

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

**Lake Wellington
Catchment Irrigation and
Nutrient Management
Demonstration Project
Landholder Booklet**



West Gippsland
Catchment Management Authority

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Agriculture Victoria Irrigation Team Contact Details

Caelan McIntosh	Irrigation Extension Officer	0476 885 716	caelan.mcintosh@agriculture.vic.gov.au
Alexis Killoran	Regional Manager Irrigation – South East	0428 387 869	alexis.c.killoran@agriculture.vic.gov.au
Steph Veskoukis	Irrigation Extension Officer	0477 924 286	steph.veskoukis@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Summary – Need to know basics

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

The Irrigation Demo Project is aimed at irrigators who are interested in trialling emerging technologies and methods on their farm and sharing the learnings with the irrigation community.

The target audience for the project is irrigators in the Lake Wellington catchment, inclusive of ALL agricultural sectors.

All applicants must be on irrigated farms in the Lake Wellington catchment (that includes all irrigated farms in the Avon, Macalister, Thomson and greater Latrobe River catchments inclusive of tributaries of these rivers).

WHAT ARE THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES?

The Project is funded through the Victorian Government's Sustainable Irrigation Program. Its aim is to demonstrate on-farm activities that help to achieve the objectives of the [Lake Wellington Land and Water Management Plan](#) including:

- reduction in nutrients and other pollutants in the Gippsland Lakes
- contain impacts of salinity and high-watertables
- sustainable regional economic growth
- improved understanding and management of social and cultural values
- reduced greenhouse emissions from irrigated agriculture.

HOW WILL DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS BE SELECTED?

All applications will be scored against the project objectives stated above. In addition, the evaluation process will also consider the following core principles:

- the projects should serve as a catalyst for practice change, for example projects should;
 - be repeatable on other Gippsland farms,
 - showcase new technology or innovative practices that have NOT yet been widely adopted in Gippsland, or
 - capture real data around existing practices that currently only have anecdotal evidence in a Gippsland context.
- the farm must be willing to share all pertinent information (both successes and failings) with the community via site visits/field days/conversations and a broad range of media (eg. newspaper, radio, web, social media)
- the project must be able to monitor and evaluate outcomes (eg. increased water use efficiency, crop pasture yield, decreased nutrient/water/power/fert use, etc)
- projects should be applicable to a wide irrigation audience across Gippsland
- projects with an ability to leverage other projects/grants would be advantageous
- linkages with industry bodies would be advantageous (eg. GippsDairy, VegNET/FFG, AusVeg, VFF).

FURTHER DETAILS ON THE EVALUATION PROCESS ARE PROVIDED WITHIN THIS BOOKLET.

WHAT ARE THE TIMELINES?

Expressions of Interest Close at: 4 pm, Tuesday 26 November 2024

All successful projects will develop a project timeline as part of their project planning. Successful projects must be able to commence before 1 March 2025 and be fully completed and signed off by 31 March 2028.

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

The funding pool available to irrigators is \$180,000. The project is looking to fund at least 6 demonstration projects up to a maximum value of \$30,000 per project. There is a limit of 1 grant per irrigation business. Further details on the funding arrangements are provided in this booklet.

WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING?

Activity Type	Example
Professional agricultural planning or consulting services	Contracting a professional agricultural planner or consultant to develop or assist with the development and implementation of on-farm plans or activities that meet the project objectives.
Equipment and/or infrastructure	Purchasing of equipment or infrastructure that contribute to project objectives.
Monitoring and evaluation equipment and/or services	*All funded projects <u>must</u> include a plan for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the demonstration. This could include specific monitoring equipment and/or contracting professional services to assist with monitoring and evaluation. Costs associated with monitoring can be included in the grant application.
Other	As a rule of thumb, any expenditure on products or services that are necessary for the demonstration to succeed will be eligible.

*A full eligibility checklist and a list of ineligible activities is provided within this booklet

For examples of projects that have previously been funded, please refer to: <https://wgcma.vic.gov.au/farmers-share-irrigation-innovation/>

HOW DO I APPLY?

