



Irrigation Research &
Extension Committee

Women In Irrigated Ag Conference

3rd June 2026



About Irrigation Research & Extension Committee (IREC)

Established in 1939, IREC is a not-for-profit Farming Systems Group that provides an independent voice for irrigated agriculture across the Murrumbidgee and lower Lachlan Valleys. Since its establishment, the organisation has worked to address the challenges affecting irrigated farming systems by fostering collaboration between farmers, researchers, government agencies, agribusinesses, and industry groups. Over the decades, IREC has become a key advocate for irrigators, helping shape research priorities and extension programs, while supporting cooperation across multiple agricultural industries.

IREC's primary role is to improve the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of irrigated farming through research, education, and knowledge sharing. The organisation conducts and supports research projects, field trials, workshops, seminars, field days, and publications that help growers adopt innovative technologies and best practices in water management, soil health, crop production, and climate resilience. Through events and initiatives such as the Irrigation Research Update, Farmers' Newsletter, crop trials, field days, case studies, demonstration reports, podcasts, and workshops, IREC acts as a vital link between researchers and farmers, ensuring research outcomes are practical and directly beneficial to irrigated agriculture and farming businesses. These collaborative efforts continue to support innovation and the long-term sustainability of the irrigation industry across the Murrumbidgee and broader southern New South Wales.

About Women in Irrigated Ag program

The Women in Irrigated Ag program, led by IREC, is an initiative designed to support, educate, and connect women working across irrigated agricultural industry. Through various events, the program creates opportunities for women to build skills, expand their professional networks, and engage with others who understand the unique experiences of living and working in rural communities. We recognise that women in agriculture can often experience social and professional isolation, particularly in regional areas, and aim to foster stronger connections and a supportive peer network across the industry.

Originally developed through the Women in Rice program, the initiative has evolved into a broader cross-commodity program that now welcomes women from all areas of irrigated agricultural industry. We aim to run events that will contribute to farm business success and personal and professional development, empowering participants with practical knowledge, leadership skills, and confidence. By bringing women together from diverse agricultural sectors, Women in Irrigated Ag helps strengthen collaboration, encourage innovation, and build a more connected and resilient irrigated agricultural community.

IREC p. 02 6963 0936 | e. irec@irec.org.au | www.irec.org.au

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PROGRAM

Women In Irrigated Ag Conference

WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE, 9AM-3PM, WHITTON MALT HOUSE

TIME	TOPIC	WHO	PAGE NO.
9.00-9.20am	Registrations	Kelsey/Sarah (IREC EM and PO)	
9.20-9.30am	Welcome	Iva Quarisa (IREC EO)	
9.30-10.30am	Water 101 in the Murrumbidgee and NSW Murray	Jenny McLeod (Coleambally Irrigation Co-operative Ltd)	Page 6
10.30-11.00am	Morning Tea		
11.00am-12.10pm	Financial Literacy	Carmen Quade (AgriFocused)	Page 10
12.10-12.45pm	WHS — Work Health and Safety	Sue Howie (Yenda Producers Co-operative)	Page 14
12.45-1.30pm	Lunch		
1.30-2.15pm	AI on the Farm and Beyond	Andrew Skinner (More Than Machines)	Page 18
2.15-2.50pm	AI in Your Farm Business	Tessa Eaglesham (Headland Australia)	Page 24
2.50-3.00pm	Thank You and Close		

Major Sponsors



General Sponsors



This event is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate-Smart Agriculture Program and delivered alongside Local Land Services, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners Panel.



Australian Government

Water 101 in the Murrumbidgee and NSW Murray¹



Jennifer McLeod,
Policy and Compliance Manager, CICL
Chair National Irrigators' Council



Introduction

This paper covers the basics of water regulation and surface water sharing in the southern NSW valleys (the Murrumbidgee and the NSW Murray). It is not intended to cover all aspects, of what is an inherently complex and highly regulated sector. However, it is intended to capture the different organisational responsibilities and key principles foundational to an understanding of surface water allocation and sharing in southern NSW.

