



Cobram community

In interpreting this information, it is important to understand that there are many drivers of the socio-economic trends reflected in the data. Therefore, the socioeconomic changes outlined here cannot simply be attributed to the Basin Plan – it is just one of a number of factors that affect communities.

This information should be read in conjunction with *Understanding change in Basin communities* on the Southern Basin community profiles page at mdba.gov.au.

Total surface water entitlements available in Cobram prior to Basin Plan water recovery was 284.8 GL. 70.1 GL (24.6% of available water) was recovered up to October 2016. 61.3 GL was recovered through purchase (of which 59% was purchased up to June 2011). 8.8 GL was recovered through on-farm infrastructure investment. The net reduction in water available for production is 57.5 GL (20.6% of available water).

Trends in social and economic conditions

AREA POPULATION

Increased from 15,794 to 16,948 persons (7.3%) between 2001 and 2016

- Nearly all of the increase occurred between 2006 and 2011

WORKFORCE

Total area workforce

Decreased from 5,547 to 4,946 FTE (10.8%) between 2001 and 2016

- 2.3% increase in 2001 to 2011 was followed by a 13.1% decrease up to 2016
- Workforce participation fell from 35.1 to 29.2 FTE per 100 persons

Agricultural workforce

Decreased 32% (616 FTE) between 2001 and 2016

- Three-quarters of the decrease occurred between 2001 and 2011
- Employment in irrigated production decreased 40.1% (37.1% between 2001 and 2011)

Agricultural manufacturing workforce

Decreased 22.2% (176 FTE) between 2001 and 2016

- 17.3% between 2011 and 2016

Non-agriculture private workforce

Decreased 15.4% (323 FTE) between 2001 and 2016

- Increased 10% between 2001 to 2011, decreased 25.5% between 2011 and 2016

Government services workforce

Increased 42.6% (315 FTE) between 2001 and 2016

- All of the increase occurred between 2001 and 2011

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Percentage FTE in key sectors:

- **2001:** 35% agriculture, 38% non-agriculture private, 13% government services
- **2016:** 26% agriculture, 36% non-agriculture private, 21% government services

TOWN POPULATION

Increased from 10,014 to 11,253 persons (12.4%) between 2001 and 2016

- All of the increase occurred between 2001 and 2011

52% of the town population was 45 and over in 2016, up from 44% in 2001

- 32% increase in 45 years and over, 4% decrease in under 45s

EMPLOYMENT

Full-time employment

22% of town population in 2016
down from 25% in 2001

Part-time employment

Constant around 12% of town
population

Unemployment in the town

Constant around 2% to 3% of
town population

SEIFA FOR TOWN: (DECILE RANKINGS, COBRAM/NUMURKAH)

- **2001:** disadvantage = 4/7, advantage/disadvantage = 4/6, wealth = 5/6, education = 4/5
- **2016:** disadvantage = 3/4, advantage/disadvantage = 3/4, wealth = 3/4, education = 3/4

Land use



Water recovery programs

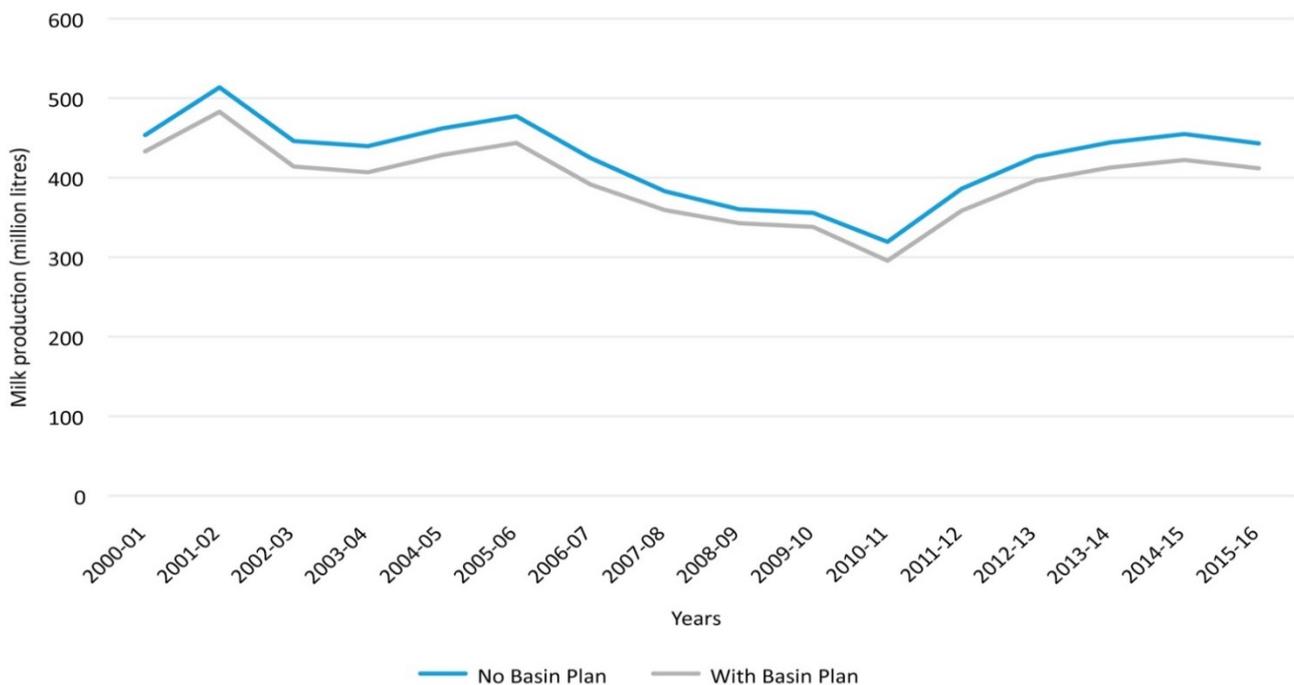
Water recovery through purchase occurred between 2009 and 2014. Water recovery from on-farm infrastructure investment occurred through the first 4 rounds of the On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency program. Water users benefitted from improvements to the water delivery infrastructure managed by Goulburn Murray Water.

