

Irrigators produce 78% of your vegies!

Australian's need irrigators if they are to have fresh vegetables, nuts and fruit and wine – that's the clear message from recent ABS statistics, says National Irrigators Council (NIC) CEO, Steve Whan.

The recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) [Gross Value of Irrigated Agricultural Production 2015-16](#) figures show that on dollar values 78% of Australian vegetable production is irrigated, 90% of fruit and nuts; and 94% of grapes.

Steve Whan said “there are nearly 23,000 agricultural businesses irrigating in Australia with more than 9,000 of those in the Murray Darling Basin. Critics of irrigation like to portray those businesses negatively but the reality is they are using their share of water efficiently and effectively to produce the food we eat and the natural fibre we wear.

“The simple truth is that without hard working Murray Darling Basin irrigators, when a Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide resident walked into a market, there'd be very little fresh, local and affordable on the shelves.

“The ABS statistics show that overall the value of irrigated agricultural production dropped slightly between 2014-15 and 2015-16 but it was still worth more than \$15 billion to the Australian economy.

“That \$15 billion rolls through our economy – not just providing our food and fibre but generating tens of thousands of jobs and export income for the nation.

“The figures confirm the booming fruit and nut sector with its value of production rising 31% between 2014-15 and 2015-16 from \$2.8 billion to \$3.8 billion. Grapes, cotton and flowers also increased while the figures confirmed the tough year Dairy had, with the value of irrigated dairy production dropping from \$2.8 billion to \$2 billion.”

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