

## Summary of Irrigator Final Report Response Findings

September 2019

### Background

The Farm Water Program engaged RM Consulting Group (RMCG) to provide an analysis of feedback reported by irrigators in their final project reports from Rounds 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Farm Water Program. This Fact Sheet is a summary of the findings from this report.

#### Positive outcomes the feedback highlighted included:



- Water savings from infrastructure works were meeting or exceeding expectations



- The ability for farmers to move to new crops/improved flexibility for management and productivity.



- Labour savings were seen as providing a very important benefit (allowing more time for higher value activities)



- Additional irrigation works that would not otherwise have been completed

#### Areas of concern highlighted by irrigators included:



- In Round 3, a 59% transfer of water savings (when 55% was originally expected)



- In Round 4 the water market price was higher the program's offer in Round 4.



- Significant issues in coordinating with GMW Connections process, mainly in earlier rounds.

PROJECTS CONTRACTED  
& COMPLETED

**622**  
PROJECTS

AREA CONTRACTED  
& COMPLETED

**69,950**  
HA



PROJECTS  
WATER  
SAVINGS

**82**  
GL

WATER  
RETAINED  
ON FARM

**38.5**  
GL

FUNDING

**\$170**  
MILLION



### IRRIGATOR FEEDBACK

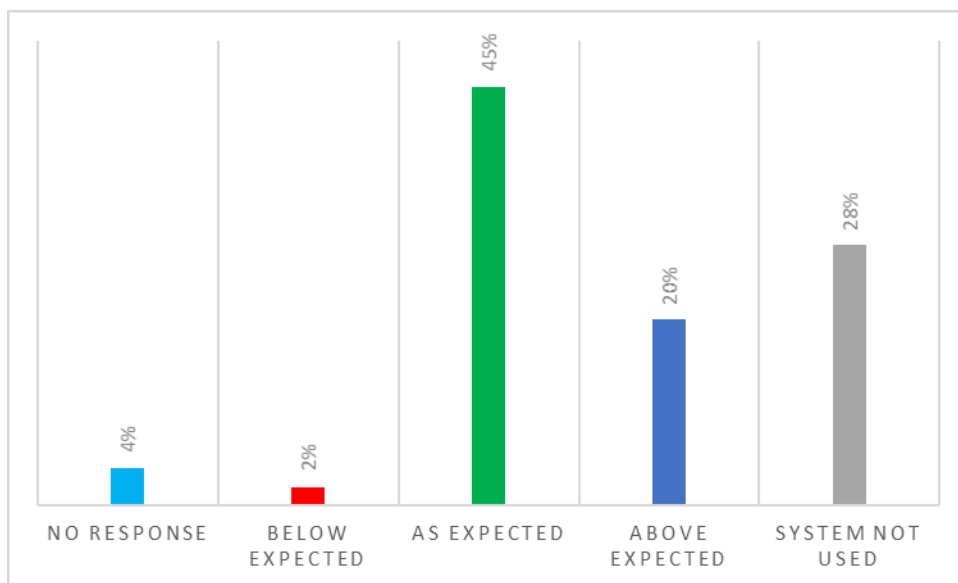
*"Very beneficial program which reinforces my belief in government co-contribution to improved irrigation in the Murray Darling Basin."*

