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Understanding the impacts of climate change on agriculture in the Goulburn Broken region

GIS mapping tool launched and climate change outcomes showcased

Better understanding the impacts of climate change was the focus of the day when representatives from across the Goulburn Broken region came together to mark the conclusion of the Climate Smart Agricultural Development Project, in Benalla on Friday 16 December.

The project culminated in the development of a new geographic information system (GIS) modelling tool with more than 60 people attending the Lakeside Community Centre in Benalla to learn more about the tool which has been integrated into Local Government GIS systems and is accessible to the agricultural sector and wider community through partner Councils.

The Climate Smart Agricultural Development project was a partnership project between Benalla Rural City Council, Campaspe Shire Council, Greater Shepparton City Council, Mansfield Shire Council, Moira Shire Council, Murrindindi Shire Council, Strathbogie Shire Council, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and was funded by the Victorian Government's Department of Environment Land Water and Planning.

Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance Executive Officer Tom Brown said the project was an important one for the region given the fundamental economic importance of agriculture in the region.

"Climate change is predicted to impact agriculture in the region due to alterations to historical patterns of rainfall and temperature. Gaining an understanding of a future where a different climate is a reality is an important aspect in making future proofed decisions. We hope the findings of this project will support Councils, the Catchment Management Authority and



community to better understand our future climate and support informed decisions now to adapt to and take advantage of a hotter and drier climate in the future,” Mr Brown said.

The project began almost two years ago with the spatial modelling tool a key project outcome. The tool incorporates production models of 17 different agricultural commodities within the Goulburn Broken region and captures the anticipated impacts of a changing climate on each using production efficiency as a proxy for future suitability of these commodities. Importantly the modelling also highlights some new commodity production opportunities for the regional that will increase in viability under the predicted future climate. The tool also includes soil maps (pH and texture) and topography.

Moving forward individual project participants have the opportunity to make the spatial modelling tool, along with other associated information like natural resources, roads and infrastructure, publicly available on their websites.

The modelling and mapping resources are available on the Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance website at www.gbga.com.au and can be found under the Projects section – Climate Smart Agricultural Development.

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