



# Water *for* Profit

Designed *by farmers for farmers*





## Investing in irrigation

The Tasmanian Government recognises the value of our farmers and farming sector to our State's economy and our regional and rural areas.

That is why we have committed to growing the value of agriculture to our State to \$10 billion by 2050.

This commitment is not just driven by our belief in the sector, but also by our belief in the skills, knowledge and experience of our farming sector.

In Tasmania, we have a major advantage when it comes to our agriculture sector.

Our natural resources of water, soil, and climate are matched by the vision, knowledge and experience of our farmers.

And, we have a world-class research, development and extension arm in the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture that has the expertise to work with our agribusiness community to deliver the latest technologies and learnings directly to our farmers.

Tasmania is in the middle of a once in a generation investment in new irrigation schemes.

Expanding access to reliable irrigation water is strengthening our regional communities and creating jobs on farms and in our country towns.

Irrigation is also transforming agriculture, giving farmers security for their existing enterprises and the confidence to invest further.

The \$1.5 million Water for Profit program will ensure that farmers have access to information they need to take the greatest opportunities offered by new irrigation schemes – to understand the potential for new crops and markets, how to maximise their yields and profits, and how to get the best from their soils and water in a sustainable way.

The program will work with farmers in key areas to benefit regional communities where there is new or increased access to irrigation.

Farmers will lead and set the research and development agenda for this collaborative program in collaboration with the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE), the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA), the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) and Tasmanian Irrigation (TI).

Family farms and regional communities are the backbone of this state and the Tasmanian Government is committed to cultivating prosperity by equipping them with the very best scientific support to maximise their return on investment and ensure their businesses are profitable for the long-term.



**Jeremy Rockliff  
MP**

Deputy Premier  
and Minister for  
Primary Industries  
and Water



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## Water for Profit: A four-year program to help Tasmanian farmers maximise their return on investment in irrigation.



# By working together, farmers will improve the prosperity of their regions.

The **Water for Profit** Program delivers directly on the Tasmanian Government's priority to increase farm profitability and grow the value of Tasmanian agriculture.

Farmers will be co-investigators working with and drawing on the resources of the Water for Profit program partners, consultants and industry bodies to:

- Direct research to benefit their region.
- Undertake benchmarking to identify what farming practices lead to better productivity and sustainability outcomes.
- Contribute to and guide the development of online irrigation and cropping decision support tools specific to Tasmanian conditions.
- Provide opportunities for both informal and formal information exchange between farmers.

## **Tasmanian farmers and the state's agriculture industry have set the priorities for future irrigation RD&E.**

TIA facilitated the development of these priorities through a series of industry forums and by establishing an advisory panel representing farmers, agribusinesses and policy advisors.

TIA is bringing together experts in irrigation and related fields from around Australia to work on these priorities through the Water for Profit program and future research projects.

Farmers will lead and set the RD&E agenda for the collaborative **Water for Profit** program.

## **Collaboration is key to success**

**Water for Profit** will deliver a more sustainable, productive and profitable irrigated agriculture sector through collaboration with farmers, agricultural consultants, government, researchers, and industry representatives.

Farmers will get access to cutting-edge research and online irrigation and cropping tools relevant to their properties through TIA, detailed land management information through TI's Farm Water Access Plans and digital soil mapping data from DPIPWE.

Farmers and farmer groups will decide how to best use this technical information through support provided by the TFGA, industry groups and agricultural consultants.

## **Farmer-to-farmer mentoring**

TIA and the TFGA will work with farmers, agriculture consultants and NRM agencies, to engage with existing or establish new farmer groups, particularly in areas with 'new water'.

Rigorous benchmarking will be used to support farmer groups to set productivity goals for yields and inputs for both cropping and pasture-based farming systems.

Farmer groups will set goals for improving irrigation management, and develop and share strategies for meeting these goals across their region.

By sharing information on cropping and investment decisions with each other, farmers will improve the prosperity of their regions.

A key part of this will be working with existing farmer networks to establish on-farm demonstration sites for peer-to-peer learning.

## **Irrigation and cropping tools**

This is an opportunity for farmers to bring agricultural research into their region to compare how different crops and pastures, products and irrigation scheduling perform with local soils and conditions.

Information generated by farmers will be supplemented by data about soil physical characteristics, crop rotations and farming systems to develop online irrigation and cropping tools specific to Tasmania's unique environment.