If you are interested in applying for the project, please contact the Agriculture Victoria irrigation team to discuss your ideas and arrange an on-farm consultation session to work through the application process.

Caelan McIntosh – Ph: 0476 885 716 or Email: caelan.mcintosh@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Alexis Killoran – Ph: 0428 387 869 or Email: alexis.c.killoran@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Steph Veskokouk – Ph: 0477 924 286 or Email: steph.veskokouk@agriculture.vic.gov.au

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you are interested in finding out more about the Sustainable Irrigation Program or the Lake Wellington Land and Water Management Plan please contact the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) project team:

Anthony Goode – Ph: 0438 507 184 or Email: anthonyg@wgcma.vic.gov.au

Brad Missen – Ph: 0472 501 223 or Email: bradm@wgcma.vic.gov.au

Bonnie Dawson – Ph: 0448 037 461 or Email: bonnied@wgcma.vic.gov.au

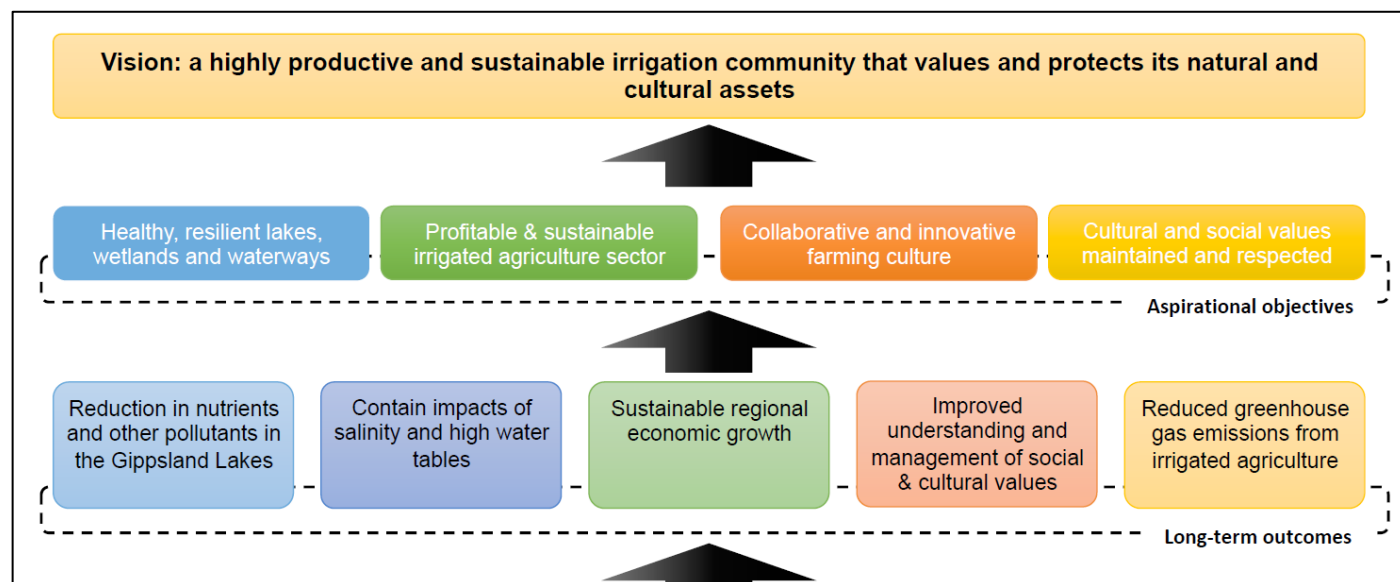
Introduction and Background

INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines the governance protocols associated with the implementation of the Lake Wellington Catchment Irrigation and Nutrient Management Demonstration Project (hereby referred to as the Demo Project).

LAKE WELLINGTON LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN (2018)

The Lake Wellington Land and Water Management Plan is a 10-year strategy that was developed in 2018 with the following vision and objectives:



In delivering these objectives the Land and Water Management Plan recommended the introduction of industry linked trials and demonstrations as a central part of a broader suite of extension services and community and industry engagement tools.

