Wah Wah community

In interpreting this information, it is important to understand that there are many drivers of the socioeconomic 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 Wah Wah prior to Basin Plan water recovery was 119.7 GL. 9.8 GL (8.2% of available water) was recovered up to October 2016. 8.8 GL was recovered through purchase (of which 1% was purchased up to June 2011). 1 GL was recovered through on-farm infrastructure investment. The net reduction in water available for production is 8.4 GL (7.1% of available water).

Trends in social and economic conditions

**AREA POPULATION**
Decreased from 629 to 221 persons (64.9%) between 2001 and 2016
→ Mostly between 2006 and 2011

**WORKFORCE**

*Total area workforce*
Decreased from 225 to 74 FTE (67.3%) between 2001 and 2016
→ Most of the decrease occurred between 2006 and 2011
→ Workforce participation fell from 35.3 to 33.3 FTE per 100 persons

*Agricultural workforce*
Decreased 75.6% (83 FTE) between 2001 and 2016
→ Mostly between 2001 and 2011
→ Employment in irrigated production decreased 80.5% (73.9% between 2001 and 2011)

*Agricultural manufacturing workforce*
Remained a small part of the local economy

*Non-agriculture private workforce*
Decreased 68.3% (50 FTE) between 2001 and 2016
→ Mostly between 2006 and 2011

*Government services workforce*
Decreased 54.5% (20 FTE) between 2001 and 2016
→ Increasing 7% between 2001 and 2006, decreasing 61.6% between 2011 and 2016
ECONOMIC STRUCTURE
Percentage FTE in key sectors:
→ **2001**: 49% agriculture, 32% non-agriculture private, 16% government services
→ **2016**: 36% agriculture, 31% non-agriculture private, 23% government services

TOWN POPULATION
Decreased from 308 to 287 persons (6.8%) between 2001 and 2016
→ Nearly all between 2001 and 2006
43% of the town population was 45 and over in 2016, up from 36% in 2001
→ 11% increase in 45 years and over, 16% decrease in under 45s

EMPLOYMENT
**Full-time employment**
33% of town population in 2016
down from 36% in 2001

**Part-time employment**
Varied around 5% to 12% of
town population

**Unemployment in the town**
Constant around 1% of town population

SEIFA FOR TOWN: (DECILE RANKINGS)
→ **2001**: disadvantage = 6, advantage/disadvantage = 5, wealth = 7, education = 2
→ **2016**: disadvantage = 3, advantage/disadvantage = 3, wealth = 5, education = 2

**Land use**

Water recovery programs
Water recovery was primarily through purchase between 2011 and 2013, then through round 5 of the On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency program.
Basin Plan impact on irrigated agriculture

The main irrigated crops grown are annual crops (summer and winter cereals and oils, pasture, rice and more recently the increasing substitution of land from growing rice to cotton represented as rice equivalent hectares) and nuts. There are also relatively small areas of vegetables and grapes. Vegetable production has declined considerably since the drought while the area of nut production has increased steadily (and 5-fold) since 2000-01.

For the rice equivalent area irrigated, the maximum area irrigated has fallen by approximately 18% to 24%. Around one-third of this decline is associated with the Basin Plan water recovery. The remaining two-thirds of the effect on the area of rice-equivalent hectares is associated with other sources of environmental water recovery. Changes to the area of rice equivalent hectares grown in Wah Wah has also been influenced by the capacity for improved water utilization in the districts further up within the irrigation delivery network.

Area of irrigated production (rice equivalent hectares) 2001–16
Basin Plan impact on farm sector

In 2001, farm employment was approximately 125 FTE (including seasonal workers). Farm employment fell by around 75% between 2001–16. Non-Basin Plan factors led to 68% of this change. Basin Plan water recovery reduced the level of farm employment by 3%, while the water recovered for the environment from processes beyond the Basin Plan contributed the remaining 4%.

Effect of Basin Plan on farm employment 2001–16

![Graph showing the effect of Basin Plan on farm employment 2001–16]

- With Basin Plan
- Basin Plan plus other e-water recovery
In 2001, total employment was approximately 230 FTE (including seasonal workers). Total employment fell by around 67% between 2001–16. Non-Basin Plan factors led to 62.5% of this change. Basin Plan water recovery reduced the level of total employment by 2%, while the water recovery for the environment from processes beyond the Basin Plan contributed the remaining 2.5%.

**Effect of Basin Plan on total employment 2001–16**

- **With Basin Plan**
- **Basin Plan plus other e-water recovery**

*Updated June 2018*