



MEDIA RELEASE

Irrigators respond Albanese Government's muddled budget

26 March 2025, Canberra, ACT – Irrigators have joined the chorus of farming and small business groups calling out the mixed messaging and missed opportunities for agriculture, regional businesses and communities in this year's budget.

"This week's budget is confusing to anyone wanting to buy locally grown, green, food and fibre", said Zara Lowien, CEO of National Irrigators' Council (NIC).

"We have on one hand a budget focused on cost-of-living measures and the need to set up Australia to be more resilient and productive in these uncertain global conditions, yet it fails to invest in regional infrastructure including much needed water infrastructure to stimulate regional economic growth and maintains unknown budget expenses for the Murray Darling Basin Plan, which is estimated to reduce annual farm-gate production between \$602 million - \$914 million per year¹".

"This budget will reduce regional Australia's capacity to provide economic activity and national resilience and directly targets our nation's food bowl – the Murray Darling Basin".

"With population growth, climate variability and extremes, increased global uncertainty and reforms like the Basin Plan limits on track, it's time to look beyond the old solutions and invest strategically and transparently, if we want to secure our nation's future".

"The budget did not include any new major water investments or alternatives that go beyond simply reducing water for agriculture to give more to the environment, when addressing environmental issues in our river systems".

"The budget was a missed opportunity to look at new ways of ensuring sustainability whilst securing water for agriculture for our nation's food and fibre future".

"One glimmer of hope was the modest \$3.5 million investment in a National Food Security Strategy which must recognise that securing 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".

"Whilst we agree with the Treasurer, it's time to make our economy stronger, more productive and more resilient in these uncertain times, unfortunately, this budget does not recognise how irrigated agriculture will be critical to this cause as it does not help to safeguard Australian food and fibre future," said Ms Lowien.

The NIC recently launched 2025 Federal Election Platform; '*Safeguarding Australia's Future: Water for Agriculture and New Actions to Restore our Rivers*' outlines a new vision and is available on our [webpage](#).

Ends.

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¹ As outlined in the Government's Regulatory Impact Statements