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT'S SUSTAINABLE IRRIGATION PROGRAM

The Lake Wellington Land and Water Management Plan is primarily funded through the Victorian Government's Sustainable Irrigation Program (SIP), regionally implemented in Gippsland by the West Gippsland CMA and Agriculture Victoria.

In 2020, a 4-year program was developed for the implementation of SIP in West Gippsland. This 4-year program included a pilot project to develop and implement an irrigation and nutrient management demonstration program as per the recommendation of the LW-LWMP. This pilot of the Demo Project saw 4 successful demonstrations implemented, with outputs including final reports, field days and numerous video products. It was effective at increasing engagement and connection within the irrigator community in Gippsland and has shown signs of increasing adoption of the technology and practices showcased. The program has now been extended for at least 6 more demonstrations to occur from 2024-2028.

This demonstration program will aim to contribute to the following outcomes for the Sustainable Irrigation Program during EC6:

- timely and efficient provision of information supports irrigation community to make informed decisions
- irrigation practices are improved to increase water efficiency and use alternative water sources effectively to reduce environmental impacts while supporting agricultural productivity
- irrigation communities apply adaptive management practices and adopt technology to support sustainable water management and respond to emerging issues and impacts of climate change.

Objectives, Scope and Timelines

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

In accordance with the LW-LWMP, all trials and demonstrations funded through this project will be assessed against the following long-term outcomes:

- reduction in nutrients and other pollutants in the Gippsland Lakes

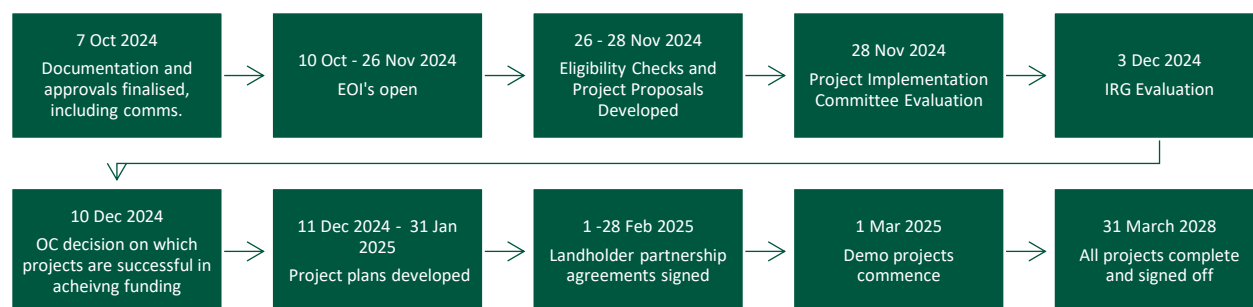
- contain impacts of salinity and high-watertables
- sustainable regional economic growth
- improved understanding and management of social and cultural values
- reduced greenhouse emissions from irrigated agriculture.

Secondary Objective

A broad objective of the Sustainable Irrigation team is to connect with the community and, as much as possible, help the irrigation community connect with each other. During the COVID pandemic, restrictions effectively stopped field days, discussion groups, training events and even less formal social networks have struggled to stay together. These communities and social networks are still in the process of rebuilding. The Sustainable Irrigation Program is well placed to play an important role in reconnecting some of the networks and this demonstration project has and will continue to play an integral part in that process.

TIMELINES

All successful projects will develop a project timeline as part of their project planning. Broadly, projects will need to comply with the below timeline –



Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI)

MERI activities will be coordinated in line with the West Gippsland Sustainable Irrigation Program EC6 MERI Plan. Each individual project funded through the project will be required to develop a mini-MERI plan that is fit-for-purpose for that project.

As a guide, baseline reporting requirements for each project would include:

- a technical report
- 1-2 page summary
- short “YouTube” style video
- a field day

However, the specific deliverables and responsibility for delivery may differ between projects and will be outlined within the Project Development Plan.

Confidentiality, Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Declarations

This program is conducted in compliance with the Victorian Public Sector Code of Conduct.

Throughout the program any breach of governance, real or perceived, including conflict of interest, code of conduct, fraud or corruption shall be referred to the WGCMA CEO immediately in accordance with the WGCMA Fraud and Corruption Policy.