Legislative context

Water management and access is primarily a state responsibility. The Water Management Act 2000 (NSW) (the Act) and its associated regulations are the primary instruments for regulation of water in NSW. The Act governs the management of water sources and aims to provide for the protection, conservation and ecologically sustainable development of water sources in NSW. The Act includes provisions for Water Sharing Plans (WSP), which set out the rules for sharing of water in a particular water source, as well as rules for trading.

The Water Act 2007 (Cth) and the Murray Darling Basin Plan 2012 (Cth) increased the role of the Commonwealth in water. A key outcome of this change being limits on the amount of water that can be taken from the Basin, known as *Sustainable Diversion Limits* (SDLs), with the new limits applying from 1 July 2019. The states are required to ensure their water sharing and allocation policies, and resultant water use, are consistent with the new SDLs.

The Murray Darling Basin Agreement which is the legally binding agreement for water sharing between the Basin states for the River Murray system is Schedule 1 of the Water Act.

Water Sharing Plans (WSP)

WSPs are legally binding plans made under the Act. They are 10-year statutory plans which describe water sharing arrangements and priorities, including rules to protect environmental health of the water sources as well as providing licence holders with clear-rules for how the available water will be shared.

The WSPs for the Murrumbidgee and NSW Murray Lower Darling regulated river water sources can be access at [Water sharing plans | Water](#).² The current surface WSP are due to expire by 30 June 2026, with the NSW Government expected to extend the current WSPs for two years to allow sufficient time to review the plans.

¹ Water sharing is a complex issue, the information in this paper is compiled from government sources and the author's knowledge. Care has been taken to ensure the information presented is true and correct. The author and CICL expressly disclaim any responsibility for losses, costs or damages incurred because of use or reliance upon the information contained, including any inadvertent errors or omissions.

² There are also Water Sharing Plans for groundwater and unregulated water in the Murrumbidgee and the Murray.

Water entitlements

NSW has a range of different category of entitlements with different features. The volume of “unit shares” or entitlements, for each of the different classes of water entitlement in the Murrumbidgee and Murray are in Table 1 and 2. It is clear from these tables that lower reliability categories are the largest volume of entitlements on issue. This being general security entitlements and in the Murrumbidgee, also Lowbidgee Supplementary water.

The different categories of entitlement have different features; these are summarised in Table 3.

Table 1. Share component by class and number of water access licences (WAL) in the regulated Murrumbidgee

Murrumbidgee Regulated River ³		
Class	Share Component	No. of WALS
Local Water Utility	23,816	14
Domestic and Stock	29,983	521
High Security (Town Water Supply)	19,769	2
High Security (Other)*	4,250	3
High Security	364,426	238
Conveyance	375,968	9
General Security	1,892,005	879
Supplementary	198,780	237
Supplementary (Lowbidgee)	747,000	26

**Includes Aboriginal Cultural, Lake Albert Filling, and Research.*

Table 2. Share component by class and number of water access licences (WAL) in the regulated NW Murray

NSW Regulated Murray ⁴		
Category	Share Component	No. of WALS
Local Water Utility	33,497	16
Domestic and Stock	17,007	1041
High Security (Town Water Supply)	3,195	2
High Security (Other)*	58	4
High Security	189,704	822
Conveyance	330,000	4
General Security	1,674,096	1310
Supplementary	252,579	205

**Includes Aboriginal Cultural, Community and Education, and Research.*

Table 3. Surface water access licence category and features in the regulated Murrumbidgee and regulated NSW Murray Lower Darling

Category	Murrumbidgee	NSW Murray
Local Water Utility	Maximum announced allocation 100 percent No carryover	Maximum announced allocation 100 percent No carryover
High Security	No Maximum announced allocation 100 percent No carryover	No Maximum announced allocation 100 percent No carryover
High Security irrigation	Maximum announced allocation 100 percent. Maximum announced allocation when general security less than 100 percent 95 percent. No carryover	Maximum announced allocation 100 percent. Maximum announced allocation when general security less than 100 percent 97 percent. No carryover
Conveyance	Maximum announced allocation 100 percent Carryover up to 30 percent of entitlements.	Maximum announced allocation 100 percent No carryover
General Security	Maximum announced allocation 100 percent Carryover over up to 30 percent of entitlements. Carryover announced allocation cannot <u>exceed</u> 100 percent net of annual allocation trade. General security entitlement holders can access supplementary water <u>without debit</u> if the general security announced allocation is less than 0 or equal to 70 percent, however any use is part of the 100 percent account limit.	Maximum announced allocation 110 percent Carryover over up to 50 percent of entitlements. Carryover announced allocation cannot <u>exceed</u> 110 percent net of annual allocation trade. General security entitlement holders can access supplementary water <u>without debit</u> if the general security announced allocation is less than 0 or equal to 60 percent, however any use is part of the 110 percent account limit.
Supplementary	Maximum announced allocation 100 percent.	Maximum announced allocation 100 percent.
LowBidgee	Maximum announced allocation 100 percent.	Maximum announced allocation 100 percent.

