



Incentives to improve Murray catchment

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THE MURRAY catchment in NSW extends from the peaks of the Kosciusko National Park to the junction of the Murray and Edward rivers and supports various agricultural enterprises, including range-land grazing, broad-scale cropping and intensive agriculture.

A range of targeted on-ground works has been identified to address catchment-wide issues of soil acidification, erosion, salinity and loss of biodiversity. To help start this work, various innovative incentives are available to landholders.

Electronic tools:

To track expenditure and capture consistent data (spatial and non-spatial), a set of electronic tools has also been developed.

A decision support system: This helps target where in the landscape on-ground works should occur.

A customised mapping system: This uses ArcView 3.3 (mapping software) to produce consistent spatial data and requires only basic Geographic Information System (GIS) skills (Figure 1).

It uses a set of standard mapping attributes that link, where possible, with state land-use mapping attributes. Four layers of information are captured — property boundary, land capability, current land use and proposed works.

An investment database: This calculates incentive rates for each on-ground works project proposed and prepares a detailed works and management schedule that is provided to landholders.

The spatial data mapped in ArcView and the investment database entry contain a common attribute that makes possible the spatial display of all activities and funds spent (Figure 2).

To meet state-level reporting requirements, information collated in the database can be uploaded into the relevant state department's financial tracking system.

Figure 1: Screen from ArcView mapping program

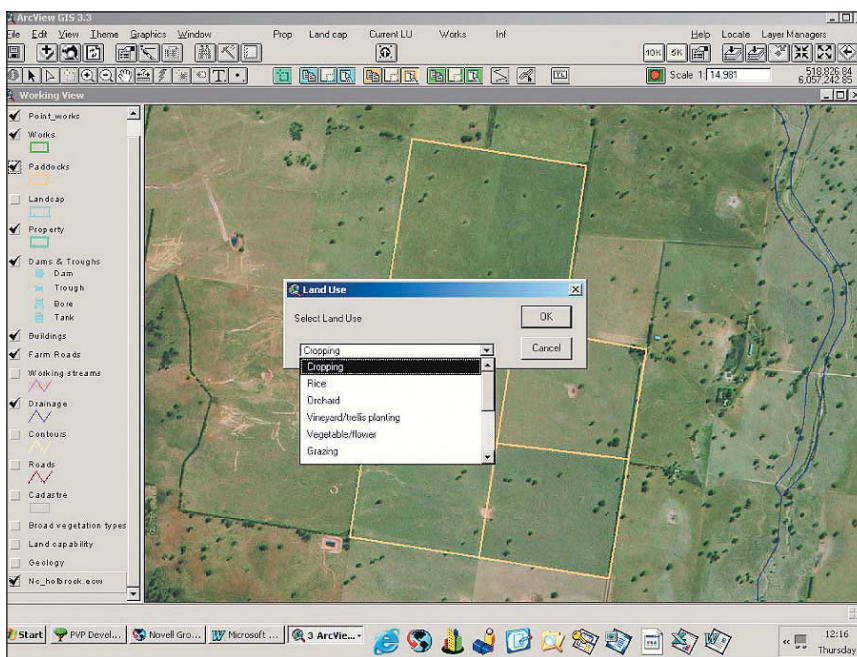
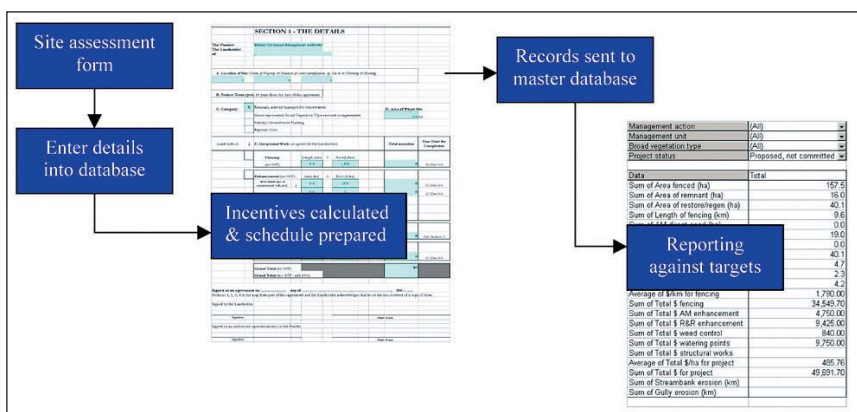


Figure 2: The investment database



A series of reporting tables: This enables reporting against the Murray Catchment Blueprint targets at catchment, management unit or down to a paddock scale.

The Murray CMA has 10 implementation officers delivering incentives for on-ground works. Each officer has a laptop loaded with the customised toolset.

The toolset has been successfully

trialed and refined and is now providing an accurate, objective and accountable way of delivering sustainable on-ground works.

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