Project Governance Arrangements

The project governance structure is displayed below. This describes which agencies and staff are involved in the project and their respective roles. Note: The WGCMA's Irrigator Reference Group comprises 13 irrigators from the community who provide advice on the Sustainable Irrigation Program in West Gippsland. The Irrigator Reference Group will be directly involved in many aspects of this project.

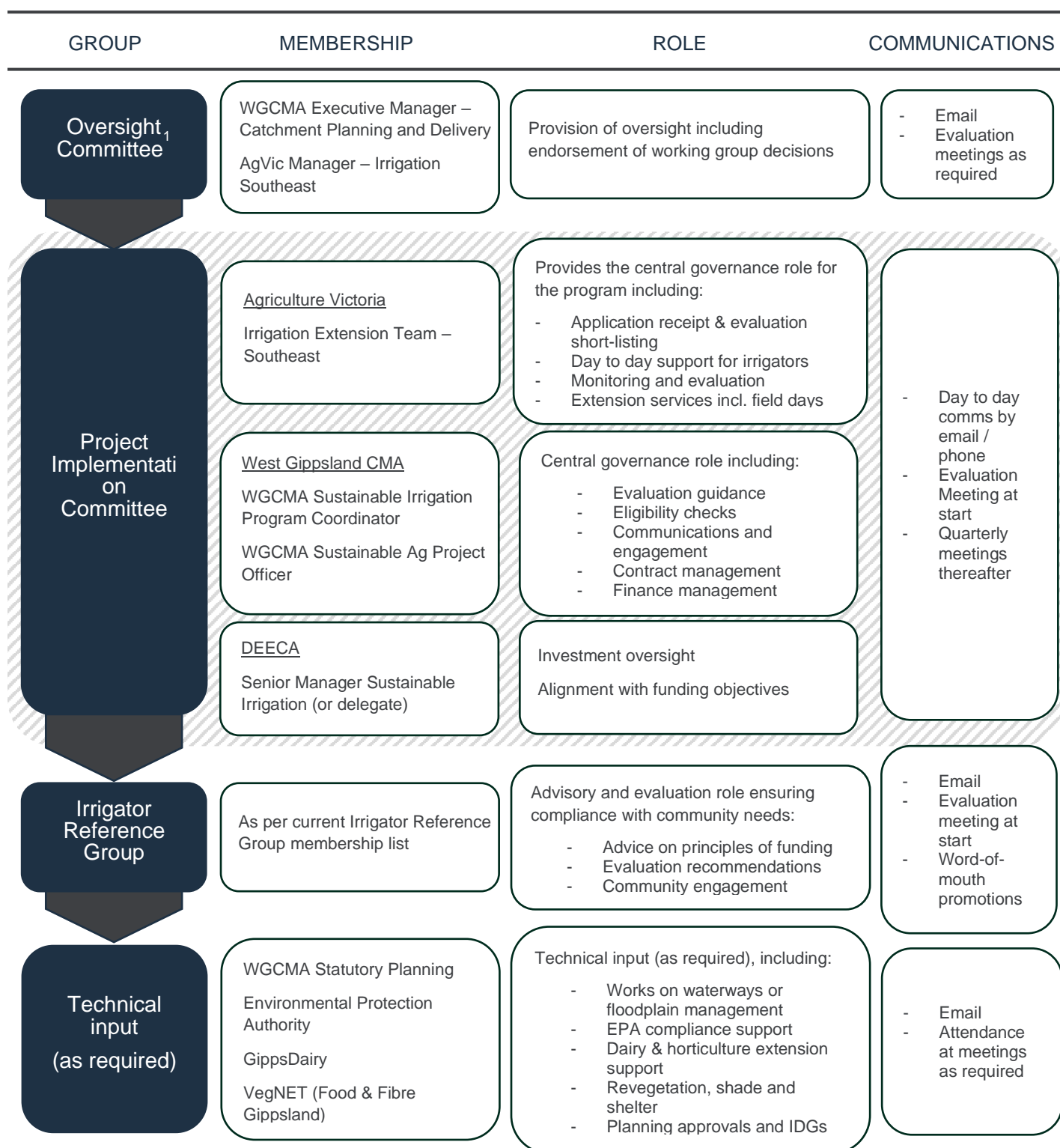


Figure 1: Governance structure for the demonstration project

Funding and Finance Arrangements

- all of the below figures are GST exclusive, the budget allows for GST addition to the below figures
- a minimum of 6 grants of up to \$30,000 each (\$180,000 total) shall be awarded to the 6 highest ranking projects. Max of 1 grant per business
- the Oversight Committee reserve the right to NOT allocate all available funds in the funding round if project applications are not deemed to be of a sufficient standard to achieve the program objectives, or are not deemed to provide value for money. In these circumstance, any remaining funding shall be carried over to a second EOI period the following year or used to support additional value adding opportunities (subject to approval from DEECA Senior Manager Sustainable Irrigation)
- all successful applicants shall be required to enter into a Landholder Partnership Agreement with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
- all costs will need to be reconciled via provision of quotes at the commencement of the project and invoices at the conclusion of the project. Only quotes and invoices from registered Australian businesses with an ABN will be accepted. All proposed expenses must be clearly described and costed, with reference to the quotations, in the detailed project plan, which will become a schedule to the Landholder Partnership Agreement
- a payment schedule linked to milestone deliverables in the project development plan will be negotiated between successful applicants and the WGCMA. All milestone payments must be authorised and signed-off by the relevant Agriculture Victoria case manager and WGCMA project officer, following a site inspection and submission of appropriate evidence and relevant invoices. Only members of the Working Group who have previously signed the Code of Conduct and Conflict of interest are authorised to sign off on milestone payments.

Eligible Activities and Criteria

Eligible activities for use with project funds

Activity Type	Example
Professional agricultural planning or consulting services	Contracting a professional agricultural planner or consultant to develop or assist with the development and implementation of on-farm plans or activities that meet the project objectives.
