

NSW SUSTAINING THE BASIN *Irrigated farm modernisation*

Update Bulletin 25

April 2015

This bulletin provides updates on the NSW Sustaining the Basin: Irrigated Farm Modernisation (STBIFM) program. This program is funded by the Australian Government's 'Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure' Program.

The bulletin will keep interested stakeholders informed of key dates and activities for the duration of the program. It will also alert you to opportunities for training and learning more about emerging issues and technologies.

DPI encourages you to be involved and stay informed using this service. You can, of course, unsubscribe at any time.

For more detailed information on any aspects of the program please send an email to IFM.info@dpi.nsw.gov.au or visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin

Important dates to remember

The closing dates for **submission of Irrigated Farm Water Use Efficiency Assessment (IFWUEA)** forms are as follows:

- Round 5 – 5pm, Monday 1 June 2015

The closing dates **for submission of Infrastructure Applications** are as follows:

- Round 4 – 5pm, Wednesday 13 May 2015
- Round 5 – 5pm, Wednesday 29 July 2015

Application workshops

NSW DPI wishes to advise irrigators operating in the NSW Border Rivers, Lower Namoi and NSW Barwon-Darling water management areas, of a series of workshops to provide information regarding submitting an infrastructure application in the *NSW Sustaining the Basin: Irrigated Farm Modernisation* program.

Irrigators and their advisors are encouraged to attend to receive current information on the program.

Tuesday 28th April, **Walgett** Council, 77 Fox Street, 10:00am – 12:00am

Tuesday 28th April, **Narrabri** Australian Cotton Research Institute, 2188 Kamilaroi Hwy, 3:00pm – 5:00pm

Wednesday 29th April, **Moree** Council, 2/30 Heber Street, 8:30 – 10:30am



NSW DPI will be on the road again for Application Workshops. Image S. Priest

It's all in the planning

Successful projects in previous rounds of the STBIFM program have relied on good project planning.

Robert Hoogers, Project Officer with NSW DPI has a few tips that he believes help with preparing a good project plan:

- Employ an irrigation consultant that you know and trust, that works in that particular field of expertise
- Work out what your water losses are, before you work out how you are going to fix them
- Don't overestimate your water savings
- Plan to give yourself plenty of time, and how you are going to grow your crop around the construction phase etc.
- There are a variety of legislations you need to be aware of that might have an effect on your project e.g. Native Vegetation, Cultural and Heritage
- Clearing old irrigation systems out of the way – things like asbestos pipes need to be considered
- Contractors, such as earth moving contractors may be in demand if there are several projects approved in your district
- Weather conditions, such as extreme wet periods can delay works

You can also watch the [video interview](#).



Robert Hoogers. Image S .Priest.

NSW DPI Executive visit Jim Wall

The DG DPI has a new initiative for DPI Executive Team meetings – they now go regional and include a field trip taking in DPI projects occurring at the regional location. The first meeting under this initiative was to the Australian Cotton Research Institute (ACRI) at Narrabri. The DPI Agriculture Sustaining the Basin Irrigated Farm Modernisation (STBIFM) team was lucky enough to lead the field trip associated with this meeting and took the Executive to Jim Wall's farm at Wee Waa.



The DPI Executive Team with Jim Wall. Image B. Fifield

Jim, a 5th generation farmer from Wee Waa, has had several successful applications in the STBIFM program.

To date, Jim has installed a new 750 ML storage covering 18 hectares, and a new swing around lateral move that irrigates 160ha with STBIFM funding. This has allowed him to save water and increase his productivity.

'We've got mung beans in now. On the flood irrigated area they used 3.5ML/ha, and under the STBIFM funded lateral they used about 1.5ML/ha. So on 160ha we've saved 320ML in our first crop. That's our first go at it. We've made a few mistakes, got a bit of learning to do, but that's the same with anything new, and the early signs are pretty good ' Jim said.

Jim believes the STBIFM program has brought his business plan forward by 15 years, as projects like this are difficult to finance yourself. 'I much prefer to do it this way and see these savings, than having to go to the bank and say I

would like \$1 million dollars in the middle of a raging drought'



Jim Wall: Wee Waa, Tracey Macdonald: Manager R & D Water, Michael Grabham: Leader of STBIFM program, Scott Hansen: Director General NSW DPI, with Jim's STBIFM funded lateral move. Image B. Fifield

Michael Grabham, Leader of the STBIFM program agreed with Jim, 'The space that we are really targeting is that point where it doesn't make economic sense for the irrigator to invest in recovering irrigation losses– they just can't afford the investment. But with a bit of help from the government the irrigator can put that infrastructure in place, recover water for the environment and their business and really make big savings and improve their business in ways that couldn't occur as part of their existing business plan' Michael said.

'Without a word of a lie, it's been the best thing that has happened to a small farm family operation like us. To put your business plan ahead 15 years it's a major, major thing.

'The brilliant part about this project is most of the money goes into regional communities supporting local businesses, which is great' – Jim Wall.

The Executive enjoyed Jim's passion for farming and his love of the land. When asked 'What keeps you in it mate?' Jim replied 'We're five generations deep now. We've owned the main block here since 1860. So when you're working towards something like that it's a bit bigger picture, a bit more rewarding'

Certified meter validators and installers training

Irrigation industry professionals who install and validate irrigation water meters in northern NSW will soon be able to take advantage of subsidised certification training.

DPI is teaming up with Irrigation Australia Limited to boost the availability of certified irrigation meter installers and validators in the program area.

The STBIFM program will cover 75 per cent of the Certified Meter Validators and Installers training course fees for those wishing to undertake this training.

This support is available to members of the irrigation industry in the NSW Border Rivers, Gwydir, Namoi, Macquarie and Barwon-Darling catchments.



A compliant meter being installed. Image: G. Lennox.

Compliant metering across the region will soon be a requirement under the National Water Initiative. Additionally, recent changes to the STBIFM program now require compliant metering to be operating by the time projects funded under rounds 4 and 5 and any future

funding rounds are complete. Therefore, it is important to have trained installers and validators available to the industry.

These professionals can greatly assist irrigators who are installing metering sites by ensuring installation meets both their needs and the needs of irrigation water providers.

As the STBIFM program works towards both modernising irrigation infrastructure and increasing irrigation management skills and knowledge within irrigation communities, this initiative is a nice fit for the program.

On one hand STBIFM provides an ideal opportunity for irrigators who need to upgrade their metering to have these costs subsidised as part of an irrigation modernisation project and on the other hand supports the capacity of the irrigation industry to install and validate compliant metering

Becoming certified also adds another string to the bow of irrigation professionals potentially improving employment opportunities in this specialised field.

For more information or to register your interest in attending the training please send an email to IFM.info@dpi.nsw.gov.au or visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/info/sustainingthebasin.

Local project contacts



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