



## Mallee Horticulture Crop Report 2021



### Crop Report 2021

Mallee Catchment Management Authority produces the Crop Report every three years, with addendums produced periodically. The 2021 Crop Report tracks irrigation development from 1997 to 2021. The study area for this report is the Victorian Mallee irrigation region, for irrigated horticulture along the Murray River from Woorinen to the South Australian border, and irrigation in the Murrayville Groundwater Management Area (Murrayville GMA). The data is presented as five pumped irrigation districts, six river reaches of Private Diversions and the Murrayville GMA.

#### Overview: 1997 to 2021

The irrigable area across the Mallee catchment increased by 115% (47,185ha), from 40,940ha in 1997 to 88,125ha in 2021. In that time, total irrigated land increased by 79% to 70,600ha. Of the total irrigable area in 2021, 80% is currently irrigated and 20% is vacant.

#### Crop type changes: 1997 to 2021

Almond trees are currently the dominant crop type across the Mallee catchment in 2021. In 1997, the dominant crop was wine grapes followed by field crops and dried grapes.

Most districts experienced a change in dominant crop type from 1997 to 2021. The dominant crop type in Red Cliffs,

Mildura and Merbein changed from wine grapes and dried grapes (respectively) to table grapes. In Nyah, Boundary Bend and Wemen there was a change from seasonal crops (field and vegetable) to almonds. Colignan to Yatpool saw a change from wine grapes to citrus. In the Mildura Private Diversion district, the dominant crop changed from wine grapes to table grapes.

#### Planting trends: Permanent plantings, seasonal crops and vacant areas

Irrigated permanent plantings have increased by 31,170ha since 1997, through expansion and redevelopment of vacant/non-irrigated areas. Irrigated seasonal cropping increased marginally by 35ha, and vacant areas increased by 15,980ha from 1997 to 2021.

Despite consistent increases in total irrigable area, there has been a minor decrease in the rate of expansion since 2015. Refer to table below.

Irrigation			
Expansion	2015	2018	2021
Total Irrigable Area (ha)	79,920	80,055	88,125
Net Change (ha)		5,135	3,070
Expansion Rate (%)		6%	4%

Above: Manna Farms, Nangiloc, Victoria.

# Irrigation development: New and retired areas 1997 to 2021

From 1997 to 2021, the irrigable area in the Mallee catchment increased by 47,185ha, an increase of 115% from 40,940ha to 88,125ha. The net increase of 47,185ha was the balance of 49,780ha of expansion and 2,595ha retired from irrigation.

The expansion predominantly occurred in Private Diversion river reaches in Wemen, Boundary Bend and Nyah. In 2021, 73% of the irrigable area was in Private Diversion river reaches.

### Key findings: 1997 to 2021

- 31,170ha increase in permanent planting to 59,130ha in 2021 (67% of total irrigable area)
- 35ha increase in seasonal plantings to 11,470ha in 2021 (13% of total irrigable area)
- Increase in vacant permanent (5,365 ha) and vacant seasonal (10,615 ha) irrigable areas (20% of total irrigable area)
- Irrigable area increased by 47,185ha to 88,125ha
- Furrow irrigation decreased by 13,080ha and drip increased by 47,240ha.











Irrigation type - changes over time



Crop type - changes over time



**Age of Permanent Plantings** 







