



FarmWater

Farm Water Program - good for business

Applying for funding from Round Five of the Farm Water Program was a 'no-brainer' for Tatura dairy farmer Mark Ryan.

"Like all modern farmers I'm a businessman and this just made sense," Mr Ryan said.

The dairy farmer, who also runs a herd of beef cattle, had plans to upgrade the irrigation system on the farm he'd recently bought from neighbours.

"I was always going to do it and thought it would probably take about eight to 10 years," he said.

In less than 18 months Mr Ryan has removed all the fences and old channels from the property and laser-graded the paddocks.

"We also built a much larger channel and increased the paddock sizes."

Having completed two irrigations with the new system, Mr Ryan said the results were even better than he'd hoped.

"With the old channels I was irrigating with little outlets and it wet the land so slowly that a lot of that water was being absorbed into the ground.

"Now I can irrigate in half the time and if I do happen to over-irrigate, that water isn't lost like it was before. It's now captured in the recycle system."

The third-generation dairy farmer had long known the value of applying water at a rate appropriate to the soil type and now he had the system to implement that knowledge.

The project realised 91ML in total water savings with 50ML transferred to the Commonwealth Government for environmental purposes.

"Water is going on and off the paddock much more quickly now, so not as much is being lost in ground water."

Mr Ryan said he expected an increase in production of between 60 and 70 per cent from his paddocks as a result of the upgrades to his irrigation system.



And the program had already saved him countless hours in labour.

"Instead of basically living down there while I'm irrigating, I now only have to check it every three hours. It means that we can go to a barbeque or maybe watch the kids play sport . Those things just weren't possible before."

He said he would, and has, recommended the project to other irrigators.

"Of course everyone has to weigh up their own circumstances but for me it was a good decision. Everything has gone to plan and worked out the way I was told it would."

The Farm Water Program, delivered by a consortium led by the Goulburn Broken CMA, has now funded over 600 individual irrigator projects worth over \$160 million over five rounds.