

# AGRI-INNOVATION PRECINCT

A VISION TO FAST TRACK INNOVATION, ADAPTATION, AND GROWTH IN  
THE MURRAY PLAINS

## INTRODUCTION

Western Murray Land Improvement Group (WMLIG) and Murray River Council (MRC) are investigating the viability of developing an Agri-innovation education, research and development precinct in line with MRC's priority to 'grow, strengthen and sustain agriculture' over the next 20 years and beyond.

A number of factors such as availability and price of irrigation water, water reform processes and expansion of high value horticulture in some parts of the Southern Murray Darling Basin has led to significant decline in population, socio-economic status and prosperity in southern NSW and northern VIC. The Agri-Innovation Precinct provides the opportunity to facilitate transformational change in the region through the development of new high value agricultural industries and activities. The precinct would facilitate collaborations between farmers, research organisations and other private and public partners which could result in new investment in value adding and processing in the region.

Barham's central location within the Southern Murray Darling Basin, proximity to capital cities and major regional centres, spare capacity and infrastructure makes it an ideal location to explore this concept.

## OPPORTUNITY

The Agri-Innovation Precinct will act as an incubator for new ideas, products and industries that could potentially help to identify viable commercial opportunities.

Whilst a specific research focus will need to be identified with industry, government and community stakeholders, emerging growth areas such as alternative proteins, agritourism and fortified and functional products have been identified as key opportunities by CSIRO (2019).

## KEY OBJECTIVES



**FACILITATE  
VALUE-ADD  
INDUSTRY**



**BOOST  
REGIONAL  
PROSPERITY**

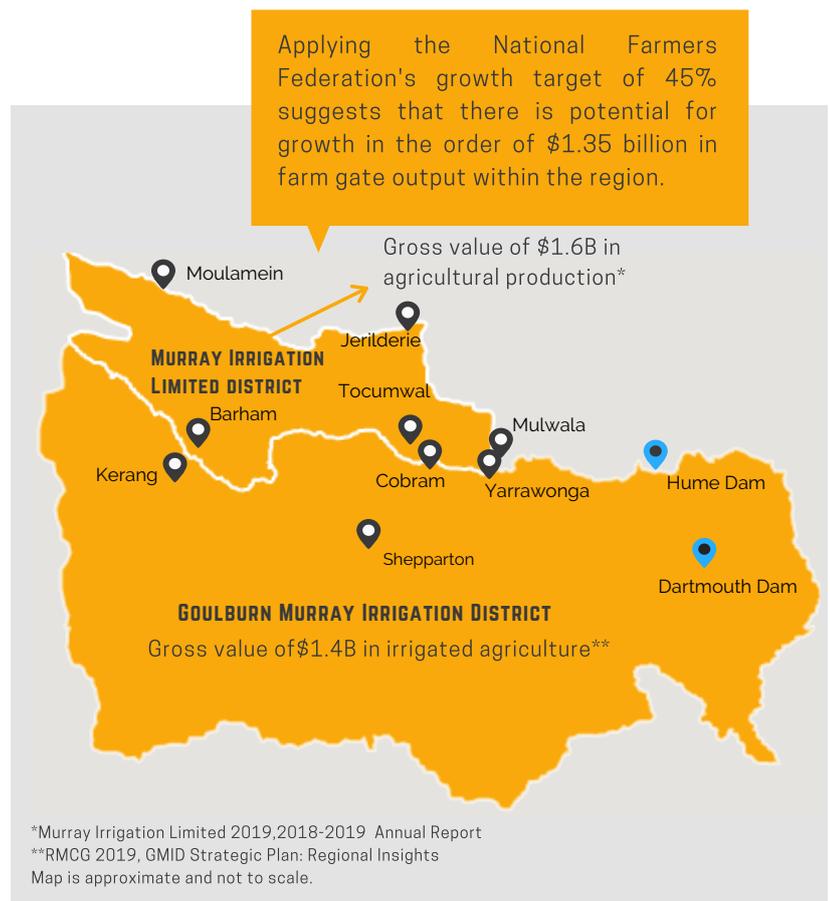


**ENCOURAGE  
ENTREPRENEURIAL  
SPIRIT**



**INCREASE  
RESILIENCE**

Applying the National Farmers Federation's growth target of 45% suggests that there is potential for growth in the order of \$1.35 billion in farm gate output within the region.



# PROPOSED PRECINCT CONCEPT

Some of the activities and services that could be provided as part of the Agri-Innovation Precinct include:



## BUSINESS SERVICES

Business and innovation services to support local agricultural businesses including IT and digital systems support, Education and Training, produce marketing, sale and communications.



## AGRI-R&D

Food Science and value add R&D facilities to help identify commercially viable solutions to convert low value commodities into high value products.



## SMART FARMS

Activities, research, and adoption aimed at building on-farm and community resilience to drought including regenerative ag, risk management activities and production trials.



## CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Investigation of options to repurpose waste from the region into energy or new commercial products.



## AGRI-MANUFACTURING

Multi-purpose processing and packing facility with common-use infrastructure to aid start-ups and local producers looking to value add locally grown produce.



## ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Pest and weed control, development of a biodiversity survey program, exchange of NRM knowledge, biodiversity incentive scheme.

## COLLABORATION:

The Agri-Innovation Precinct would involve significant collaboration with a range of public and private partners including WMLIG, farmers, start up businesses, research institutions, farming system groups and government. These stakeholders will have an important role to play in further developing the precinct concept.

## TRANSFORMATION:

Possible outcomes include

New/premium markets  
Drought resilient business systems  
Farm income diversification  
Dynamic business plans  
Positive investment return  
Employment opportunities  
Value adding

Waste utilisation and reduction  
Improved biodiversity  
Improved wellbeing and optimism  
Best practice/informed decision making  
Healthy and wholesome food marketing  
Broadened networks  
Fresh capital

For more information on the draft Agri-Innovation Precinct Proposal, to access a copy of the full scoping document, or to discuss any opportunities please contact Kate O'Neill.

[kate.oneill@wmlig.org](mailto:kate.oneill@wmlig.org)  
0405 723 515



Western Murray  
Land Improvement Group



murray river  
council