



Environment Policy

Murray Irrigation has combined the Rice Growing Policy, Total Farm Water Balance Policy and Stormwater Disposal Policy into a single Environment Policy. The new policy is a refinement of these policies and provides increased flexibility to Murray Irrigation and its customers.

The Environment Policy maintains Murray Irrigation's commitment to achieve a balance between agricultural production and environmental sustainability.

Murray Irrigation reports annually to Governments on the region's watertables. Minimising the area that has a watertable within two metres of the surface is important in demonstrating sustainable irrigation practices, regional productivity, as well as protection of the environment.

Rice Growing Rules

Rice is only to be grown on areas approved for rice growing by Murray Irrigation. Murray Irrigation maintains Approved Rice Soil Suitability Maps for each landholding. These maps are available on the Murray Irrigation website in the Customer Portal or by request.

For landholdings with areas identified on the Approved Rice Soil Suitability Map as marginal (one in four years), landholders are required to check with Murray Irrigation before sowing rice for the year the area is next available for rice growing.

A soil assessment for rice growing is required for the following reasons:

- A new area not previously surveyed (i.e. not classified on the Approved Rice Soil Suitability Map)
- High rice water use on a previous rice crop (i.e above the maximum rice water use)
- Reclassification of areas classified as unsuitable or marginal in the Approved Rice Soil Suitability Map

A maximum rice water use figure is determined each year on the crop irrigation requirement plus an additional allowance of 4ML/ha for profile wetting and drainage.

The maximum rice water use figure is announced each year in March in *Talking Water* and will be available from our website

An audit of rice areas is completed each year to measure the area and location of rice grown on each landholding (using satellite technology) and the volume of water used on rice. This information is used to ensure the rice is grown on approved areas and to calculate the rice water use for each landholding.

Total Farm Water Balance Rules

The Total Farm Water Use Limit means the total volume of water from all sources (other than groundwater pumped within 10 metres of the surface) which may be used on a landholding during a water year.

The base total farm water use limit is 4ML/ha on each landholding, based on the total area of the landholding.

Landholders can apply to increase the total farm water use limit to 5 or 6 ML/ha. Murray Irrigation considers the level of development on the landholding when assessing applications to increase the total farm water use on a landholding.

Landholders can apply to increase the total farm water use limit to 8ML/ha where deep rooted perennials are grown (including lucerne).

Fact sheet



Updated Wednesday 5 September 2013

All increases to the total farm water use limits apply for three years.

Landholders can apply to combine the total farm water use limits across two or more landholdings where landholdings adjoin and are operated by the same business entity. The approval to combine the total farm water use limit across multiple landholdings applies for one year only.

A consolidated account of multiple landholdings for a single bill, the merging or consolidation of a water account for *Water Ordering*, do not meet the provisions of the Environment Policy to combine the total farm water use across multiple landholdings. The combining of the total farm water use limit is a separate application process.

In a year of high evapotranspiration a climatic variation to the total farm water use figure will be applied to increase the total farm water use limit on a landholding. Murray Irrigation will announce in *Talking Water* any increase in the total farm water use no later than the second week of March.

Murray Irrigation has introduced three year rolling averages for the total farm water use limits on individual landholdings.

Drainage Rules

Customers' are required to contact Murray Irrigation prior to discharging drainage water into the drainage system or supply channels.

Murray Irrigation may require a water sample be tested prior to giving approval for drainage.

Further Information

The following forms are available on the Murray Irrigation website in Customers, Forms then General Forms:

- Form TFWB1: Increase Total Farm Water Use Limit on a landholding
- Form TFWB2: Combine the Total Farm Water Limit on multiple landholdings
- Form DRAIN1: Discharge into drainage system
- Form DRAIN2: Discharge into supply system

For further information please contact the Compliance Supervisor, via reception on T. 1300 138 265.