³ NSW Water Register, Monday 11 May 2026.

⁴ *ibid*

Irrigation Infrastructure Operators (IIOs) own Water Access Licences (WALs), these are the statutory licences issued by the NSW government. IIO customers generally hold a contractual right to a share of the relevant WAL. A WAL can be held separate to a work approval, but to use water, a work approval is required. The IIOs hold combined water supply work and use approvals.

Water allocation priorities

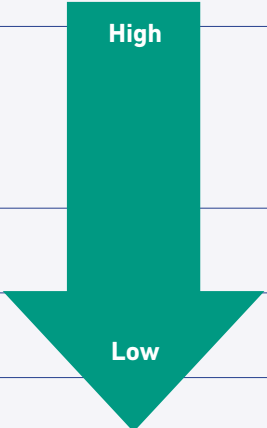
In southern NSW, there is annual accounting for available water determinations, with starting allocations commencing on 1 July for the water year. Annual allocations are made to a category of WAL, generally described as a percent of the category of water entitlement.⁵

Available water determinations (AWD) and water allocation statements are made by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). Generally, AWDs and water allocation statements are released every two weeks between July and the end of May, or until the general security AWD reaches at least 100 percent.

AWD and water allocation statements can be found at <https://www.water.dcceew.nsw.gov.au/our-work/allocations-and-availability/allocations/water-allocation-statements>

When determining water allocations there is a hierarchy of priorities. These priorities are determined by the Act, described in the WSPs and summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. Priority of water allocation under normal circumstances⁶

Take type / use	Priority
Water source and dependant ecosystems Taking of water by persons exercising basic landholder rights	Highest priority
Local water utility access licenses Major utility access licenses Domestic and stock access licenses	 High Low
Regulated river (high security) access licenses	
All other forms of access licenses, other than supplementary water access licenses	
Supplementary water access licenses	

Water trade

The NSW water allocation framework is risk adverse; NSW has a four-step process for making AWDs.

1. Assess the supply which includes water in storage and assumed minimum future inflows for the remainder of the water year.
2. Assess existing commitments which includes operational reserves, environmental allowances, and any carryover from the previous year.
3. Water which is not committed under step two is available to allocate by licence category, with high priority licences allocated first (Table 4).

⁵ Note NSW legislation refers to unit shares.

⁶ Schedule G: Murrumbidgee Surface Water Resource Plan Incident Response Guide

There are two key types of water trade⁷, permanent trade or annual allocation trade. Permanent trade involves the water entitlement being transferred permanently to a new owner. Annual allocation trade is the transfer of “annual allocation” from one WAL to another or between farms or accounts within an IIO. There are rules in the relevant WSPs which limit where water entitlement and annual allocation can be transferred to and from. The purpose of these rules is to maintain the integrity of the water entitlement framework. The Murrumbidgee also have an undelivered Intervalley Transfer Limit (IVT) of 100GL. This limit restricts the exposure to Murrumbidgee water availability of annual allocation trades from the Murrumbidgee to the Murray. Annual allocation cannot be traded into the Murrumbidgee unless there is an undelivered IVT volume. More information about the IVT limit can be access at: <https://www.waternsw.com.au/customer-services/ordering-and-trading/murrumbidgee-ivt>

The right to use supplementary water can also be traded annually. More specifically, the right to use a volume of supplementary water when announced and once transferred to another work approval.

