



JULY 2018

Murray Valley Water Service Area Fact Sheet

The Farm Water Program operated across the Goulburn Murray Water Service Area. This region encompasses a number of Water Service Committees (WSC). WSCs consist of customer representatives who advise and assist Water Authorities in understanding stakeholder issues, needs and concerns. This Fact Sheet outlines participation and involvement across the [Murray Valley Water Service Area](#) in the Farm Water Program for all completed projects in all rounds 1 – 5.

MURRAY VALLEY WATER SERVICE AREA PROJECTS		
PROJECTS	WATER SAVINGS	FUNDED
149 PROJECTS	23 GIGALITRES	\$43 MILLION

Background on the Farm Water Program

A Northern Victorian consortium secured \$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. At least half the water saved was transferred to the Australian or Victorian governments for environmental purposes. Funding was released in rounds.

Overall Benefits

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 - Murray Valley Water Service Area (continued)

The figures shown below relate to participation and involvement by irrigators across the Murray Valley Water Service Area 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	BEEF	GRAINS	MIXED	HORTI-CULTURE
149 PROJECTS	23 GIGALITRES	\$43 MILLION	68	13	6	41	18	3

PROJECTS BY IRRIGATION IMPROVEMENT WORKS

Laser Grading – Hectares	4702	Pipe & Riser Systems – Hectares	3319
Drainage Reuse – Hectares	3342	Irrigation Scheduling – Hectares	36
Farm Channel Upgrades – Kilometres	1.23	Gravity Channel Surface Irrigation – Hectares	4756
Sprinkler Irrigation	1236	Micro Systems	66
Automation*	805*	*with water savings generated	



Participant Profile: Bill Gread

Modernisation of the irrigation network and funding for on-farm efficiency works are a “blessing” for Goulburn-Murray farmers, according to Katunga’s Bill Gread. “I reckon this Goulburn-Murray valley region is a golden region - a real Garden of Eden – but because of the drought, we were watching it wither before our eyes. This modernisation work and extra funding for on-farm work is completely reinvigorating the region, it’s given us all a new lease on life.”

Mr Gread said he recognised that the OFIEP funding could provide him with the opportunity to carry out on-farm improvements. “The place was pretty run down when I bought it so I got to work on the re-use dam, white-rocking some of the channels, earthworks and getting rid of some of the bays in some parts of the farm,” he said. In the meantime modernisation work on nearby channels had been carried out as part of the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project. “Through the connections upgrade, I’d gone from getting five or six megs through the wheel to 20,” he said. “Instead of wasting days watering it meant I could water in hours. To make the most of this, on-farm works were obviously the way to go. I had these paddocks that were basically full of rubbish and because of all the uneven-sized bays and gullies watering them was costly and unviable,” Mr Gread said.

Following works, Mr Gread planted stands of lucerne and some sorghum. “I reckon fast-watering is the way to go and, now, because of what we’ve done with the bays and channels, most of the run-off – about 98 per cent I’d say – is going in to the re-use dam and that’s got to be good thing. It’s a real blessing; a lot of people just couldn’t have afforded to get this sort of work done,” he said.

For more Water Service Area Fact Sheets and Participant Profiles, visit the Farm Water Program pages on the GB CMA website.

