

# *Innovative* Farming *Program*

*Productive farming for a variable water future*

## Irrigation Modernisation Project Summary

June 2013



The Project will assist our communities achieve a confident prosperous region, healthy resilient environment, sustainable profitable farming and regional growth across the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District.

- > ensure optimum social, economic and environmental outcomes by modernising the Goulburn-Murray Water irrigation system.
- > improve the competitive advantages for farming in the region.
- > increase the diversity of agricultural production and the value chain.
- > enable our communities to create new opportunities and become more resilient.

# About the Program and Project

## What is the Project?

The Project provides a critical whole of landscape and regionally coordinated response to maximising the opportunities of irrigation modernisation, increasing regional development for farming and communities, and adapting to a variable water future.

## What is the area covered by the Project?

Broadly speaking, the Project covers the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District and incorporates the local government and catchment management areas contained within. (Refer to the map on page 5).

Reconfiguring the irrigation footprint is inevitable and structural change will therefore occur.

## What are the actions of the Project?

The Project has been designed to provide information and tools that help landholders make their own informed decisions in a more timely manner. The Project does not tell people what to do. Support for landholders deciding upon their best connection option into the modernised irrigation backbone are vital for a competitive and successful regional future.

The actions range from: whole of enterprise thinking; retaining farmers and attracting new investment; to proving alternative crops, new technologies and farming practices; through to improved government agency approval processes.

## Who is rolling out the Project?

The North Central Catchment Management Authority is leading a strong consortium that comprises five local governments, the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Goulburn-Murray Water, La Trobe University and other state government authorities.

## What Project information is available?

The Project is factually based and describes the context, background and justification for intervention that will underpin the overall success of modernising agriculture across the region. The opportunities available to a coordinated and integrated response are detailed for a region ready for the next wave of development creating jobs and investment.

## How does the Project integrate irrigation modernisation?

The Project strategically integrates with both the Goulburn-Murray Water Connections Project and the Farm Water Program<sup>1</sup> (the On-farm Irrigation Efficiency Program) by enabling confident and timely decisions to be made by regional investors, especially the landholders, to ensure the long-term benefits for agriculture, communities and the environment.

The main decision support tool is a 'workbook' that enables landholders to be clear about their enterprise and people to be involved prior to negotiating about irrigation connection infrastructure. Well considered decisions will further increase financial water returns and production from the land.

## How much will the Project cost?

The Project is estimated to cost \$20 million over 5 years or \$4 million per year.

The benefits are estimated to be a \$50 million per year increase in gross value of production that could generate an additional 250 jobs in the region. The region's population is expected to increase as it is estimated that one job in agriculture supports two to three people in the region. Assuming farm profit is 10% of additional agriculture turnover that equates to \$5 million per year as additional farm profit.

The Project has been structured such that it can be utilised as an investment prospectus; specifically to optimise irrigation modernisation opportunities, address socio-economic impacts and meet the sharper government focus on sustainable agriculture, as well as food and fibre production.



## What is the urgent need for the Project?

The region is well recognised as the Food Bowl of Victoria (around a quarter of Victoria's agricultural commodities). It is based upon irrigated agriculture and covers about one million hectares. The region is currently experiencing rapid large-scale transformation of land and water resources as irrigation is modernised.

The modernised irrigation backbone has been identified; now is the critical time for farmers to decide how, when and where they will connect in.

The rate of change is rapid and has been hastened by the extreme climate events of drought and flood. Communities and governments are struggling to respond adequately to maximise opportunities and address challenges.

<sup>1</sup> Funded by the Commonwealth and State governments, this program is delivered by Goulburn Broken CMA on behalf of a consortium including North Central CMA across the G-MW supplied area.



# Project Actions



## Reaping the benefits

A1

### Attract and enable investment in high value irrigation and new crops

- > Local government coordinators to promote the region's competitive advantages and attract investment in high value agriculture.



## Local solutions for local issues

A2

### Lift regional farming competitiveness through research & development & practice change

- > Prove alternative crops, technology and farming practices lift production and sustainability whilst reducing costs; improve the knowledge and science for innovative farming.



## Good decisions based on good information

A3

### Inform & facilitate modernisation with 'Future Farm Connect' Program

- > Support landholders to set appropriate enterprise goals and make informed, confident and positive future farming decisions.