Further information and other useful resources

Water Sharing Plans



Murrumbidgee region — Water sharing plans



Murray Region — Water sharing plans

Available Water Determinations



[How much water licensed users can extract — water.dcceew.nsw.gov.au](http://water.dcceew.nsw.gov.au)

Water Insights



WaterInsights – WaterNSW

Murray Darling Basin Plan



[Basin Plan | Murray–Darling Basin Authority](#)

Irrigation Infrastructure Operators



Coleambally Irrigation



Murray Irrigation



Murrumbidgee Irrigation

⁵ Note NSW legislation refers to unit shares.

⁶ Schedule G: Murrumbidgee Surface Water Resource Plan Incident Response Guide

⁷ A range of new water market products continue to develop, such as leasing, forward carryover products etc. The paper only addresses entitlement and annual allocation trade.

NOTES

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Coleambally IRRIGATION

CICL is proud to support the IREC Women in Irrigated Ag Conference and to stand alongside the capable women who contribute every day to our resilient farms, businesses and communities.



AgriFocused
training • communications • mentoring

STREAMLINE
Your farm office

The admin requirements of running an ag business have grown exponentially. Staying on top of finances, managing the email load and record keeping can take a lot of time, often impacting on farm operations and family life. Efficient and effective systems and a better understanding of tech solutions can win back hours. Timely information can lead to less stress and better decisions.

 **In AgriFocused's Online Course – Farm Office Plus course you will**

- ✔ Determine what programs and apps will suit your operation
- ✔ Simplify and secure bill payment and invoice storage
- ✔ Improve communication and access to information
- ✔ Master time management
- ✔ Learn online with lifetime access
- ✔ Access our video bank of short instructional videos
- ✔ Meet other farmers and expert advisors in our live meetings

 Contact Carmen Quade from AgriFocused on 0467 571 919 or follow the QR code to find out more



 Use the code **IREC** at checkout to save 10%

 **Enrollments close 30 June 2026**

Financial Literacy

Carmen Quade
AgriFocused | Training, Communications & Mentoring

Understanding accounting reports

Formal tax and accounting reports are produced annually. They are often out of date by the time we receive them and are sometimes hard to understand. Producing your own Statement of Assets and Liabilities at market values for land, water and machinery gives a more accurate view of the farm business situation. Reviewing your profit and loss report regularly gives a greater understanding of the business and helps drive profit focused decision making.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- ☐ Do I understand my business structure?
- ☐ Do I understand my accountants reports?
- ☐ Can I prepare an accurate Statement of Assets and Liabilities for management purposes?
- ☐ How am I going to learn what I need to know?

NOTES

MORE INFORMATION



[GRDC — Farming The Business Manual](#)



[Young Farmer Business Program Financial Statements Toolkit](#)



[ATO — Guide to different business structures](#)

BAS requirements and super changes

BAS reporting is required by most businesses on the 28th of February, April, July and October. Lodgment is usually undertaken via your accounting system with a live link to the ATO. Alternatively your accountant may lodge these reports for you.

If you employ staff, from the 1st of July 2026 superannuation is now required to be paid each payday. It's easily handled through a bookkeeping program with payroll functionality. You are also required to pay superannuation on independent contractors. Talk to your accountant about what may be required.

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- ☐ Have I got my payroll program set up for payday super?
- ☐ Am I employing contractors that may be covered by superannuation requirements?

MORE INFORMATION



Australian Tax Office
Payday Super



Australian Tax Office
Super for Independent Contractors

Farm budgets

Farm budgets are prepared for lots of reasons. Sometimes its about managing cashflow, sometimes it's about costing out a project or an expansion. Cropping budgets are often prepared when allocations and water prices vary, to determine the best use of this valuable asset. Budgeting should not be about saving costs, it's all about making businesses more profitable and productive.

If you are writing a one off budget, a tool like excel or google sheets is great, just start with a list of categories of income and expenses from last year. If you want to check back during the year against what actually happened, you probably need a budgeting tool that integrates with your bookkeeping program.

NOTES

[illegible]

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- ☐ I know how the changes in input costs will impact my cashflow.
- ☐ I review my budgets as needed.
- ☐ I need to investigate some new budgeting tools.