Equipment and/or infrastructure	Purchasing of equipment or infrastructure that contribute to project objectives.
Monitoring and evaluation equipment and/or services	*All funded projects <u>must</u> include a plan for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the demonstration. This could include specific monitoring equipment and/or contracting professional services to assist with monitoring. Costs associated with monitoring can be included in the grant application.
Other	As a rule of thumb, any expenditure on products or services that are necessary for the demonstration to succeed will be eligible.

For examples of projects that have previously been funded, please refer to: <https://wgcm.vic.gov.au/farmers-share-irrigation-innovation/>

Ineligible Activities

The following activities/costs are not eligible to be claimed as part of a project:

- labour, staffing or time related expenses (other than contracted professional services)
- any activities considered to be routine farm maintenance or costs associated with routine maintenance
- any product or service funded, in part or in whole, by another Government run grants program. However, the project may fund activities that add to or extend other funded projects (eg. Funding monitoring equipment to measure the benefits of a previously funded activity)
- general supplies and consumables.

Eligibility Checklist

#	Eligibility Criteria	Criteria Met (Y / N / NA)
1	Is the property within the Lake Wellington catchment?	
2	Does the property have a current irrigation licence (groundwater, river and drain diversion licences ARE acceptable)?	
3	Does the applicant agree to complete the works within the agreed timeframe?	
4	Does the applicant agree to meet all statutory requirements and provide a copy of all relevant permits for on-ground works prior to incentives payment being processed including any permits relating to the clearing of native vegetation?	
5	Does the applicant agree that the project grant funding cannot be used retrospectively and that purchases relating to the demonstration project cannot occur until after WGCMA Landholder Partnership agreement is signed?	
6	Is the applicant willing to meet any additional criteria stated in the landholder contract?	
7	Is the application deemed eligible by the Oversight Committee? The Oversight Committee reserves the right to overturn the eligibility status of an application (from eligible to ineligible and vice versa) if, in the opinion of the Oversight Committee, the eligibility criteria is creating a perverse or unintended outcome in the context of the project objectives.	

