Farm Irrigation Assessments

Fact Sheet

Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project

NVIRP waterforgrowth

Introduction

Farm Irrigation Assessments help ensure that any planned modernisation works enhance farm operations, rather than impact negatively on them. These assessments also maximise rationalisation opportunities.

The process involves keeping landowners informed and providing support to help them make informed decisions regarding modernisation and rationalisation opportunities for their properties. The process helps maximise rationalisation outcomes, facilitate meter selection, encourage a greater take-up of connection incentives, reduce modernisation costs, improve farm operations and optimise service levels.

The process involves a visit to a property to undertake an assessment, where potential implications from the modernisation program are considered on the farm side of the service point. The assessment will involve landowner interviews, farm surveying and perhaps a Whole Farm Plan (WFP). Landowner involvement and input is essential.

A Dethridge wheel or open outlet will generally only be replaced once a Farm Irrigation Assessment (FIA) has been undertaken. Where potential farm implications are identified, the meter replacement can be deferred until a plan is developed to address these and any remediation works identified. Remediation works may be on either the channel side or the farm side of the outlet.

In addition, under-used or redundant infrastructure can be identified and rationalised. In some cases, rationalisation also assists with maximising service point size through a redistribution of delivery shares.

Usually, six to 12 months of notice is provided for impending backbone modernisation works. The first step of the process is for NVIRP to contact the property owner. This will initially be through publically advertised group meetings, followed by an individual letter. The farm designer will then contact the landowner and commence the FIA.

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The process

Properties with direct access to the backbone

Properties with direct backbone access are usually visited six to 12 months prior to backbone modernisation works occurring. The initial Farm Irrigation Assessment is used to:

1. Determine whether there are any supply issues that impact on the service provided
2. Evaluate any rationalisation opportunities
3. Identify any required remediation works
4. Determine the appropriate channel operating level to service the property
5. Evaluate and reapportion delivery shares
6. Recommend the appropriate service point type and size

In some cases, where there are considerable command, flow constraint issues or complex rationalisation opportunities, further farm analysis and design may be required.

Connections Program

The Connections Program provides incentives for landowners to relocate their water supply point from spurs to the automated backbone.

The initial Farm Irrigation Assessment is used to:

1. Develop preliminary designs and costs to allow the property to be connected to the backbone
2. Evaluate any rationalisation opportunities
3. Evaluate any implications on Goulburn-Murray Water infrastructure or adjacent properties
4. Determine the appropriate channel operating level to service the property
5. Evaluate and reapportion delivery shares
6. Recommend the appropriate service point type and size.

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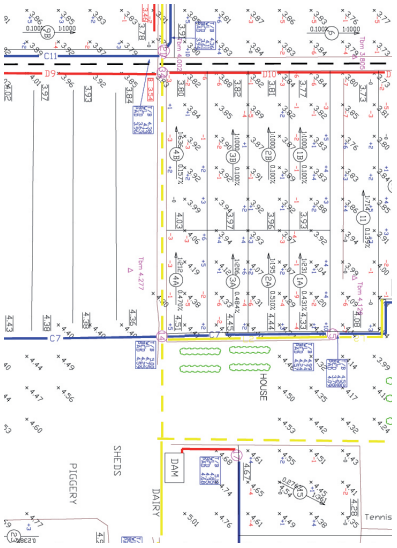
What is Involved?

Generally a Farm Irrigation Assessment will:

- Confirm whether there are any supply issues that impact on the service provided. This will occur through:
  - Landowner consultation
  - Analysis of historic flow rates
  - On-farm survey
  - Whole Farm Plan (WFP) analysis or review
  - Development of Farm Design



- Assess geography and check against current channel operating level.
- Compare current channel operating level with the originally designed supply level.
- Identify remediation works to optimise performance, including:
  - Recommending the appropriate service point type and size to service the property if it is to be serviced from the backbone
  - Justifying a change in service point type and size if different to NVIRP metering principles
  - Identifying and maximising any rationalisation opportunities
  - Confirming WFP details and verifying that completed works are in accordance with the WFP
  - Identifying any required on-farm remediation works
  - Determining the appropriate channel operating level, to service the property to an agreed standard in line with NVIRP principles and required works.

- A report for each property will be developed, with a copy provided to the landowner and NVIRP. Then NVIRP will negotiate with the landowner to identify an agreeable solution.
- If simple on-farm supply issues are apparent, NVIRP will work with landowner to develop solutions.
- If complex farm supply issues are apparent, the assessment will be used to develop available options.

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