MORE INFORMATION



AgriFocused 8 Step Budget Guide



Budgeting Tools Webinar



Budget Friendly Cake Recipe

Farm money and family money

The friction between farm money and family money can put pressure on relationships in family farming. It makes difficult years harder and takes some of the joy out of more prosperous times. If not managed properly, the same friction is amplified in multi generational or multi sibling family businesses.

Communication, goal setting and clear boundaries can help manage this important issue.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- ☐ What are our financial goals as a couple or individual?
- ☐ What are our goals as a farming family?
- ☐ Are there changes to make to my personal or farm accounts?
- ☐ Do our drawings need to be reviewed?

NOTES

[illegible]

MORE INFORMATION



AgriFocused — When every spare dollar goes to the farm



AgriFocused — Will the farm debt always be there?



AgriFocused — Determining your strategy for farm drawings

WHS — Work Health and Safety

**YENDA PRODUCERS
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Sue Howie

Yenda Producers Co-operative

WHS obligations

Under WHS legislation, everyone in the workplace has responsibilities. Understanding your role and duties helps create a safe and healthy work environment.

As an employer, you are required to provide a safe work environment. That includes everything from the physical workspace to the systems and processes you have in place, including induction and process of reporting safety issues. You must provide adequate information, training, instruction, and supervision particularly for new or inexperienced (at risk) workers.

Employers also have an obligation to consult with workers about health and safety matters and provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and first aid kits and ensure chemicals are stored and handled correctly, with up to date Safety Data Sheets (SDS).

Workers have responsibilities too. They must take reasonable care of their own health and safety, and they must not do anything that puts themselves or other people at risk. Following reasonable instructions and workplace policies is also part of their obligation.

On the rights side, workers have the right to stop or refuse work they believe is unsafe. Importantly, there should be no negative consequences for raising health and safety concerns. This is a protected right under the legislation. The overarching theme here is consultation — safety works best when everyone is engaged and communicating openly.

Key Roles

- **PCBU: (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking):** Primary duty to ensure health and safety of workers and others at the workplace
- **Officers:** Exercise due diligence
- **Workers:** Take reasonable care

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- ☐ I know what my role is within the organisation
- ☐ I know my duties as a PCBU
- ☐ My workers know their role and duties

NOTES

FURTHER RESOURCES



WHS obligations

Emergency preparedness

Every workplace must be prepared to respond to emergencies such as fire, medical incidents or chemical spills.

Emergency preparedness is one of those areas that is easy to put off because emergencies feel unlikely until they happen. The key message here is to have a plan in place before you need one.

There are several things to consider when developing your emergency plan. Buddy systems are particularly important on farms where people often work alone or in remote areas. Make sure someone always knows where you are and when to expect you back. Staying connected using technology is getting easier on sites that previously had limited/no connectivity, for example the Emergency Plus App.

Ensuring all workers on site know the address, the nearest cross street, how many km's down the road to the front gate/landmark, emergency evacuation/meeting point.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- ☐ Our business has an emergency plan
- ☐ Workers know the emergency plan for their location



FURTHER RESOURCES



Emergency card

NOTES

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Powered mobile plant & machinery

Powered mobile plant and equipment present significant risks and must be managed correctly.

First and foremost, consult and train your workers. Everyone operating powered mobile plant and machinery should be properly trained on that specific piece of plant/machinery.

Planning the work is essential. Before starting a job, think through what is involved, what could go wrong, and how you will manage the risks.

Maintaining plant and machinery in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations and ensure machinery has safety devices such as PTO Guards and roll bars.

Reduced speed and exclusion zones are one of the most effective controls available to you. Separating people from powered mobile plant and machinery eliminates the risk of someone being struck or caught in machinery.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- ☐ Equipment is maintained as per manufacturer's recommendations/instructions
- ☐ Guarding is checked and in place
- ☐ Pedestrians are separated from powered mobile plant and equipment

FURTHER RESOURCES



Forklifts



Safety around your vehicle



Fixed machinery & vehicles



Equipment on farms



Farm safety self-assessment



Safety around moving plant



Many people find the best starting point is experimenting with small, low-risk tasks. AI can be really effective for drafting emails, summarising meeting notes, rewriting documents in clearer language, generating checklists or turning rough notes into structured plans.