Funding Principles

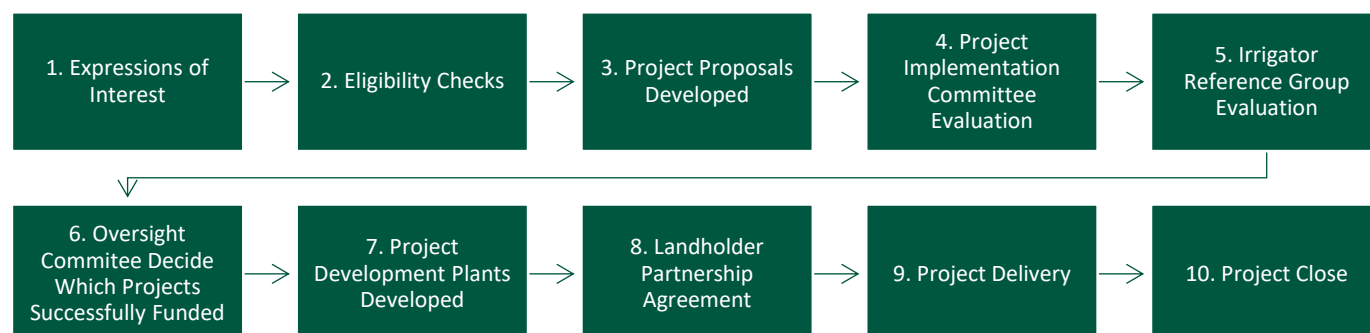
As a trial and demonstration project, all funded projects should aim to meet the following **principles**:

- the projects should serve as a catalyst for practice change, for example projects should;
 - be repeatable on other Gippsland farms,
 - showcase new technology or innovative practice that have NOT yet been widely adopted in Gippsland, or
 - capture real data around existing practices that currently only have anecdotal evidence in a Gippsland context.
- the farm must be willing to share all pertinent information (both successes and failings) with the community via site visits/field days/conversations and a broad range of media (eg. newspaper, radio, web, social media)
- the project must be able to monitor and evaluate outcomes (eg. increased water use efficiency, crop pasture yield, decreased nutrient/water/power/fert use, etc)
- projects should be applicable to a wide irrigation audience across Gippsland
- projects with an ability to leverage other projects/grants would be advantageous
- linkages with industry bodies would be advantageous (eg. GippsDairy, VegNET/FFG, AusVeg, VFF).

Procedure – How will my application be handled?

This procedure describes how the project will run including how an application will be managed and evaluated.

Step 1. Expressions of Interest (EOI)



1. if you are interested in submitting an EOI, it is recommended that you contact one of the Agriculture Victoria Extension Officers listed on the front of this booklet to discuss your idea. They will conduct a preliminary eligibility check and can help you to submit your Expression of Interest (refer to Attachment 1)
2. if the Agriculture Victoria Extension Officer deems your idea ineligible, this will be confirmed by the project's Oversight Committee
3. you may submit an Expression of Interest for the project at any time during the EOI period
4. on receipt of your EOI, Agriculture Victoria will record the application on a secure database in preparation for the evaluation process.

Step 2. Complete Project Proposals

1. Agriculture Victoria Extension Officers shall then work with each applicant to develop detailed project proposals.

Step 3. Project Implementation Committee Evaluation

1. A meeting with the Project Implementation Committee shall be called to perform an evaluation of all eligible applications against the Assessment Matrix.

Step 4. Irrigator Reference Group Evaluation

1. A meeting with the Irrigator Reference Group shall be called to perform an evaluation of the applications based on relevance and applicability to irrigators within the Lake Wellington Catchment.

Step 5. Oversight Committee Endorsement

1. Following the IRG meeting, the Oversight Committee shall then review and endorse the recommendations. However, if the Oversight Committee believe a perverse or unreasonable outcome has been achieved then they reserve the right to alter the recommendations and present an appropriate corrective procedure

2. Following the final evaluation, Agriculture Victoria will inform the applicants, initially via phone call with a follow up email letter, whether the application has been successful or not.

Dispute Resolution - Unsuccessful applicants have the opportunity to seek clarification from the Oversight Committee who will review the treatment of the application to ensure that the process has been followed. Complaint's responses are to be finalised within 28 days of lodgement by the applicant.

