

Irrigators feeding us our summer fruit and veg

Australia's irrigators have spent summer working hard to produce the fresh vegetables, fruit and nuts we've all enjoyed over the break says Steve Whan, CEO of the National Irrigators Council (NIC).

"One of the things Australian's love about summer is being able to enjoy tables laden with fresh fruit, nuts, summer salads and plenty of healthy vegies.

["Australian Bureau of Statistics figures"](#) confirm the vital role irrigation plays in getting those delicious and nutritious foods to our tables.

"By value 80% of NSW's vegetables are grown by irrigators, 76% of fruit and nuts and over 90% of grapes. Imagine a festive season without those!

"Victorians get 75% of their vegetables from irrigators, 95% of fruit and nuts and 97% of their grapes. In Queensland, its 74% of vegetables grown, 89% of fruit and nuts and 98% of grapes.

"When South Australians buy locally grown product, 95% of their vegies come from irrigators, 95% of their fruit and nuts and 96% of their grapes – including those grown for our fine Australian wine."

Steve Whan said "it's important for Australian consumers, particularly those in the cities, to realise why getting the balance right on water issues is so important. Irrigators want to see healthy rivers and we believe that can happen at the same time as enhancing our capacity to produce the food Australians love to eat and the natural fibre we like to wear.

"Unfortunately, we don't always get that balance in public comment on issues to do with water use.

"Australia's irrigators are thousands of mainly family owned farms who lead the world in water efficiency, who pay for every drop they use and who have been out in the hot sun over the last month growing the food we've enjoyed over the summer break.

"If we want them to keep doing that then we need to ensure their role as producers of food, fibre and jobs is valued alongside the need to restore the environmental health of our rivers."

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