

Murray–Darling Basin Irrigation Management Grant



Background

The purpose of the grant is to allow eligible irrigators located in the Murray–Darling Basin (MDB), or those who draw water directly from the MDB as their sole source of irrigation, the opportunity to access additional funding to implement water management strategies.

What assistance is available?

The MDB Irrigation Management Grant is a taxable grant of up to \$20 000. It is available to irrigators who draw water directly from the MDB as their sole source of irrigation. The purpose is to implement eligible activities that assist with the management of reduced water allocations.

The grant will be payable for eligible activities undertaken between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2009 and will be paid directly to irrigators. Applications for the grant must be lodged by 31 March 2009.

How is the grant paid?

The MDB Irrigation Management Grant will be paid by direct deposit into the account of the farm enterprise business.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the MDB Irrigation Management Grant you must:

- be at least 18 years old and living in Australia
- have a right or interest in the land used for the purposes of a farm enterprise, contribute a significant part of your labour

and capital to the farm enterprise and derive a significant part of your income from the farm enterprise *

- meet an off-farm asset test
- have been a farmer for two years prior to lodging your application
- have a current Australian Business Number
- have identified the activities for managing reduced water allocations, **and**
- be an irrigator, that is, you either:
 - hold an active license for irrigation entitlement
 - demonstrate you have derived income from irrigation activities within the three years prior to the date of application
 - demonstrate you would have derived an income from irrigation activities if water allocations were not significantly reduced, **or**
 - demonstrate you have incurred expenses for irrigation activities within the three years prior to the date of application.

* To derive significant income from the farm enterprise you must be able to demonstrate that you would have derived an income from irrigation activities if water allocations were not significantly reduced.

Note: Only one MDB Irrigation Management Grant per business enterprise will be issued.

What can the grant be used for?

The grant is available to assist irrigators undertake a range of eligible activities that improve on-farm practices with reduced water allocations.

Eligible activities include:

- piping, troughs and associated activities for stock and domestic water
- fixed water charges*
- sinking, extending or 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 levelling.

* Fixed water charges are not related to the volume of water used. For example in a year where allocations are significantly reduced and water may not be delivered to the irrigator for on-farm use, fixed charges will still apply.

Examples of activities that are not eligible include:

- the purchase or leasing of vehicles
- purchasing water or fodder
- re-financing existing loans
- accounting fees, **and**
- purchase or service of assets not directly involved in the operation of the farm enterprise.

What will Centrelink do?

Centrelink will:

- issue the claim form for the grant
- assess eligibility for the grant
- arrange payment to eligible irrigators who have undertaken eligible activities that assist in managing reduced water allocations, **and**
- arrange payment to eligible irrigators in cases where the irrigator is applying retrospectively and can provide documentary evidence of expenses incurred for an eligible activity.

How do I apply?

- Contact Centrelink for the *Murray-Darling Basin Irrigation Management Grant* claim form by calling the Murray-Darling Basin Assistance and Referral Hotline on **Freecall™ 1800 050 015**, visiting your local Customer Service Centre or **www.centrelink.gov.au**
- Lodge the completed claim form at your local Customer Service Centre.
- Show Centrelink documents that prove who you (and your partner) are—see the *Proving your Identity to Centrelink* factsheet for more information.

Note: The checklist on the *Murray-Darling Basin Irrigation Management Grant* claim form includes information about what other documents you will need to support your claim.

How to find out more

Murray-Darling Basin Assistance and Referral Hotline	Freecall™ 1800 050 015
Drought Assistance Hotline	13 2316
To speak to Centrelink in languages other than English	13 1202
Customer Relations (for complaints, compliments and suggestions)	Freecall™ 1800 050 004
Australian Government Services Fraud Tip-off Line	13 1524
TTY* enquiries	Freecall™ 1800 810 586
To make an appointment	13 1021

Go to our website at **www.centrelink.gov.au**

Note: Calls from your home phone to Centrelink "13" numbers from anywhere in Australia are charged at a fixed rate. That rate may vary from the price of a local call and may also vary between telephone service providers. Calls to "1800" numbers from your home phone are free. Calls from public and mobile phones may be timed and charged at a higher rate.