

Farm Water Program Rounds 1-5 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.

ROUNDS 1 – 5		
PROJECTS	WATER SAVINGS	FUNDED
622 PROJECTS	81 GIGALITRES	\$172 MILLION

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.

Fact Sheet – Farm Water Program (continued)

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

ROUNDS 1 – 5			PROJECT BY INDUSTRY TYPE					
PROJECTS	WATER SAVINGS	FUNDED	DAIRY	GRAINS	MIXED	SHEEP & BEEF	HORTICULTURE	OTHER
622 PROJECTS	81 GIGALITRES	\$172 MILLION	332	126	85	62	10	7

PROJECTS BY IRRIGATION IMPROVEMENT WORKS

Laser grading – hectares	17536	Pipe & riser systems – hectares	15506
Drainage reuse – hectares	14783	Irrigation scheduling – hectares	1404
Farm channel upgrades – kilometres	11.1	Gravity channel surface irrigation – hectares	14634
Sprinkler irrigation - hectares	3458	Micro systems – hectares	937
Automation – hectares	1790		

Participant Profile



Participant	Graeme Nurse
Property Location	Stanhope
Property Size	323 hectares
Industry	Dairy
Project	Laser Grading and Fast Flow
Project Timeframe	8 months
Water Savings	51ML transferred to government
<p><i>Mr Nurse successfully applied for Round 1 funding to upgrade 40.6ha of his 323ha property. “It was badly set up and very hard to irrigate.. We’ve gone from more than 100 bays to about 35 and use one outlet rather than three; instead of taking days to irrigate it takes hours.”</i></p>	

Mr Nurse found out about the Farm Water Program through NVIRP. “NVIRP staff suggested applying for on-farm funding and while it was a bit of a hassle, I’m very glad that I went ahead with it and applied,” he said. “The work needed to be done and would have taken me at least 10 to 12 years to do otherwise.” The upgrade involved clearing all existing fences, laneways and troughs. A G-MW channel that cut the farm almost in half was removed, lasering carried out, new bays constructed and outlets installed. “It used to take 3 or 4 days at 6 to 8 megs a day to irrigate. Now it takes about 12 to 16 hours using an average of about 14 megs a day.” Mr Nurse said. He is moving from growing sub and some permanent pasture on the property’s medium soils to growing mostly lucerne with some permanent pasture. “We’re losing less through evaporation and the water is going where it needs to go,” he said. “Like everyone we’d been doing it tough after the drought but this (infrastructure upgrade) has given us a second wind. It’s also good for the local economy; I know the local bloke that makes the stops has put on extra people because of the work this (the Farm Water Program) is generating. It makes sense to help the farmers use their water more efficiently rather than buying up farms and water.”