



Murrumbidgee
Irrigation

Case Study

John & Michelle Houghton and
William & Tanisha Houghton
Gogeldrie NSW



Broadacre cropping and opportunity livestock farming has been a part of John Houghton's family since 1927, when his great grandfather, Thomas Sidney Houghton, purchased a Gogeldrie property and farmed it with his wife Ronnie until 1947.

John and his older brother Robert returned to the farm in 1985 where they operated it alongside their parents, Norm and Yvonne until 2000, at which point John and Robert separated the farming business into their own separate entities.

John and Michelle took over farm 1687 and have since been farming there, and working with MI, for 38 years. Their son William became a director of the business in 2019, and he purchased the adjoining farm, 1686.

NEEDS OF THE BUSINESS

Farm 1686 only had 2 x 15 meg outlets, which was not well suited to the type of cropping planned. Watering was slow and inefficient; and farming practices used more water than anticipated. It took longer to identify and organise what water was needed for each paddock and crop, and what outlet the water would come from.

"We wanted to integrate the two farms together and centralise the main water outlet to allow us to get the flows of water that we needed for both

farms and streamline the water ordering process so that we could implement our own automation system.

"The main aim for our business is to be able to be flexible with our cropping plan and being able to change cropping enterprises quickly to adapt to climatic conditions or changes in markets and demand for different products. To be successful in this strategy, our main priority is being able to get water on and off paddocks quickly, and this can be achieved with a larger outlet."

"Our business works hand in hand with MI. Enhanced flow rates enable us to be more water efficient and allow our business the flexibility to change cropping enterprises to suit the seasonal and market conditions."

WORKING WITH MURRUMBIDGEE IRRIGATION

The Houghton's partnered with MI to consolidate and streamline the delivery of water to the existing and new property to enable them to water more





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efficiently, saving water, time, and money.

“We discussed it with MI and decided we would remove all the outlets on both farms and put in one 60 meg outlet which supplies both farms. This reduced the costs we pay to MI, and it reduced the number of outlets that MI had to service.”

MI covered all aspects of safety and third-party interests to make sure what was planned would not negatively affect other farming businesses nearby. This consideration of neighbours and other farming families was important to the Houghton family.

THE EVOLUTION OF FARMING

The Houghton’s on-farm practices have changed over the past 38 years—as have MI’s. The work environment is ever evolving, and there are many external factors affecting business functions such

as water policy, technological advances, plant genetics and climate change.

“We are always looking at new ways to streamline our business practices and partner with other businesses that can assist us to move forward.”

“Automation is the key to our future watering needs in our area. Having control over when watering starts and stops is the key to our future and MI.”

MICHELLE HOUGHTON

