

North Central Catchment Fact Sheet

Background on the Farm Water Program

A Northern Victorian consortium secured more than \$170 million from the Australian Government's On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program (\$46 million); the Victorian Government's NVIRP (\$16 million); the Victorian On Farm State Priority Projects initiative (\$43 million); and the Victorian Farm Modernisation Project (\$70 million). Administered through its Farm Water Program the program assisted irrigators to achieve water savings by improving on-farm irrigation systems. An average of around 55% of the water saved was transferred to the Australian or Victorian governments for environmental purposes.

NORTH CENTRAL CATCHMENT PROJECTS

PROJECTS	WATER SAVINGS	FUNDED
244 PROJECTS	33 GIGALITRES	\$66 MILLION

On-Farm Irrigation Improvements



- 618 of 622 projects completed with \$170 million funding
- 68,000 hectares of works including:
 - Laser Grading
 - Drainage Reuse
 - Micro Systems
 - Sprinkler Irrigation
 - Gravity Channel Surface Irrigation
 - Pipe and Riser Systems
 - Irrigation Scheduling
 - Farm Channel Upgrades
 - Automatic irrigation



Water Savings Generated

- 82 gigalitres water saved.
- 38 gigalitres retained on-farm for improved productivity.
- 43 gigalitres transferred to Australian and Victorian governments for environmental purposes.



Food Security

- Increased resilience in the face of climate change and Murray Darling Basin Plan.
- Higher value of production per megalitre used (estimated increase of \$48 million per year).
- Irrigators can maximise benefits of a modernised supply from the GMW Connections program.
- Significant increase in production, time and labour savings when irrigating.
- On-farm investment stimulated after years of drought and then flood.



Environmental

- More water is available to protect and restore river health.
- More efficient water delivery systems reduce groundwater accessions (by about 20 gigalitres per year) and nutrient run-off (by about 120 tonnes per year of nitrogen and phosphorus) and help address salinity and water table issues.



Regional Development

- With an average cost-benefit ratio of 1.4, the funding administered through the Farm Water Program is estimated to generate at least:
- \$48 million a year in economic benefits across the region;
 - 122 jobs; and
 - significant social and environmental benefits and a boost in industry confidence and co-investment.



¹ Depending on industry and technology- individual circumstances will vary.

Fact Sheet – North Central Catchment (continued)

The figures shown below relate to participation and involvement by irrigators across the North Central Catchment in the Farm Water Program for all completed projects in all rounds 1 – 5.

ROUNDS 1 – 5 (completed)			PROJECT BY INDUSTRY TYPE					
PROJECTS	TOTAL WATER SAVINGS	FUNDED	DAIRY	SHEEP & BEEF	GRAINS	HORTI-CULTURE	MIXED	OTHER
244 PROJECTS	33 GIGALITRES	\$66 MILLION	139	14	44	3	41	3
PROJECTS BY IRRIGATION IMPROVEMENT WORKS								
Laser Grading – Hectares			7408	Pipe & Riser Systems – Hectares			9388	
Drainage Reuse – Hectares			7056	Irrigation Scheduling – Hectares			460	
Farm Channel Upgrades – Kilometres			3.21	Gravity Channel Surface Irrigation – Hectares			4288	
Sprinkler Irrigation			1017	Micro Systems			781	
Automation*			481*	*with water savings generated				

Participant Profile: Harry Rowlands



Dairy farmer Harry Rowlands is watering more often but it takes less time thanks to the extensive pipe and riser system he installed on his Gunbower farm.

He successfully applied for funding from Round 1 of the Farm Water Program to install 3.5km of pipe and 50 risers on 85ha of the family's 113ha main farm property. Mr Rowlands has also upgraded his re-use pump, pump shed and installed another pump.

"The pumps are on timers so there's no more getting up at all hours to turn them on and off," he said. About 20ML of water is now delivered through each riser, significantly more than the 12ML delivered via the old channel system.

"It used to take up to six hours to get water to some paddocks now it's about 30 seconds. There's less water lying around, I'm watering faster and the pasture is growing better so there's a lot more feed."

Mr Rowlands said while water savings were a consideration when he applied for the program the main attraction was improved efficiency.

"The real win is the amount of my time and labour that's saved," Mr Rowlands said. "It was also an opportunity to carry out work I probably could never have afforded to otherwise. Work that would have taken me 20 years to get done has instead taken two months."

"The program has been a real boon for area," Mr Rowlands said. "The local pump supplier's been run off his feet and the excavator operator's put on someone else. It's good for everyone."

For more information, visit the Farm Water Program pages on the GB CMA website.

Property Location	Gunbower
Property Size	113 hectares
Industry	Dairy
Project	Pipe and riser, pump and motor to service pipe and riser system
Water Savings	238ML