



MEDIA RELEASE

Irrigators Launch Federal Election Platform: *'Safeguarding Australia's Future: Water for Agriculture and New Actions to Restore our Rivers'*

6 March 2025, Canberra, ACT – The National Irrigators' Council (NIC) today launched its Federal Election platform, urging all parties and independents to commit to securing Australia's water future and investing in actions to restore our rivers whilst supporting agricultural productivity and rural communities.

NIC CEO, Zara Lowien said, "Two-decades of water reform means Australian water management system is world-leading but to secure our nation's future, we must look to new ways of ensuring sustainability and secure water for agriculture".

"The industry has made the difficult step changes that established water as a property right, created water sharing arrangements within global standards that can adapt to our variable climate, these steps and more have helped drive water-use efficiency and sustainability."

"In the Murray-Darling Basin, this means one in three litres of irrigation water is now returned to the environment, but it wasn't without impact. The Basin Plan is a \$13 billion investment and irrigation-water dependent Basin communities will lose at its completion between \$602 million - \$914 million per year in economic activity from reduced production¹."

"Looking ahead, with population growth, climate variability and extremes, and increased global uncertainty, we must look beyond past solutions to ensure sustainability because water for agriculture will be essential, if we are to optimise Australia's world-leading water systems and technology to meet future demands for clean, green, affordable food and fibre".

"It's time to safeguard Australia's food and fibre future. Our Federal Election requests and recommendations are designed to start this conversation with parties and candidates," said Ms Lowien.

The National Irrigators Council's Federal Election Priorities Include:

1. **Secure Water for Agriculture for Australian's:** NIC is seeking support for policies that secure water for agriculture and plan for Australia's future water and food security. NIC welcomes the Australian Government's National Food Security Strategy as a step towards a 'National Food Security Preparedness Strategy'.
2. **'Beyond Water - Restoring our Rivers Action Plan':** NIC is seeking \$500 million per year over four years to plan and implement a comprehensive action plan that goes beyond simply adding more water to address environmental issues.
3. **'Regional Australia Productivity and Welfare Benchmarking Program':** NIC is calling for data collection to establish a benchmarking program to monitor and assess the impact of policies on regional and rural communities to ensure effective support for at-risk areas.

For more information, please visit our Federal Election [webpage](#).

Ends.

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¹ As outlined in the Government's Regulatory Impact Statements