Basin Plan impact on irrigated agriculture

Since the early 2000s, the overall decline in milk production has been around 13%. Factors contributing to the decline in milk production during this period include the sale of water out of the district prior to 2007-08, the long-term effects of drought, changes in farming practices to accommodate the effects of both drought and Basin Plan water recovery, and the milk prices received. Basin Plan water recovery is estimated to have reduced milk production by around half (7%-8%) of the total decrease in milk production, with another quarter of the total decrease explained by the permanent sale of water out of the community prior to 2007-08. The other factors listed above contributed to the remaining quarter of the decrease in milk production.

While only limited data is currently available on the gains in dairy productivity, preliminary evidence indicates the combined effects of the off-farm and on-farm infrastructure investment associated with the Basin Plan water recovery might reduce the effects of the Basin Plan below the current estimated effects. Further information will be required to assess the potential size and nature of these productivity gains. Fruit production is also a major part of the irrigated production in this community. Limited data provided by industry indicates the major changes were associated with moving from supplying the canned fruit sector to the fresh fruit market. These include significant changes in the types of trees grown and the layout of the orchards. Basin Plan related changes for the fruit-growing sector will be considered as part of the observed changes in employment for the agriculture sector.

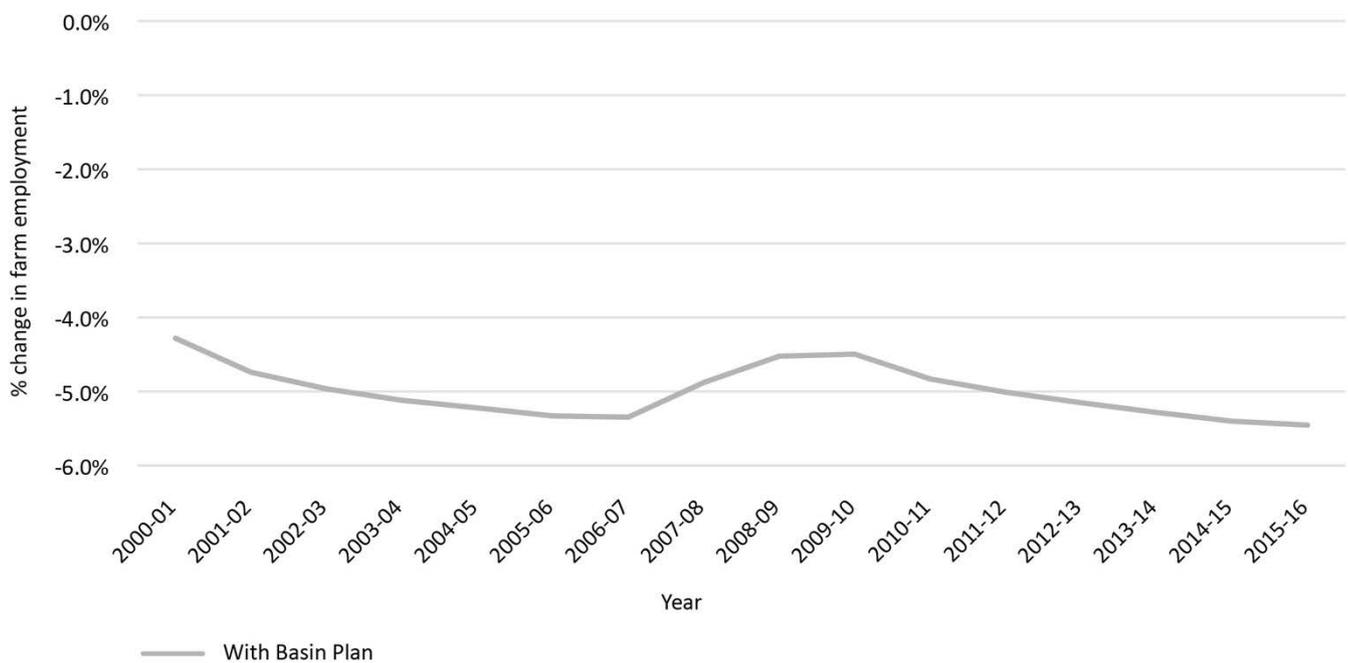
Milk production (million litres) 2001–16



