



New assistance measures for irrigators in the Murray-Darling Basin

On 25 September 2007 the Australian Government announced a new and improved drought assistance package for irrigators, dryland farmers and small businesses severely affected by the drought. These measures recognise the unprecedented severity, length and extent of the current drought, and subsequent reduced water allocations, and their impact on rural and regional communities, the environment, and the broader Australian economy.

What are the new measures?

Information sessions to assist irrigators manage reduced water allocations

Information sessions will be delivered across the Murray-Darling Basin to provide irrigators with practical advice to assist them in managing their farm enterprises with reduced water allocations. The sessions, delivered in key irrigation communities across the Murray-Darling Basin, will provide irrigators with information specific to their industry and region. The aim of the sessions is to assist irrigators to identify challenges and risks from the current water resource issues, and improve their planning and risk management during this difficult time.

Irrigators will receive practical and expert advice on things such as improving water use efficiency, minimising production losses and improving production planning. Irrigators will also be able to seek advice on what changes they may need to consider to manage this water shortage crisis.

Further details, including dates, towns and venues, will soon be available by calling the Murray-Darling Basin Assistance and Referral Line on **1800 050 015**, and from the website **www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought/assistance/murray-darling-basin**

New grants for irrigators to improve water management in the Murray-Darling Basin

Grants of up to \$20,000 (GST exclusive) will be available to eligible Murray-Darling Basin irrigation businesses to help implement water management strategies. Irrigators will be able to access the taxable grant for approved activities undertaken from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2009.

Grants are available to help irrigators undertake a range of activities that respond to temporarily reduced water allocations and improve on-farm practices to maximise production from the water that is available.

A table outlining the activities which irrigators may implement to receive the grant is attached to this fact sheet.

For further details on the grants for improved water management, call the Murray-Darling Basin Assistance and Referral Line on **1800 050 015**, or visit **www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought/assistance/murray-darling-basin**

For more information about the new assistance measures for irrigators in the Murray-Darling Basin contact the Murray-Darling Basin Assistance and Referral Line on 1800 050 015.



Activities that irrigators may undertake to receive the grant

Irrigators can select from the following activities:

- piping, troughs and associated activities for stock and domestic water;
- fixed water charges;
- sinking/extending/refurbishment of bores (and pumps);
- pruning activities to minimise the impact of low water allocations;
- reconfiguring irrigation systems;
- equipment replacement to maintain irrigation systems (including computer software, piping and pumps);
- costs associated with implementing water efficient crop options; and
- laser leveling.

Assistance will NOT be paid for:

- the purchase or leasing of vehicles
- purchasing water or fodder;
- refinancing existing loans;
- accounting fees; or
- the purchase or service of assets not directly involved in the operation of the farm enterprise.

Note: this funding complements the activities of the National Plan for Water Security 'On-farm Efficiency Gains Programme'.