



Hillston 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 Hillston prior to Basin Plan water recovery was 105.6 GL. 31.3 GL (29.7% of available water) was recovered up to October 2016. 30.5 GL was recovered through purchase (of which 100% was purchased up to June 2011). 0.8 GL was recovered through on-farm infrastructure investment. The net reduction in water available for production is 30.2 GL (28.7% of available water).

Trends in social and economic conditions

AREA POPULATION

Decreased from 1,633 to 1,298 persons (20.5%) between 2001 and 2016

- Decrease of 27% between 2001 and 2011, increase of 6.6% between 2011 and 2016

WORKFORCE

Total area workforce

Decreased from 678 to 410 FTE (39.5%) between 2001 and 2016

- Half the decrease occurred between 2001 and 2006
- Workforce participation fell from 41.5 to 31.6 FTE per 100 persons

Agricultural workforce

Decreased 41.5% (160 FTE) between 2001 and 2016

- Over half between 2001 and 2006
- Employment in irrigated production decreased 31.1% (17.8% between 2001 and 2006)

Agricultural manufacturing workforce

Remained relatively constant between 2001 and 2016

- Around 28 FTE

Non-agriculture private workforce

Decreased 62.6% (110 FTE) between 2001 and 2016

- Over half between 2001 and 2006

Government services workforce

Decreased 16.4% (15 FTE) between 2001 and 2016

- Increased 19.4% between 2001 and 2006, decreased by 32.6% between 2011 and 2016

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Percentage FTE in key sectors:

- **2001:** 57% agriculture, 26% non-agriculture private, 13% government services
- **2016:** 55% agriculture, 16% non-agriculture private, 18% government services

TOWN POPULATION

Decreased from 1,226 to 1,093 persons (10.8%) between 2001 and 2016

- Decreased by 14.4% between 2001 and 2006, increased by 8.1 between 2011 and 2016

44% of the town population was 45 and over in 2016, up from 37% in 2001

- 6% increase in 45 years and over, 21% decrease in under 45s

EMPLOYMENT

Full-time employment

27% of town population in 2016
down from 34% in 2001

Part-time employment

Varying between 11% and 16%
of town population

Unemployment in the town

Constant around 2% to 3% of
town population

SEIFA FOR TOWN: (DECILE RANKINGS)

- **2001:** disadvantage = 3, advantage/disadvantage = 3, wealth = 6, education = 1
- **2016:** disadvantage = 4, advantage/disadvantage = 4, wealth = 5, education = 3

Land use

Irrigated production



Water recovery programs

Most of the water recovered was through purchase between 2009 and 2013. A small volume was recovered through the On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program Pilot and Rounds 1 and 2 of that program.

Basin Plan impact on irrigated agriculture

The main irrigated crops grown are nuts, vegetables and cotton based largely on general security and groundwater entitlements. In the absence of any other changes, it is estimated the maximum area of irrigated production would have decreased by around 25% to 27% due to Basin Plan water recovery.

Most of the change in the area irrigated would have been associated with a decrease in the area of cotton irrigated, noting the area of nut production has been expanding (particularly since 2010-11). However, in the timeframe of this analysis, there has been no decrease in the area of irrigated production as temporary trade was used to move water from the upper Lachlan to the Hillston community. That is, the area of irrigated production is similar to the no Basin Plan estimates of irrigated production. As a consequence, the effects of the Basin Plan water recovery have been transferred to the Forbes community (not studied in this analysis). In future, if temporary trade is not used to help maintain the maximum area of irrigated production in the Hillston community, it is likely the effects of the Basin Plan water recovery will become evident at that time.

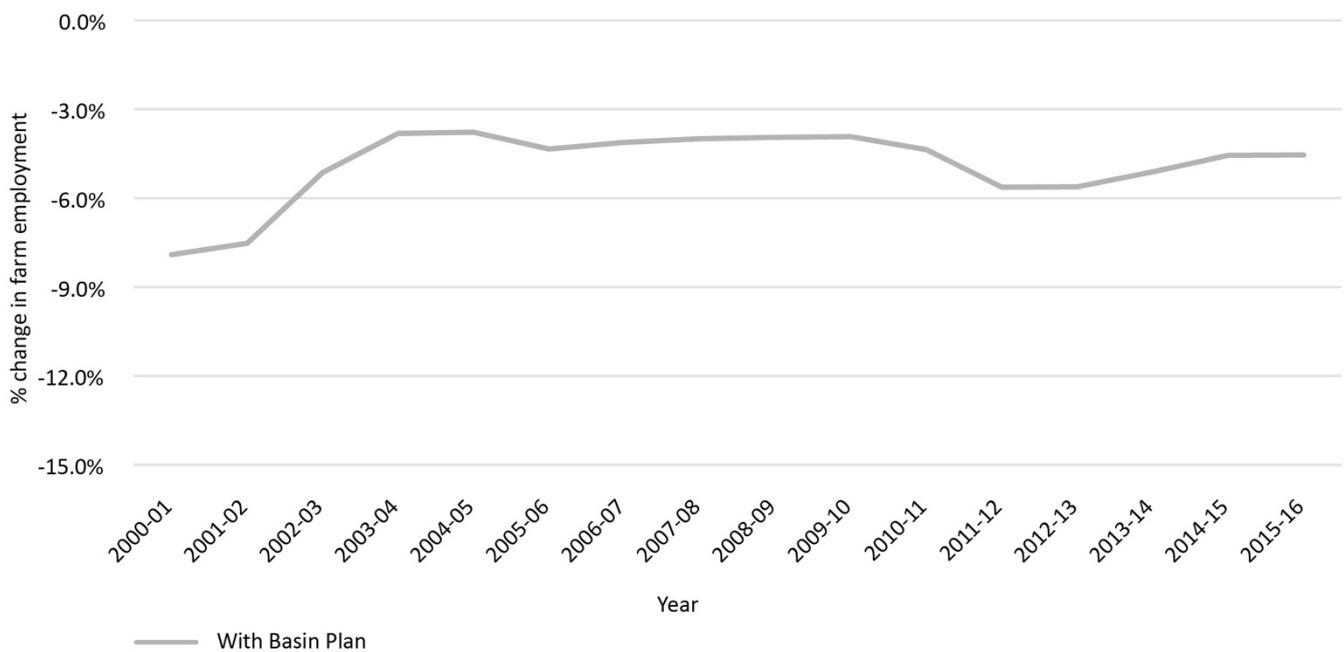
Area of irrigated cotton (hectares) 2001–16



