

# Cows reap benefits of system

**G**etting water on and off pasture is a huge benefit for Nathan Shannon.

It's what experts say will achieve the greatest growing results for the pasture at his Naring dairy farm.

But it wasn't until Mr Shannon's irrigation system was upgraded through Goulburn-Murray Water's Connections project that he could irrigate this way.

"The biggest benefit for us is being able to put water on and get it off in four hours," Mr Shannon said.

"I can irrigate twice as much per day and with the high flow rate, I can get more again."

Mr Shannon runs the 400 ha fully irrigated property with his parents Bryan and Lynda.

They milk 600 cows, but aim to expand to a 700-head Friesian herd.

The family milks in a 50-stand rotary dairy and is reaping the benefits of good pasture management with the herd achieving milk solids of 600 kg/cow/year.

When G-MW connected the Shannons to the backbone, four wheels were replaced with one automated gate and 2 km of spur channel was decommissioned.

"Since then flow rates have improved and we can irrigate more land," Mr Shannon said.

"We were using 10 MI to irrigate about 16 ha/day, now we're using 20 MI and we're doing 40 ha/day."

"The system gives us the ability to put water on when the plants need it."

Irrigation on the Shannons' property was upgraded with a pipe-and-riser system through the On

Farm Efficiency Grants.

"This has turned almost dry land into highly productive land," Mr Shannon said.

"Previously we had trouble getting water on because it was higher ground."

G-MW's Connections project is connecting landowners to the backbone.

G-MW managing director Gavin Hanlon said the project aimed to increase irrigation water use efficiency from about 70 per cent to at least 85 per cent.

"Modern channel automation technology is sensitive enough to detect discrepancies in water delivery and to identify where maintenance is required," Mr Hanlon said.

"Critical water level and flow monitoring via automated gates ensures precise amounts of water are delivered when and where they are needed, shortening ordering times and providing more consistent and reliable delivery of water to irrigators."

"The project will redevelop the Goulburn Murray irrigation system into a world-class, best practice system and irrigators can manage their businesses confidently knowing their water delivery is accurate and delivered on time."

When the Connections project is complete in 2018, the G-MW system is expected to operate about 3500 km of channels supplying water to about 12 000 irrigation outlets.

► **For more information or to watch a video, go to [www.gmwconnectionsproject.com.au](http://www.gmwconnectionsproject.com.au)**



Higher flow rates have been achieved on his Naring dairy farm since Nathan Shannon joined the Connections project.



The Shannons' farm is part of the Connections project.



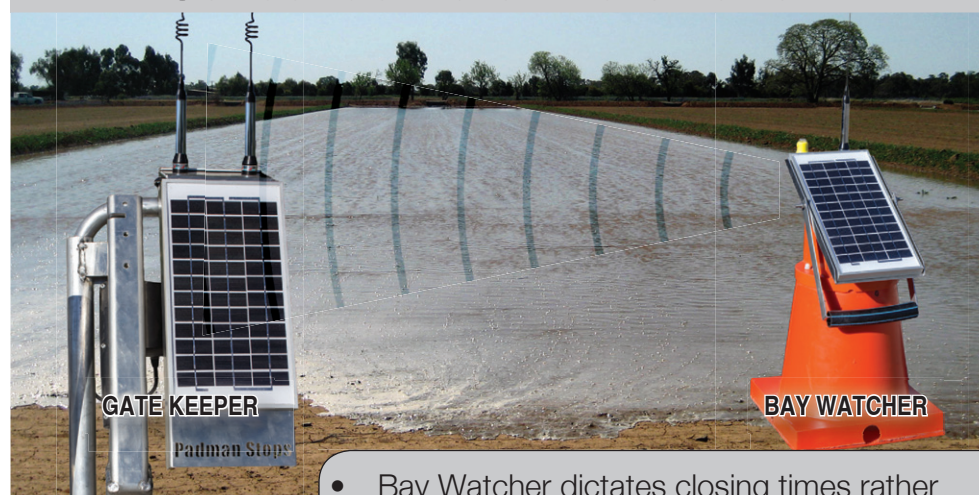
Four wheels were replaced with one automated gate.

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