## Reconfiguring for the future

A4

### Rationalise under-utilised & high cost infrastructure & reconfigure to new demands

- > Match land use to land capability; rationalise, reconfigure and consolidate land to maintain an affordable, competitive and viable irrigation system.



## Reducing the red tape

A5

### Facilitate Government approvals

- > Facilitate positive land use change through a streamlined approval process to encourage development and manage 'red tape'.



## Taking care of business

A6

### Project coordination and governance

- > Ensure accountability and stakeholder engagement through Project progress; manage governance requirements.

WORKBOOK

An aerial photograph showing a vast, vibrant green agricultural field, likely a cornfield. In the foreground, a dirt road or path runs diagonally across the frame, bordered by a line of trees and shrubs. Several power lines with wooden poles stretch across the lower portion of the image. The overall scene depicts a rural landscape.

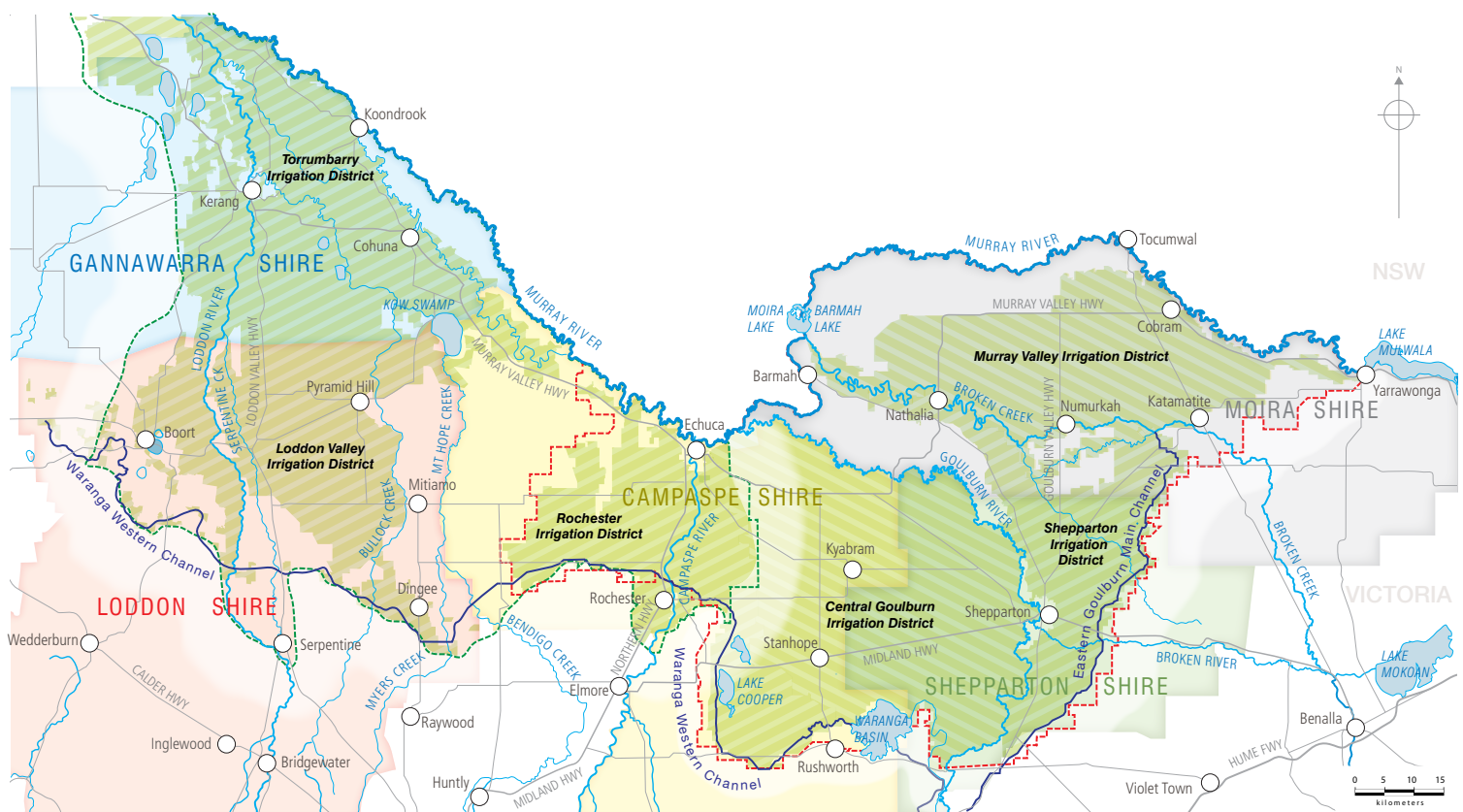
	A1 Attract and enable investment in high value irrigation and new crops	A2 Lift regional farming competitiveness through research & development & practice change	A3 Inform & facilitate modernisation with 'Future Farm Connect' Program	A4 Rationalise under-utilised & high cost infrastructure & reconfigure to new demands	A5 Facilitate Government approvals	A6 Implementation Plan coordination and governance
O1 Reduce transaction costs for achieving large-scale properties		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
O2 Understand and adapt to climate risk	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
O3 Enhance and recruit skills for new agricultural challenges and innovative farming	✓	✓	✓			✓
O4 Ensure connections to the modernised system are sustainable and affordable for users		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
O5 Attract new investors and entrants	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
O6 Deliver information for farm planning, connections and succession planning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
O7 Research, Development and Practice Change	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
O8 Rationalising / reconfiguring infrastructure				✓	✓	✓
O9 Improving holistic landscape management outcomes.		✓	✓			✓
Responsibilities (Lead in bold)	Local Government, Planning & Community Development (DPCD), DEPI	Commodity and industry groups, <b>DEPI</b> and <b>CMA</b> s	<b>DEPI</b> and <b>CMA</b> s	<b>G-MW</b>	Local Government and <b>CMA</b> s	North Central <b>CMA</b> , Local Governments, <b>DEPI</b> , <b>G-MW</b>
Other key stakeholders, partners, commodity and industry groups						



