



## MEDIA RELEASE

Now is the time for stability, irrigators submit to Basin Plan Review

**23 April 2026, Sydney, NSW:** The National Irrigators' Council (NIC) met in Sydney today to finalise a response to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Review, issuing a sneak peek.

"The balance has been struck when it comes to sharing water, with three-decades of reforms shrinking the share for farmers by one-third," said NIC CEO, Zara Lowien.

"The Government's own science says there's no need to further reduce water from farming, showing 92% of environmental indicators across the Basin's rivers would not change."

"Protecting river health is more than 'just adding water'. If the Government is serious about genuine environmental outcomes, it's time to take practical, on ground action, such as tackling invasive species, restoring habitat, improving fish passage, and targeting barriers to healthy rivers."

"You can't just wash away those problems," said Ms Lowien.

Farmers are calling for stability, as water security for Australia's food bowl is under severe threat from rising costs, and constant water reform.

"We are not a problem to solve, but a vital part of the solution to a healthy Basin, which can and must coexist as Australia's food bowl," said Ms Lowien.

"Water security for agriculture is a missing part of the discussion".

"This is a unique opportunity for the Federal Government to achieve win-win outcomes, by providing communities with stability, and the environment with what it needs most," said Ms Lowien.

A sneak peek into the NIC Submission has now been published: [National Irrigators' Council - 2026 Basin Plan Review](#)

We call on irrigation – water dependent community members and irrigators to have your say by 1 May 2026 via the MDBA website.

**Media Contact: Zara Lowien, [ceo@irrigators.org.au](mailto:ceo@irrigators.org.au)**

Background:

The Basin Plan commenced in 2012 to introduce Sustainable Diversion Limits (SDLs). These came into effect in 2019, and full compliance is now being achieved, with over 99% of water recovery to 'bridge the gap' from previous water usage levels completed.

Under these new limits, 72% of total inflows stay in rivers for the environment, with the remaining 28% supporting Australia's food bowl, providing critical town water supplies, and other sectors.