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National Irrigators Council Appoints New CEO

National Irrigators Council (NIC) has today welcomed the appointment of former NSW Primary Industry Minister Steve Whan as CEO of Australia's peak irrigator representative organisation.

NIC Chairman Gavin McMahon said Mr Whan will bring to NIC a breadth of experience in the area of government, policy and advocacy.

"Mr Whan's 12 years in NSW Parliament, including periods as Minister for Primary Industry, Emergency Services and Rural Affairs, and Opposition spokesperson for Rural Water, including balancing the needs of a very marginal electorate, has equipped him with a wide range of skills which will be invaluable to NIC as it negotiates critical policy outcomes in the area of water and energy," Mr McMahon said.

"Mr Whan's more recent experience managing Australian Chamber-Tourism furnishes him with the skills that come from operating on the other side of the government-advocacy desk."

Mr McMahon said Mr Whan would be joining NIC at a critical time with 2017 being a key period for the finalisation of the implementation of the Basin Plan.

"It remains an absolute priority for NIC that the Basin Plan is finalised in a manner that does the least damage to irrigated agriculture in the Basin and irrigation dependent communities."

Mr McMahon said Mr Whan's extensive government experience had also given him a broad understanding of the issues impacting on energy pricing in Australia, high on the list of critical issues for much of NIC membership.

Mr McMahon praised outgoing CEO Tom Chesson whose five years at NIC had seen the organisation cement its position as the leading national voice for irrigated agriculture in Australia.

"Tom's time at NIC has been marked by a number of significant achievements including the legislating of the 1500GI cap on water buybacks under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, and placing on the national agenda the extraordinary benefits that will accrue to our river system by releasing European Carp biological control agent," Mr McMahon said.

Mr Whan will commence formally with NIC on 24 January.

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