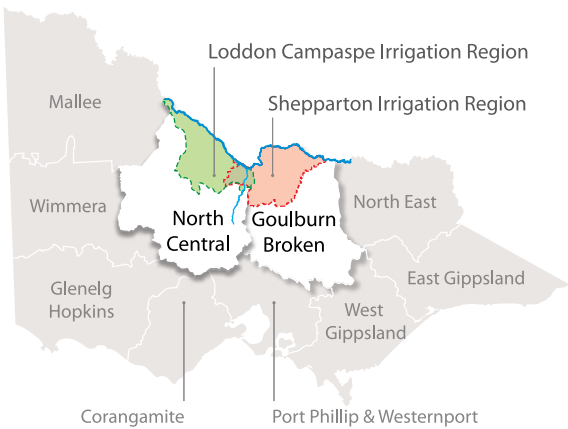


# Goulburn Murray Irrigation District

The area covered by the Innovative Farming Irrigation Modernisation Project



- LEGEND
- Irrigation Areas
  - Loddon Campaspe Irrigation Region
  - Shepparton Irrigation Region
  - Gannawarra Shire
  - Campaspe Shire
  - Loddon Shire
  - Moira Shire
  - City of Greater Shepparton



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# Case Study

## Modernised Dairying

The Clymo family at Calivil has been dairying for thirty years and milk 650 cows, watering 64 ha of lucerne and 240 ha of annual pasture. They have recently upgraded their farm design to maximise the benefits of the G-MW modernised supply.

The change resulted in decommissioning 2.8 km of spur channel, relocating some supplies to the backbone main channels, eliminating two gates and five Dethridge wheels, removing two wheels and decommissioning five other G-MW structures eliminating their ongoing operating and maintenance costs. They also saved about 200 ML of water per year.

*"We started to think about what we could do with this farm early last year and it is something we always wanted to do, but we did not realise that getting rid of channels and changing supply points would make our property more manageable. The changes allowed us to dilute some of our bore water with channel water and use this over a greater majority of our farm with the pipes and risers. This farm restructure had us really thinking outside of the square and it's a once in a lifetime opportunity to make the changes we would never have been able to afford before (December 2012)"*  
Trevor Clymo.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

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