It’s important to realise though that prompts do not need to be perfect. Clear thinking matters more than clever wording.

Some useful prompts to experiment with include:

- “Summarise this document into five key points.”
- “Rewrite this email in a more professional tone.”
- “Create a machinery maintenance checklist for an Australian, NSW based mixed farming operation.”
- “Explain carbon accounting in simple language.”
- “Turn these rough notes into a meeting agenda.”

Small time savings across many tasks can compound quickly across a business.

MORE INFORMATION



[OpenAi Prompt Guide](#)



[OpenAI Prompt Packs](#)



[Claude Prompting 101 Video](#)

Understanding common AI terms

The language surrounding AI can sometimes sound more complicated than it really is. While people do not need deep technical knowledge to benefit from these systems, understanding a few common terms can make the broader discussion easier to follow.

A model is the underlying AI engine that generates responses and performs tasks. Different models have different strengths, costs and capabilities. Systems such as GPT, Gemini and Claude are all examples of large language models.

Connectors and tools allow AI systems to interact with other software and information sources. This might include email, calendars, spreadsheets, documents or external business systems. These connections allow AI to move beyond simple chat and begin assisting with practical workflows.

Agents are AI systems designed to complete multi-step tasks with limited supervision. Instead of simply answering questions, agents can monitor information, organise tasks, generate reports or interact with other software systems on behalf of a user.

Another term that has emerged recently is “vibe coding”. This refers to people using AI systems to help create software, websites and automations without needing deep programming expertise. Increasingly, people are building practical tools for their businesses simply by describing what they want in plain language although this is not without risks and is a more advanced topic.

COMMON AI LANGUAGE MODELS



[Chat-GPT](#)



[Claude](#)



[Gemini](#)



Cloud and local AI models

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Another term that has emerged recently is “vibe coding”. This refers to people using AI systems to help create software, websites and automations without needing deep programming expertise. Increasingly, people are building practical tools for their businesses simply by describing what they want in plain language although this is not without risks and is a more advanced topic. Most popular AI systems today operate in the cloud. When someone uses systems such as ChatGPT or Gemini, their requests are sent over the internet to large remote computing systems operated by companies such as OpenAI, Google or Anthropic.

Cloud systems are currently the most capable and easiest to use. They are updated regularly, require little technical setup and can perform sophisticated reasoning, writing and analysis tasks.

At the same time, growing numbers of people are becoming interested in local AI models. Instead of sending information to remote servers, local models run directly on a computer or local hardware owned by the user.

This approach can provide greater control over sensitive information and may be useful in rural locations where internet access is unreliable or where businesses are uncomfortable uploading certain types of data to external platforms.

Local models can be useful for reviewing sensitive records, analysing internal business documents or experimenting with AI in environments where privacy is particularly important. However, they also involve trade offs. Local models are less capable than leading cloud systems, they may require more technical setup and can demand relatively powerful laptops or desktop PCs to run effectively.

For many businesses, the long term reality may involve a combination of both approaches. Cloud systems will continue to offer convenience and cutting edge capability, while local systems may become increasingly important for privacy sensitive or specialised workflows.

MORE INFORMATION



[Ollama - a tool for running local models](#)



[Gemma 4 Google’s local model](#)

AI in agriculture

Agriculture already relies heavily on technology, automation and data. AI is increasingly being integrated into systems designed to improve operational efficiency, support decision making and reduce administrative burden.

Examples already appearing across the industry include crop and pasture monitoring, livestock monitoring systems, machinery diagnostics, weather forecasting, automated reporting and image recognition systems capable of identifying weeds, pests and disease.

Many agricultural AI systems combine information from sensors, machinery, weather data, satellite imagery and historical records to generate insights or recommendations. In most cases, the quality of the underlying data strongly influences the quality of the outcome.

It is also important to remain practical and sceptical. Some agricultural AI systems are genuinely useful today, while others are heavily marketed and still relatively immature. Agriculture has seen many waves of technology enthusiasm over the years, and AI should still be evaluated through the lens of operational value rather than what's cool.

