

Tuesday 27th August, 2013

Worried about how you are going to pay your September electricity bill? So are we

Many farmers are dreading a visit to the mail box with out of control electricity bills now due to land on kitchen tables around the country.

The CEO of the National Irrigators' Council, Tom Chesson said one of the biggest issues facing NIC Members this election was escalating electricity prices."

"We need cheaper electricity. We need it now. It is as simple as that.

"The reality is that most farmers are now very worried. Worried about how they are going to pay their electricity bills. Electricity bills are now a major stress inducer.

"In seven years Australia has gone from having the cheapest electricity amongst comparable countries to the highest," Mr Chesson said.

"The Prime Minister recently stated 'electricity prices are too high by global standards'. We know. We are the ones paying the bills which have doubled."

"The prices we receive for our products have certainly not doubled during that period."

"Unsustainable electricity prices are forcing irrigators to switch off electric pumps. This in turn is leading to a massive slump in productivity."

"Farmers are price takers who operate on low margins. A small increase in fixed costs can have a drastic impact on their profitability," Mr Chesson said.

NIC believes cheaper electricity can happen now if the Parties and candidates committed to;

- A food and fibre tariff on which producers pay no network charges
- Abolishing a price on carbon whether it be through a tax or ETS
- Streamlining and/or abolishing State and Federal renewable energy schemes and targets.

Mr Chesson said if we are to transition from mining boom to dining boom and take advantage of the Asian century we have to be able to compete in the global market. We cannot compete when electricity prices are the highest in the world."

"Every single Leader of the major Parties including the Greens has indicated that electricity prices are too high. They are right.

"The time has come for Politicians to stop talking about high electricity prices and do more to ensure the price drops before we get our January electricity bill," Mr Chesson concluded.

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