Farmers will provide direct input into the development and application of these tools, ensuring that they are commercially relevant to their own properties and to the wider industry.

Once validated, the models will be used with farmers to explore different cropping strategies, including: different plant varieties, fertiliser application, irrigation scheduling, crop rotations.

# What the program will deliver for farmers

**Water for Profit** will deliver benchmarking data, tools for analysing this data and training on sustainable and profitable irrigation management for farmers through:

- 1 **Farmer groups** for peer-to-peer learning.
- 2 **Effective irrigation and cropping decision support tools.**
- 3 **Soil management** practices under irrigation.
- 4 **Soil mapping** information to assist with land-use planning and investment decision making.

The expertise of farmers, consultants and industry will be combined with that of specialists at TIA and its research, development and extension partners to create better ways of managing irrigated farming systems.

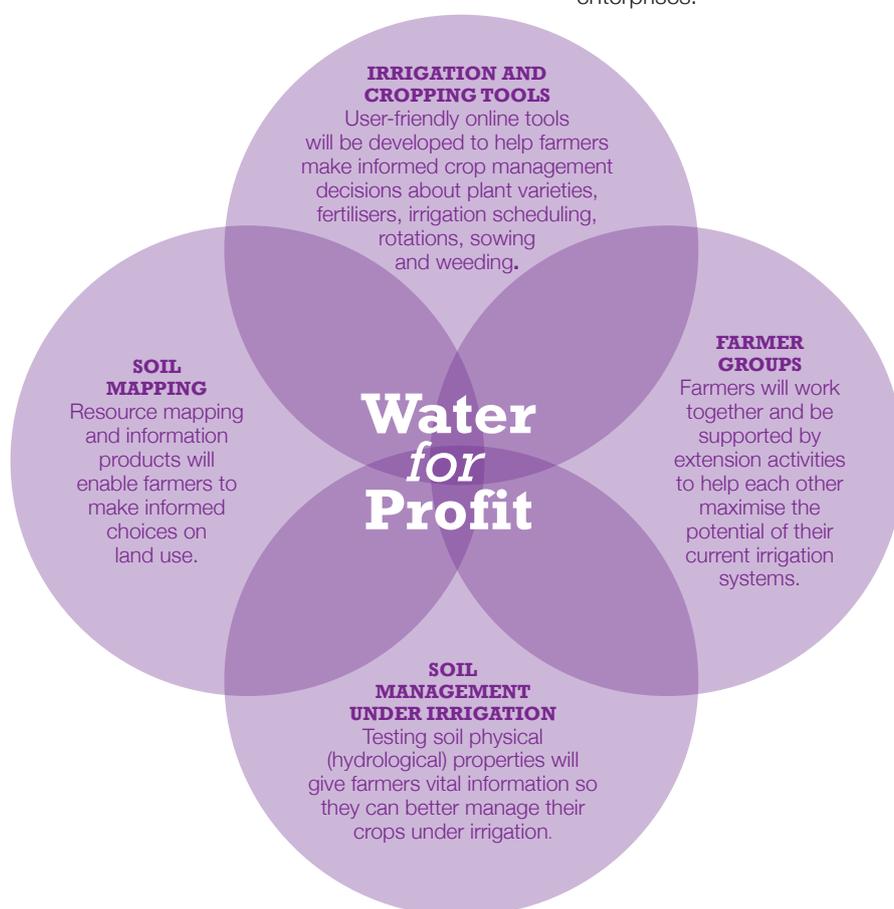
**Water for Profit** will lead to practical solutions that will be shared with other farmers to:

- Allow comparison of productivity goals within farmer groups and between groups;
- Identify training needs and knowledge gaps limiting productivity gains;
- Identify and support better practices for irrigated farming systems;
- Change management practices leading to improved productivity and profitability.

## GET INVOLVED

**Water for Profit** aims to improve the prosperity of farmers and regional communities through farmer-driven innovation:

- Join a farmer group and work together to improve farm management practices and profitability for your region.
- Lead field-based research in your region by hosting irrigation demonstration sites for field days and peer-to-peer learning.
- Direct the development of and get access to online irrigation and cropping tools to help you make decisions, increase profits and operate sustainable farming enterprises.



**Be part of a valuable peer-to-peer network.**

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TIA is a joint venture of the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government.