Before adopting AI systems, it is worth asking practical questions. What problem does this solve? Does it save time or reduce risk? Can outputs be verified? Who owns the data, where does it go? Does it integrate with my existing systems and workflows?

AI should support your practical experience and judgement rather than attempt to replace it.

Data privacy, trust and critical thinking

You are right to think carefully about privacy, data ownership and governance when using AI systems. AI should be treated like any other external software platform or service provider. Before uploading information into an AI system, it is worth considering where the data is stored, who can access it and whether the information may be used by the company for model training.

Not every use case carries the same level of risk. Asking AI to draft a social media post is very different from uploading financial records, contracts, payroll information or confidential business documents.

Much of the current concern around AI privacy is not really about artificial intelligence itself. It is about operational discipline and good information management (Governance). Most privacy failures occur because people share information carelessly rather than because the underlying technology behaves maliciously. This is the same in all areas of business governance.

Good practice involves using AI deliberately and thoughtfully. Sensitive information should only be shared when there is a clear operational reason to do so. Important outputs should always be reviewed independently, particularly where legal, financial or safety implications exist. It is all too easy to pop something into a chat box that you shouldn't have and this is where business governance is essential.

One of the more challenging characteristics of AI systems is that they can produce incorrect information confidently. This is often called a hallucination. These systems are capable of generating persuasive and well written responses that are completely inaccurate. That makes critical thinking extremely important.

Similarly, AI systems are also targeted by cyber attackers through prompt injection and prompt exfiltration techniques, where prompts are hijacked to steal information or undertake actions you did not intend.

Responsibility for decisions still sits with people and businesses, not the AI system itself.

MORE INFORMATION



[Australian Cyber Security Centre](#)



[Open AI Privacy Policy](#)



[Anthropic Privacy Policy](#)

What's next?

AI is likely to become increasingly embedded within the software and systems people already use every day. Over time, these systems will move beyond simply answering questions and toward coordinating information, automating workflows and assisting with operational tasks.

Businesses most likely to benefit from AI are often those with organised information, clear operational processes and a willingness to experiment carefully and pragmatically.

The best starting point is usually not a large project. It is identifying a small repetitive task that wastes your time and experimenting with whether AI can reduce the friction involved.

That might involve summarising documents, drafting meeting notes, organising files, creating procedures or improving administrative workflows. Small improvements applied consistently can create meaningful operational benefits over time.

The technology will continue evolving rapidly, but practical knowledge, critical thinking and good judgement will always remain essential. The value is not to chase hype or adopt technology for its own sake. The value is to identify where AI can genuinely improve your outcomes in safe, practical and sustainable ways.

About More Than Machines

More Than Machines is an Australian artificial intelligence and data engineering consultancy focused on helping organisations work more effectively in an increasingly digital world.

Our work sits at the intersection of AI, automation, data systems and operational design. We build practical tools and workflows that reduce administrative burden, improve access to information and help people spend less time fighting systems and more time running their operations.

Across agriculture, we have worked on projects involving traceability, compliance, reporting, operational data capture, knowledge systems and AI powered decision support. That experience has given us a strong understanding of the day to day pressures businesses face, particularly when time, connectivity and resources are limited.

We believe the real value of AI is not replacing people. It is helping capable people move faster, stay organised and make better use of the knowledge they already have.

Email: hello@morethanmachines.com



Murray Irrigation



**Delivering for
farmers,
communities
and the
environment.**

murrayirrigation.com.au
1300 138 265

Tessa Eaglesham
Headland Australia (Eaglesham Group Pty Ltd)

Getting started with AI

AI is a learning game. Take it in bite-sized chunks and move at your own pace. Getting comfortable with it now will matter more and more as it becomes part of how business gets done.

A good place to start is just having a conversation with AI about your business. Tell it who you are, what you run, and ask what it can help with. Here are five areas worth exploring:

Writing and drafting

First draft of anything: emails, letters, proposals, procedures, grant applications. Faster than a blank page.
Review, edit, make it yours.

Email and daily admin

Draft responses, write meeting agendas, summarise notes. Small tasks that quietly eat up time. A practical place to start.

Research, summaries and data

Summarise long documents, explain changes in plain English, or make sense of data from a spreadsheet. Good for staying across Fair Work or WHS updates without reading everything.

