Partners/Sponsors Natural Heritage Trust, National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, Goulburn Valley Water, Goulburn Murray Water, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, Shepparton Science and Technology Centre, Department of Primary Industries, City of Greater Shepparton, Moira Shire, Murrindindi Shire, Mitchel Shire, Campaspe Shire, Strathbogie Shire, Mansfield Shire, Benalla Shire, Parks Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment. ***Monitoring Information*** 98 Groups, 432 participants, 309 sites. ***Education participation*** 8407 participants. ***Coordinators*** David Hodgkins, Jill Breadon, Glenda Woods, Jacinta Burke, Melanie Giovanetti, Kirsten Hogan.

Goulburn Broken

Ken Lucas collecting a water sample from his irrigation drain monitoring site.

Drainwatch signs have been erected to display monitoring results for ortho phosphorus and electrical conductivity.

Drainwatch

Monitoring irrigation drains

Ken Lucas, a fourth generation irrigator, has seen many changes in local drains and creeks in his lifetime. The Drainwatch program has provided him with the opportunity to monitor this change.

Ken started monitoring water quality in the irrigation drain in front of his property back in 1997, after hearing Waterwatch Coordinator David Hodgkins talk at the opening of Kennedy's Weir at Broken Creek. 'I had never thought of doing it (monitoring) before that'.

Drainwatch is a Goulburn Broken Waterwatch program initiative engaging the Shepparton Irrigation Region community in the monitoring of irrigation drains. Drainwatch monitors regularly monitor Ortho Phosphorus, Electrical Conductivity, Turbidity and Flow. Goulburn-Murray Water and their Water Service Committees also have strong links with the Drainwatch program.

Drainwatch Coordinator Melanie Giovanetti knows firsthand how valuable the Drainwatch data is. 'Monitoring drains is very important. Local irrigators are more aware of nutrient runoff from farms. Irrigators can then better manage phosphate applications to their land by accounting for phosphorus levels present in the diverted water.'

'Drainwatch has provided valuable information on the quality of water in smaller drainage systems that have no other monitoring. It helps us to estimate nutrient loads and decide whether more intensive monitoring is required,' said *Greg Smith, Goulburn Murray Water's Drain Management Officer.*

'When I used to live on the Broken Creek, everyone used to pump straight from it for domestic and irrigation supply. Back then you used to be able to see a (fishing) spinner 12 ft away, now there is no chance of that... its very dirty.' *Ken Lucas, Nathalia irrigator and Drainwatch monitor.*

Ken Lucas proudly shows off the new Drainwatch sign at his monitoring site.

Ken has seen change firsthand since he first started monitoring. Over the last 8 years, he has monitored changes in salinity and weeds in his drain.

This year Drainwatch monitors were invited to participate in a regional nutrient workshop and various information events. This year the program hosted two Drainwatch bus tours. Attendees on the bus tours had the opportunity to refresh their monitoring skills and to get up to date information on drainage and nutrients.

The program recently obtained funding for ten large roadside signs to communicate monthly ortho phosphorus and electrical conductivity results with the broader community. Smaller site signs will also be erected at each Drainwatch site.

When asked what changes he would like to see in the future, Ken answered that he would like to see more local irrigators use more accurate irrigation systems. Better land management is one step towards reducing salt, sediment and nutrients entering local irrigation drains and waterways.

Photos courtesy of Goulburn Broken Waterwatch program.