Basin Plan impact on farm sector

In 2001, farm employment was approximately 1,300 FTE (including seasonal workers). Farm employment fell by around 40% between 2001–16. Non-Basin Plan factors led to 35% of this change, while Basin Plan water recovery is estimated to have contributed the remaining 4.5% to 5.5%.

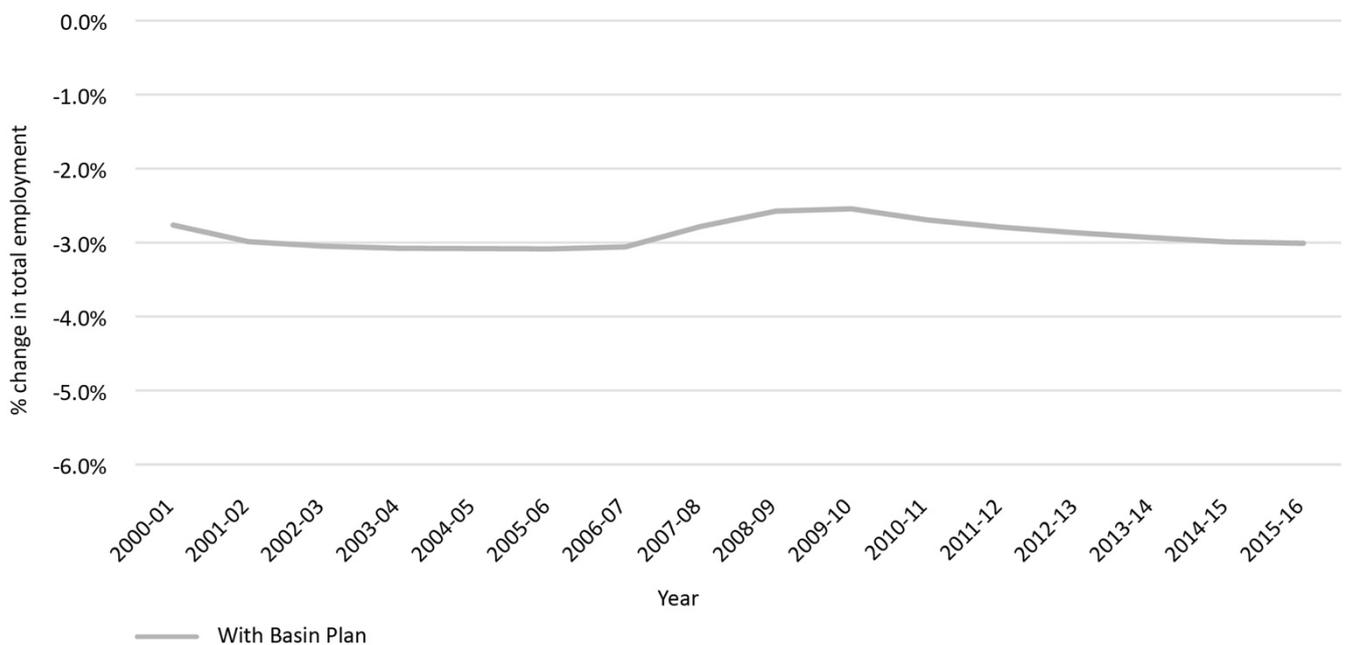
Effect of Basin Plan on farm employment 2001–16



Basin Plan impact on total employment

In 2001, total employment was approximately 5,545 FTE (including seasonal workers). Total employment fell by around 11% between 2001–16. Non-Basin Plan factors led to 8% of this change while Basin Plan water recovery is estimated to have contributed the remaining 3%.

Effect of Basin Plan on total employment 2001–16



Updated June 2018