



**Murrumbidgee Horticulture
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Forging Partnerships

“Agriculture and the environment: facing the challenges and making the change”

The objectives of the project are:

Broad Objectives of the project

- Take the learning from regional programs (specifically: MIA EnviroWise, The Green Book, RGA Environmental Champions Programs and the MIA powerPACT Rural Partnership Program) and apply them to achieve engagement in these groups.
- Seek targeted, practical and visible outcomes (eg active chemical compliance through self assessment and reporting; an active water benchmarking network).
- Effectively target groups differently. For rural agricultural women highlight women's traditional responsibility as environmental stewards and focus on traditional female strengths of nurturing, family, problem solving. For young irrigators highlight the legacy of previous generations and provide technology as an opportunity for change.
- Make the learning accessible by using formats and media that are known and used by the groups (internet/email/chat-rooms, ag & chat groups, farm tours, mobile phone technology).
- Empower both groups for action by giving appropriately targeted tools and information. Young Irrigators respond well to new technology and seek out ways of demonstrating innovation for improved productivity. Women often feel “information powerless” – giving them accessible information in an appropriate format will enable them to assess their own farms performance and visibly contribute to the farm business.
- Promote achievements to the community in a visual and accessible way. Target schools and art/cultural events to take the message to the local community. Opportunities include local festivals and/or other regional events (eg exhibitions at Art gallery – Library); running an “Agriculture and the environment: challenges and change” creative arts competition for judging at 2007 Murrumbidgee Farm Fair.
- Build trust between partnering organisations and grower networks to facilitate future NRM partnerships.

Specific Outcomes

- Demonstration of chemical compliance and reporting;
- Demonstration of active water benchmarking and reporting; and
- Increased community awareness of environmental challenges and changes.

Additional Opportunities Created

- Integrated Pest and Disease Management network and biodiversity monitoring;
- Identified water savings and increased on farm water use efficiency; and
- Promotion of regional land and water management plan including biodiversity challenges.