Step 6. Landholder Partnership Agreement

NO WORKS SHALL COMMENCE UNTILL THE WGCMA LANDHOLDER PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT IS SIGNED!

1. all successful applicants will be required to develop a detailed project plan in consultation with their Agriculture Victoria case manager
2. the project plan shall form an addendum to the WGCMA Landholder Partnership Agreement
3. where deemed relevant, a copy of the draft project plan may be supplied to the following parties:
 - a. SRW who may advise on supply or drainage considerations
 - b. WGCMA Statutory Planning regarding any Works on Waterways or earthworks on the floodplain
 - c. local government regarding native vegetation issues
 - d. EPA who may identify whether any applicants have existing sanctions that the Committee need to consider. If any sanctions are identified then the EPA are to provide a written description of the basis of the sanction and any other information that may be useful for consideration by the Governance Group.
4. project Plans shall be reviewed and approved by the Implementation Committee prior to contract signing
5. once the Project Plan is approved, it shall be attached to the WGCMA Landholder Partnership Agreement and a meeting arranged to sign the Agreement.

Step 7. Project Delivery and Milestones

1. in order to track progress of individual projects, and ensure projects are completed on time, successful applicants will be required to meet milestones described in the project plan
2. milestone payments shall be made in accordance with the agreed schedule in the project plan. It will be indicated on the schedule which Milestones are required for payments to occur and which may be altered or removed. An inspection will occur at each Payment Milestone, with photographs or other appropriate documentation recorded for evidence. The irrigator must submit a copy of all invoices relevant to the project
3. during the project delivery phase, if there are any **variances** required to the project plan the irrigator must advise their case manager
4. depending on the nature of the variance, a variation to the project plan may be required in which case the Plan may need to be reapproved
5. the Oversight Committee will have the final say on whether project variations are acceptable or not.

Step 8. Project Close

1. project close and final payments shall be made in accordance with the schedule in the project plan
2. each demonstration site may be utilised for extension purposes for up to 3 years following project close at the request of Agriculture Victoria or the WGCMA.



Intellectual Property

Any reports, case studies, media, etc, and therefore any data, information and Intellectual Property contained within these publications, that are produced as a result of the funded projects, in accordance with the Landholder Partnership Agreement, will become the property of the WGCMA and Agriculture Victoria. As a public entity, all WGCMA and Agriculture Victoria publications would then be freely available to the public.

If there is specific information or data (eg. confidential information) that a landholder did not want published, the WGCMA will consider all reasonable requests and discuss this as part of the landholder agreement process. In considering privacy and confidentiality, the WGCMA will refer the request to the Oversight Committee to consider whether the need for privacy will unreasonably compromise the objectives of the project.

Any formal arrangement regarding confidentiality and/or intellectual property should be clearly described in the Landholder Partnership Agreement.

ATTACHMENT 1: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

Expressions of Interest



Funding for Irrigation Demonstration Trials

* Required

Please submit your expression of interest by answering the following questions.

If you would like to discuss your ideas or assistance with submitting this application form, please contact Alexis Killoran from Agriculture Victoria on 0428 387 869 .

Upon the completion of this form, one of our team members will be in touch to discuss your idea(s) and eligibility.

1. What is your innovative idea?

Enter your answer

2. Which of the following objectives does your idea intend to achieve? *

- ☐ Reduce nutrient runoff into and pollution of the Gippsland Lakes
- ☐ Contain impacts of salinity and high watertables
- ☐ Encourage regional economic growth
- ☐ Improve understanding and management of social and cultural values
- ☐ Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from irrigated agriculture

3. Please indicate which of the below apply to you *

	Yes	No	Unsure
Are you the property owner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is the property within the Lake Wellington Catchment?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does the property have a current water use license? (Drainage diversion license not included)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has the project already commenced?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has the project already been funded?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Will the project be able to be completed within three years?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. What is the property's address? *

5. First name *

6. Last name *

7. Phone number *

8. Email address *

You can print a copy of your answer after you submit

Submit