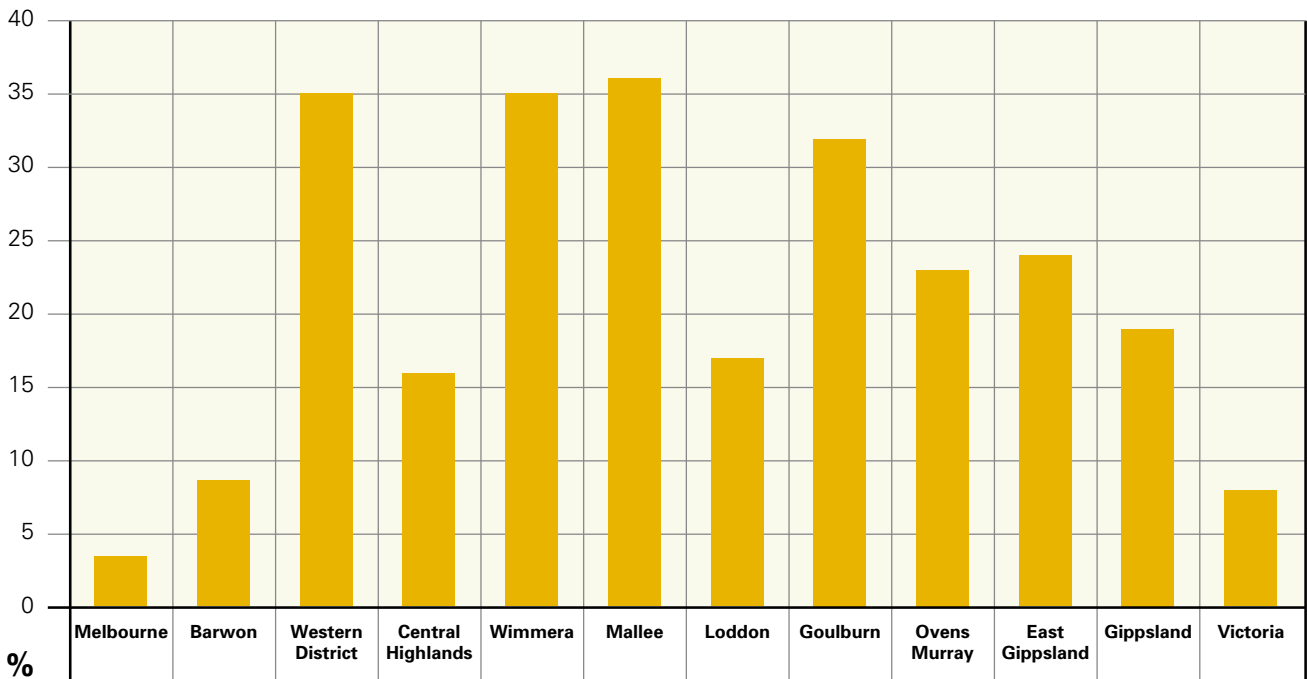


Figure 7: % of workforce employed in agriculture, agricultural services or food manufacturing 2001*



Statistical Division * Includes beverage and tobacco manufacturing. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2001

Dollars

The SIR supports a large food processing sector producing annually \$1.7 Billion Gross Value of production & processing (2000 dollars). The flow-on effects to the other sectors in the regional economy result in a Gross Value of Production annually of approximately \$5.5 Billion (2000 dollars). The sector includes 22 national and multi-national manufacturing companies & a very significant service sector. The major food manufacturers invested over \$1 Billion in processing and handling infrastructure in the 1990-2000 period (Young, 2001).

The multi nationals with processing plants in the SIR include:

- Kraft Foods
- Fonterra Cooperative Group (Bonlac)
- Snow Brand Australia
- Cedenco
- Simplot Australia
- Nestlé Australia
- Unifoods
- Henry Jones Foods (IXL)
- Tatura Milk
- Murray-Goulburn
- Meiji-MGC Dairy Company
- Coca-Cola Amatil (SPC Ardmona)
- Campbells Soups Australia
- Girgarre Country Foods

Working

32% of the workforce is employed in agriculture, services to agriculture, hunting and trapping, forestry and logging, commercial fishing or food, beverage and tobacco manufacturing (ABS, 2003) (see Figure 7). Only the Western District, the Wimmera and the Mallee Divisions exceed this.

Further Information

For further information see the GBCMA Regional Catchment Strategy, call (03) **5820 1100** or visit **www.gbcma.vic.gov.au**

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