Templates and checklists

Reusable templates for recurring tasks: onboarding checklists, supplier briefs, inspection forms. Create once, adjust as needed.

Planning and scheduling

Seasonal workforce plans, project timelines, budget outlines. Useful for structuring your thinking and making sure nothing gets missed.

WRITING BETTER PROMPTS

Give context. Start with who you are and what the business does.

Be specific. State the format, length, tone, and audience.

Show an example. Paste in a document or describe what good looks like.

Break it up. Complex tasks work better as smaller separate prompts.

Iterate. Follow up: 'shorter', 'more on X', 'friendlier tone'.

Al gets you started. Review what it produces, adjust it to fit your situation, and get proper advice when the stakes are high.



What AI can miss

AI is worth using. Worth understanding too. A few patterns come up consistently in HR and WHS. Knowing them means you get better results from it.

Pay rates and entitlements

Training data is typically 12 to 18 months behind. Rates and classifications can sound confident and still be out of date. Check the Fair Work Pay Calculator before using any figures.

It does not know your farm

AI gives the same answer to everyone. Your equipment, team, and risk profile are not in the picture. The context that makes it useful for your situation has to come from you.

Office and agricultural bias

Most AI is trained on corporate environments. Seasonal workforces, Award-based employment, and the reality of how farms operate are underrepresented. Trust your own judgement when something feels generic or off.

Sounds right, worth checking

AI does not flag uncertainty. It presents everything with the same confidence. A quick read-through before you use anything is always time well spent.

Are you paying the right rate?

Most agricultural employees sit under the Pastoral Award 2020 (MA000035) or the Horticulture Award 2020 (MA000028). Both set the floor for pay rates, penalty rates, overtime, allowances, and a 25% casual loading.

Rates update every 1 July. Worth a calendar reminder so the new figures do not get missed.

One thing to be aware of with AI: pay rates are one area where the output genuinely needs checking. Training data can run 12 to 18 months behind. The Fair Work Pay Calculator is worth a look before you lock anything in.

Where AI does help: paste a clause from the Award or ATO guidance and ask it to explain what it means. Good for decoding the language without reading the whole document.

The essentials worth getting right

AI can help draft a site induction or SOP. Good for getting something on the page quickly. For employment contracts, professional input is worth it. These need to reflect your Award and actual conditions.



1

Written employment contract
Sets out role, pay, hours, and conditions.
Worth having in place for every employee before work begins.

2

Site induction
Covers hazards, emergency procedures, and site rules.
Useful for employees and contractors before they start.

3

Standard operating procedures (SOPs)
Documents the safe way to do a task on your site:
the how, the hazards, and what is specific to your operation.

Employee or contractor? Worth knowing.

Classification depends on how the relationship actually works, not just the contract or ABN. Both employees and contractors are covered by your WHS obligations.

Super and contractors

The super guarantee is 12% from 1 July 2025. Contractors engaged mainly for their labour can attract super obligations regardless of ABN status. Worth checking if you are not sure.

Headland Australia works with farms and agricultural businesses on HR, WHS, and operational compliance. Founded by someone who runs a farm, the work is practical, plain English, and built around how agriculture actually operates.

Website: www.headlandaus.com

MORE INFORMATION



[Headland Australia Free Farm Safety Check-in](#)



[Headland Australia Services](#)



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Southern Cotton supports the cotton industry through a continued commitment to innovation and education

The award-winning Southern Cotton team is committed to providing growers in southern NSW with a high-quality cotton ginning service.

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Additional benefits include:

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Thank you to all those who attended today's event.
If you have any feedback, please complete the
2026 IREC Women in Irrigated Ag Conference Evaluation (QR Code below).

If you have any further questions for speakers, please contact us and we will forward your questions onto the relevant parties.

Iva on 0402 069 643 / iva@irec.org.au
Kelsey on 0491 380 399 / irec@irec.org.au
Sarah 0449 511 507 / po@irec.org.au



Evaluation

HAVE YOUR SAY

THANK YOU



Irrigation Research &
Extension Committee

p. 02 6963 0936 | e. irec@irec.org.au
www.irec.org.au