

Irrigators' Welcome Action on Electricity

The National Irrigators' Council says an [announcement, by the Prime Minister and Minister for the Environment and Energy](#), of Federal Government action that may help bring energy prices down will be welcome news to all people interested in seeing Australia produce competitively priced food and fibre.

NIC CEO, Steve Whan said "irrigators have been making the point, consistently, that Australia is putting in danger its ability to produce reasonably and competitively priced local produce with its energy prices.

"How can any business be expected to stay competitive when it experiences a single year increase in power cost of over \$87,000, as one South Australian family owned orchard experienced this year?

"This week's announcement by Prime Minister Turnbull and Energy Minister Frydenberg is a welcome step forward.

"NIC has called, in its submissions to various inquiries, for strong action to redress the massive imbalance against consumers in the, so called, market.

"We've said we felt suppliers were gaming the market and welcome a big boost in resources, and a clear mandate from Government, to the Australian Energy Regulator.

"Abolition of Limited Merits Review is also welcome, once again a system that seemed to work only for the big network owners and their phalanxes of lawyers.

"Action on the price of gas is also critical. We know gas is an important step-down fuel toward a lower carbon emitting energy sector and seeing the Federal Government exercise its power in this area is very welcome.

"The Government has also outlined a process for better planning in future for the base energy supply. Australian irrigators want to see some certainty in electricity policy so that long term investment decisions can be made. If this contributes to that it will be welcome.

"Irrigators have made it very clear that we believe prices must and can come down. We've called for a 30% reduction and going forward a price of 8 cents per kilowatt for the electrons and 8 cents for the network. For a country with bountiful energy resources, both renewable and non-renewable, that shouldn't be too much to ask."

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