

Friday, 5 March 2010

## IRRIGATORS URGED TO BACK NEW SA COUNCIL

The National Irrigators' Council (NIC) said today that ongoing reform in water management made the success of the newly formed South Australian Irrigators' Council critical.

NIC CEO Danny O'Brien said the new council would provide a voice for irrigators in state water management and urged all South Australian irrigators to throw their support behind it and attend information sessions in Keith and Mt Gambier next Thursday.

Mr O'Brien said irrigators with both surface and underground water licences were facing ongoing reform and threats to their livelihoods and it was vital they had a unified voice to represent them at the political level.

"Water is always a hot-button political issue and too often decisions are made that affect irrigators without them having a proper say. The South Australian Irrigators' Council will help change all that.

"As an example, unlike most other states, South Australian law makes no provision for compensation to irrigators in the event their entitlements are reduced. That is just one of the issues that the new SAIC can help address to the benefit of all irrigators across the state – indeed the NIC has already had some success on this issue on behalf of its SA members, proving the value of a dedicated irrigators body.

"Decisions will be taken without regard to irrigators concerns unless they have a voice at the table. The SAIC can be that voice for all irrigators, whether they are citrus growers in the Riverland, dairy farmers in the south-east, potato growers in the Mallee, vege growers at Virginia or winegrowers in the Clare Valley."

The South Australian Irrigators' Council, a member of NIC, has recently sent out information sheets and levy notices to surface and underground water users right across the state.

Mr O'Brien urged all those receiving notices to back the new organisation for the sake of their future in the industry.

"Everyone knows that things are tough at the moment for most farmers and irrigators, but a small contribution from each irrigator will help establish a solid organisation providing full time representation.

"That small investment will repay itself a thousand times in future if it means more secure water entitlements and a better deal for irrigators."

Information sessions will be held on Thursday, March 11 at the Keith Football Club rooms at 9 am and in the Leadlight Room in Mt Gambier Council offices at 8 pm. For more information on the SAIC contact Ian Zadow on (08) 8569 7240 or Ken Schutz on (08) 8577 4002.

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