Round 4 irrigator

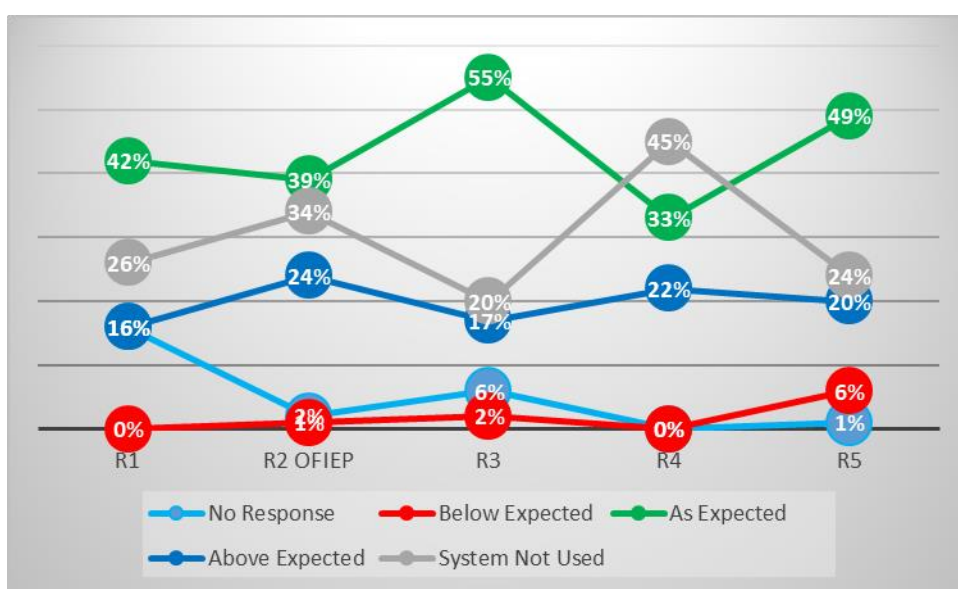
# Summary of Irrigator Final Report Response Findings (CONTINUED)

## Irrigator responses to Water Savings

Water savings generated by improving farm infrastructure were the main outcome sought from the Farm Water Program. Below are the percentage of responses gathered from 563 irrigators in relation to expected water savings from their final reports:



## Responses to level of Water Savings for each round



# Summary of Irrigator Final Report Response Findings (CONTINUED)

## Satisfaction of the program across Rounds

Across the five rounds comments were sought on common themes from participants and they covered:

Q4. The conduct, benefits and outcomes of project activities. Including CMA conduct, processes and requirements.

Q5. Participant evaluation of the implementation of the works program to date including benefits, outcomes, issues and the extent to which the objectives of the VFMP and project have been achieved.

Q8. Any other comments that you wish to make about your Project or the Program

The level of satisfaction with the program, as measured by the responses to these three questions, did not significantly change over the five rounds, except for Round 3 when positive comments reduced. This is likely to be due to the unexpected change from 55% water transferred to 59% and increasing water market value.

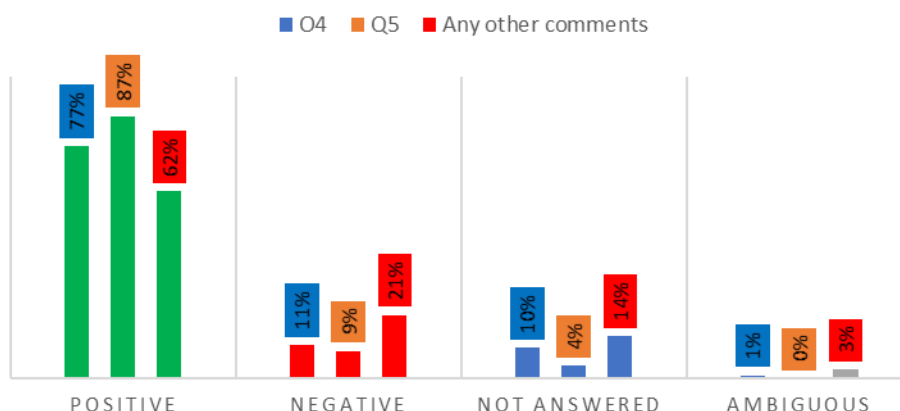
**Table 7-17: Negative comments over each round**

QUESTION (#COUNT)	R1	R2 OFIEP	R2 VOSP	R3	R4	R5
Q4	8% (6)	7% (6)	3% (4)	19% (30)	27% (3)	18% (18)
Q5	7% (5)	6% (5)	5% (7)	18% (28)	14% (2)	4% (4)
Q8	29% (27)	25% (25)	20% (34)	27% (43)	29% (2)	4% (4)

**Table 7-18: Positive comments over each round**

QUESTION (#COUNT)	R1	R2 OFIEP	R2 VOSP	R3	R4	R5
Q4	91% (73)	90% (83)	95% (139)	57% (90)	64% (7)	62% (63)
Q5	84% (63)	87% (78)	90% (135)	82% (130)	86% (12)	93% (87)
Q8	60% (55)	70% (71)	71% (122)	58% (93)	71% (5)	44% (44)

