In South Australia’s rural Riverland area, farmers have struggled to earn a living from the land due to successive droughts in the 2000s and poor prices for their crops. Many were forced to abandon their land and livelihood after the prolonged drought.

As pressure grew for them to sell their farms, a locally-based installer of solar energy systems set out to demonstrate that solar energy could make a significant contribution to the sustainability of their farming.

Mark Yates, owner of Yates Electrical Services, coming from the same area, demonstrated to one of the farmers how this land can be used economically with a solar plant to ensure constant energy harvest and profitability. Not only could farmers significantly reduce their own energy costs, but they could also sell surplus power to the local energy retailer, taking advantage of the volatility of the wholesale energy market.

As he sought to build local support for his innovative approach Mark called on ABB, knowing that their experience and high level of technical support would help win the confidence of the farmers.

He trusted ABB’s technical expertise and reliability and knew that ABB would provide a high level of local support and training. The first solar farms developed in the Riverland employed six 27kW ABB TRIO Inverters, housed in an on-site containerised solution, which was later reconfigured to take advantage of the versatility and durability of the ABB Trio-50 inverters.

Now ABB is playing a key role in bringing sustainable renewable energy to the region and revitalising the local economy, throwing a lifeline to grape and citrus growers.

Working in partnership with ABB, Mark built on the success of his first project to encourage more farmers in the Riverland area to follow the same approach by adopting solar energy. The first installation has inspired an innovative community solar project called Redmud Green Energy, which involves building small-scale solar farms on vacant, redundant agricultural land parcels.
With the solar farm you don’t need to do anything but occasionally spray the weeds around it and that’s it,” he says. “It makes good economic sense and it’s good for the environment, so it’s a win-win.”

Want to know how your installations could do more to build a better future?
With our huge portfolio of solar solutions, integrated digital services and reliable support network, you can count on us. To find out how ABB can help you achieve even more with your installations, visit www.abb.com/solarinverters to find your local sales rep.