

On Farm Connectivity Program Round 3 – Public Consultation

Issues:

1. The new process for reimbursement will impact applications and the management of cash flow. E.g. Primary producers in drought affected areas or who are recovering from recent floods are closely managing cash flow and may be unable to manage the short fall in the interim of receiving reimbursement.
2. The change in items available is seriously limiting and impacts farmers ability to invest in connectivity ag tech to boost productivity and climate resilience which is a real shame with the Albanese Government's current focus on climate and productivity.

Personal experience

We had such a great experience with investing in remote water monitoring, remote rainfall monitoring and remote electric fence monitoring in round 2. As young farmers relying on off farm income and working farming around our teaching jobs, as well as managing 2 farms 1 hour apart - the remote monitoring systems we invested in have been an absolute game changer. Not only are we able to make valuable management decisions knowing what rainfall our property 1 hour away has had to ensure appropriate timing of management tasks, we are also able to remotely monitor our stock, water and fencing and reduce diesel costs and emissions. Furthermore, we observed an increase in productivity with considerably more time to complete management tasks and make good decisions.

For us, we invested up to the maximum our farm business could handle at the time of round 2 and having opportunities like this coming up yearly really enables us to continue to invest in future proofing our farm business.

It's really important for young farmers and small farm businesses that opportunities like this are available in regular, smaller amounts to enable us to leverage into ag tech in the good times. We are lucky to have had interest rates come down and lamb prices soaring so we're particularly disappointed to hear of the changes to the program as we had built great plans to invest in technology to enable us to measure Food On Offer and lamb growth rates to assist us in making decisions around a plan to bring perennials into our system now that our farm business is growing and able to.