## OVERALL RESPONSE TO EACH QUESTION FROM ALL ROUNDS

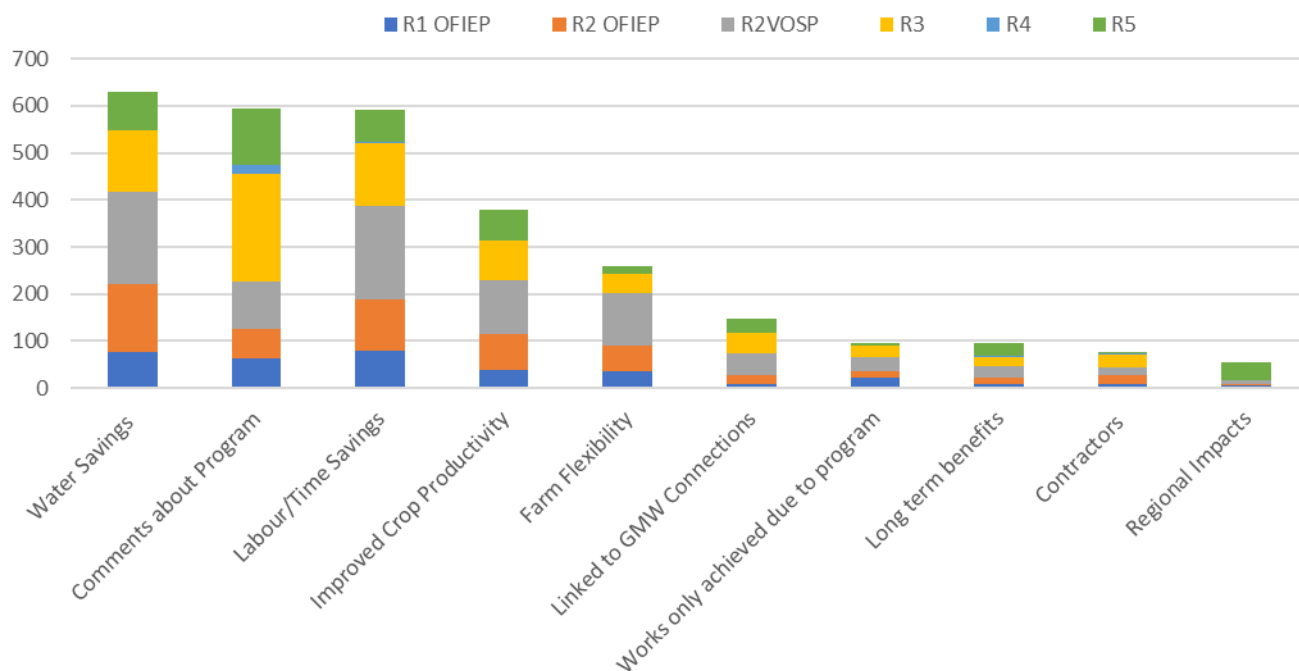


## Summary of Irrigator Final Report Response Findings (CONTINUED)

The key changes in positive/negative comments, based on feedback received was that:

- Round 3 positive comments reduced due to the unexpected change from 55% water transferred to 59%.
- Round 4 was strongly influenced by the low level of payment relative to the water price. Most applicants withdrew as the water market price rose above levels that made the round unviable.
- Round 5 was influenced by dairy price drop as well as low water availability, water leaving the region and regional impacts of less water in the region.
- Rounds 3, 4 and 5 were also less attractive financially than the earlier rounds, especially round 4. This had a major impact on positive/negative comments received and participation

The top 10 responses by landowners from all rounds:



### IRRIGATOR FEEDBACK

*"This funding that we received has been a terrific help to modernise our farming enterprise and has taken it to a level that we never thought we would be able to financially obtain."*

Round 2 irrigator

For more information, visit [www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/sustainable\\_irrigation/farm\\_water](http://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/sustainable_irrigation/farm_water).