



FINAL REPORT RESULTS

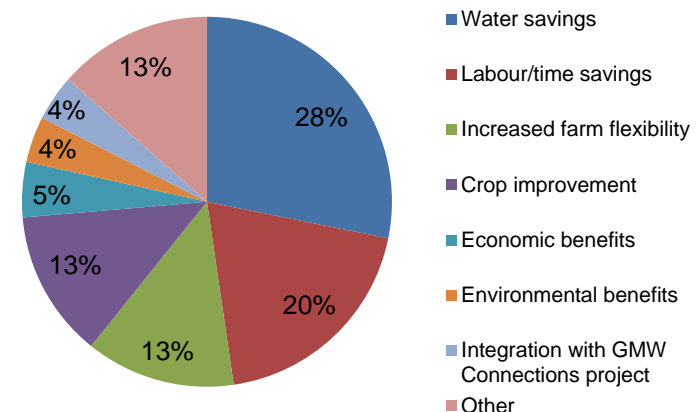
5th August 2014

ROUND 2 On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program

The Farm Water Program (FWP) requires landowners to submit a final report upon project completion. The purpose of this report is to gain general feedback and assess landowner attitudes in regard to the benefits of the FWP and the funding received from the Australian Government. All 86 projects funded under Round 2 of the On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program (OFIEP) are now complete and final reports have been prepared by landowners.

Trends were analysed from 477 comments received from landowners (Figure 1). The majority of landowner feedback received has been positive and indicated that the greatest perceived benefits of the FWP for them related to labour and water savings. Increased farm flexibility and crop choices, crop improvement and economic benefits for their business were also frequently cited as benefits of the FWP.

Figure 1: Landowner responses arranged by topic (477 comments)



Landowners were asked to provide their perception of the water savings achieved through the FWP (Table 1 on page 2). Those who had indicated water savings had either been achieved as expected or above expected. However, a considerable number of landowners had not yet used their system post on-farm works. For example, one landowner indicated that water savings achieved as part of the FWP were less than originally expected; however, they also identified the need to upgrade their pump system and indicated that the water savings would be achieved after these works had taken place.

In many cases landowners acknowledged other benefits of the FWP including economic, environmental and social benefits.

“Now we are set up in a way that I can grow higher value crops and grow more dry matter tonnage per ML”

“(The project) has added value to the property”

“Less weeds and more grass”

“Irrigating more efficiently and allowing water to be used for the environment”

“A very good program – provides employment locally”

“Now taking half of the time to irrigate the same area”

Feedback indicated the FWP has provided landowners with a more positive outlook relating to the long term sustainability of their property.

“Good program – the new system will be used for a long time into the future”

“(The project) ensures viability into the future”

11 landowners indicated that without the FWP they would not have been able to complete on-farm works, due to financial constraints.

“Project has allowed works that wouldn’t have happened for a long time”

“We could never have done the works without the funding. This project could lead to us staying in the dairy industry and passing on the business to the next generation”

Table 1: Landowner responses to water savings achieved

Response	Number	Percentage
Above Expected	20	24%
As Expected	37	44%
Below Expected	1	1%
System Not Used	25	30%
No Response	1	1%

While the majority of landowner feedback was positive, there were some concerns raised by a small number of landowners.

Integration of the FWP with Goulburn-Murray Water's Connections Project led to a small number of hold-ups for on-farm works which landowners found frustrating and impacted upon their ability to complete the project in the time allowed.

“The project went well despite hold ups from the GMW Connections (Project)”

However, most landowners felt that integration of the two programs worked well as their FWP was designed around new modernised delivery system.

“Project has been completed in conjunction with changes being made to GMW delivery system, this has worked well”

Several landowners noted that they were not prepared for the disruption that would occur on farm and the time required for management of their project. Most, however, indicated that this was a worthwhile sacrifice.

“The level of project management required over a short period of time was huge and took me away from other farm activities. It was well worth the time and effort involved”

“The whole project required a lot of project management on our behalf to ensure the works were done correctly”

Overall information collected in the final reports indicates landowners' perceptions of the FWP are positive. Landowners consider the project to be a worthwhile investment in which the objectives of the project have been achieved.