Basin Plan impact on farm sector

In 2001, farm employment was approximately 379 FTE (including seasonal workers). Farm employment increased by 45% between 2001–16. The majority of the increase is associated with the demand for seasonal workers to support the growth in horticulture. If the Basin Plan water recovery is considered on its own, it is estimated farm employment would be around 5% to 7.5% below the current levels, however, these effects have been offset by water trade. Temporary water trade into the community maintained cotton production at levels similar to what might be expected if there had been no water recovery from the Hillston community. This has transferred the effects of the Basin Plan water recovery from Hillston to Forbes. In future, if the volume of water trade from the upper-to-lower Lachlan is reduced, the effects of the Basin Plan might be observable in the Hillston community.

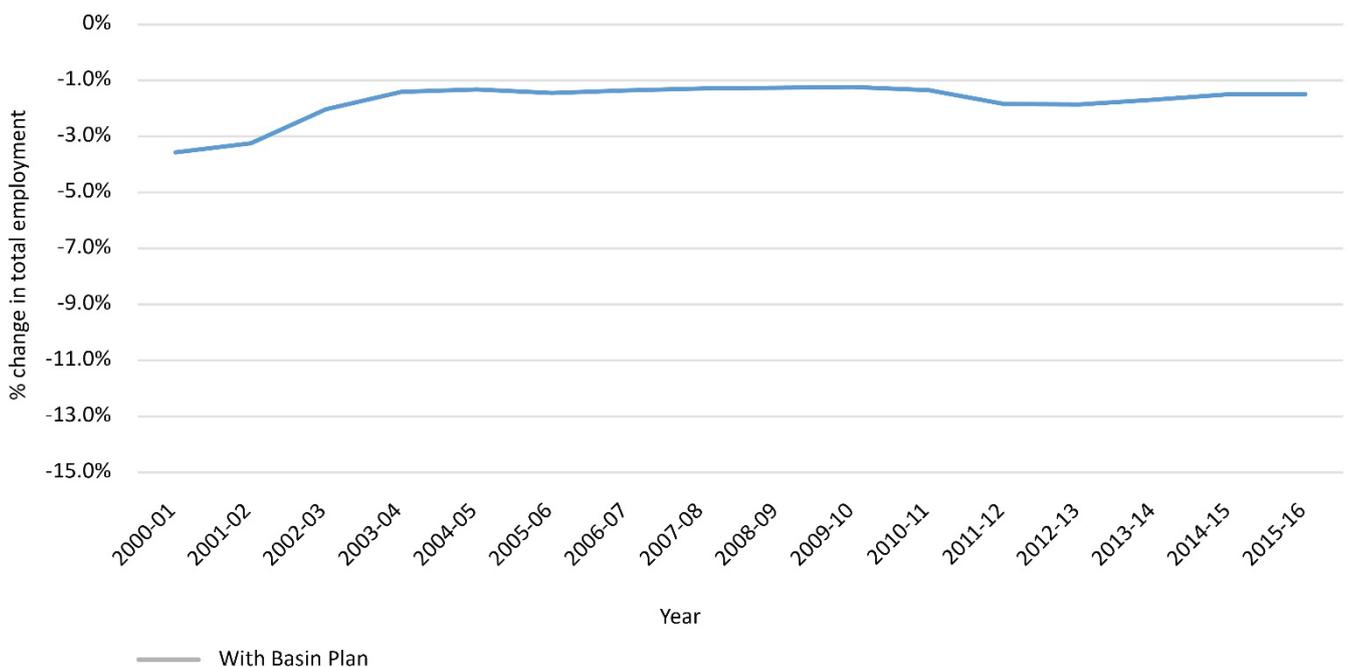
Effect of Basin Plan on farm employment 2001–16



Basin Plan impact on total employment

In 2001, total employment was approximately 745 FTE (including seasonal workers). Total employment fell by around 25% between 2001–16. Non-Basin Plan factors led to 22.5% of this change, while the Basin Plan water recovery contributed the remaining 2.5%. Given the prevailing social and economic conditions at the time of the water recovery, the trends of social and economic change affecting the community and changes in access to groundwater, it is possible the modelling results might under-estimate the effect of Basin Plan water recovery.

Effect of Basin Plan on total employment 2001–16



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