
National Irrigators' Council
STRATEGIC PLAN
2024-2028



National Irrigators' Council
Food · Fibre · Future

Contents

How this plan will be used	..... 2
Foreward	..... 3
About Us	..... 4
• Our history	..... 4
• Why we exist	..... 4
• Who we are	..... 5
• What we do	..... 5
• How we operate	..... 6
Vision	..... 7
Mission	..... 7
Values	..... 7
Objectives	..... 7

How this plan will be used

This Strategic Plan is our commitment to NIC Members, our Partners and Sponsors on why and how we operate. It is not a set and forget document, but the cornerstone of the organisations planning and is subject to review ensuring it meets our needs.

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed by members on an annual basis as part of annual work planning at the Annual General Meeting.

The Chair and CEO will then report on progress towards the annual work plan at the General Meetings.

The CEO will report to the board the milestones and priorities mapped to achieve the annual workplan. This Strategic Plan is supported by internal plans for communications, advocacy and government relations and operations.





Foreword

The National Irrigators' Council is the leading advocate for irrigated agriculture in Australia, with a diverse membership representing various sectors within and beyond the Murray-Darling Basin.

NIC stands as the national organisation dedicated to safeguarding water rights and ensuring water reliability for agricultural and horticultural purposes. As water resources face increasing pressures nationwide, we are the irrigation industry insurance policy to continue to operate in this increasingly complex regulatory system and global market.

NIC has recently undergone structural reorganisation and prioritisation to ensure the organisation is future proofed in a dynamic landscape, to be the voice for irrigated agriculture for more generations of irrigation industry and community leaders. This process has refocused our priorities to continue to deliver value for our Members and seek to grow through establishing Partners and Sponsors into the future. A key pillar of this reform is demonstrating through leadership, NIC transitioned to a hybrid office model which aims to support our communities directly, as the organisation seeks to provide opportunities for service delivery and employment in our regions while maintaining its presence in Canberra.

Our Strategic Plan is a critical piece of the organisation's restructure. It outlines our vision, mission, values, and objectives going forward. It is subject to regular updates following Member feedback and performance and can adapt to evolving priorities.

To find out more about NIC and our policy positions, please visit www.irrigators.org.au and feel free to engage with us [@Nat_Irrigators](https://www.facebook.com/NatIrrigators) on Facebook and Twitter, or by email to ceo@irrigators.org.au.



J. Morton

Jeremy Morton
Chair

Z. Lowien

Zara Lowien
Chief Executive Officer

ABOUT US

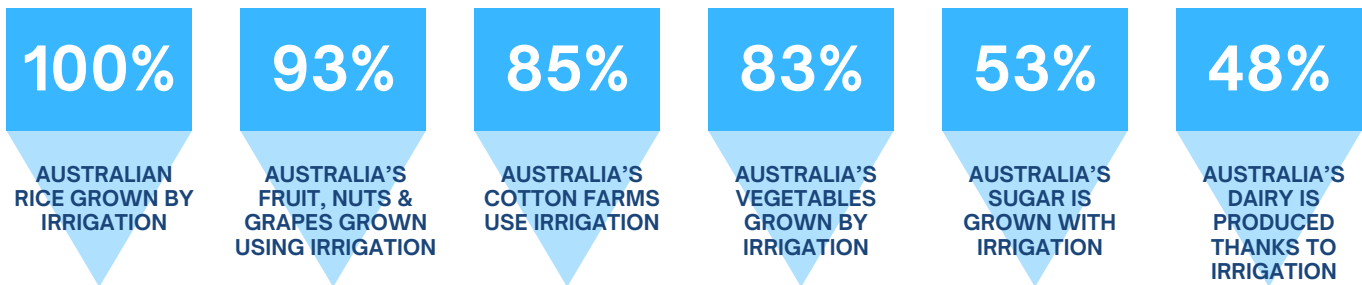
Our history

The National Irrigators' Council was established in 2008 to provide a unified voice for irrigators in Australia amidst increasing government involvement in water policy. This was at the height of key Australian Government led reforms, such as the first National Water Initiative and policy commitments to address water sharing arrangements in the Murray Darling Basin.

As the industry and societal landscape evolved, so has NIC. Effective July 1, 2024, NIC has implemented a new constitution, expanded membership options, and will update its Strategic Plan to continue advocating for water policy, management, and agricultural use for the next generations of irrigation leaders, their businesses and irrigation water dependent communities.

Why we exist

Water is a precious and limited resource and there will always be competing interests for its use. NIC exists to safeguard water rights and ensure water reliability for agricultural and horticultural purposes, recognizing the vital role of irrigated agriculture in producing essential food and commodities. As the sole organization dedicated to protecting water rights for commercial use, NIC plays a crucial role in supporting Australian irrigators who contribute significantly to the nation's economy and international trade.



Irrigated agricultural is essential to Australian's and many around the world producing food such as milk, fruit, vegetables, rice, grains, sugar, nuts, meat and other commodities such as cotton and wine. Australian irrigators help feed and clothe our nation, our neighbours and friends around the world through international trade. The total gross value of irrigated agricultural production in Australia in 2017-18 was \$17.7 billion (1) although this varies with water availability such as in drought.

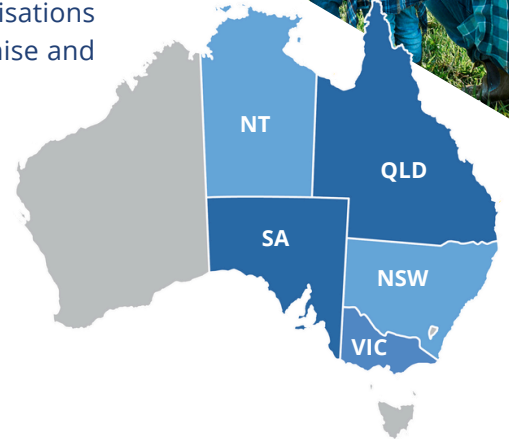
As indirect representatives of irrigation water dependent communities and residents, NIC recognises the important role irrigation plays in our regional economies providing the backbone of the regional economy, population and social fabric.

Who we are

NIC is the national peak body representing irrigators in Australia, supporting Member organisations covering the Murray Darling Basin states, as well as irrigation regions and the major agricultural commodity groups around Australia.

NIC currently has 31 members across five states including key commodity groups. Membership of the Council includes water entitlement holders, irrigation infrastructure operators and Australian businesses and organisations which are indirectly involved in the irrigation industry but whom recognise and value water for the commercial agricultural and horticultural use.

It's acknowledged, that to continue to be effective as a national body, we need to grow and expand our footprint as well as work collaboratively with other bodies to drive added value for our Members. To achieve this we are embarking on a new Partnership and Sponsorship program alongside our modernised Member structure.



What we do

We influence public policy, provide industry advocacy, and leadership to support the interests of the agricultural industry, particularly in safeguarding water rights and reliability.

Our member-driven organisation formulates policies based on collective input to advocate for a responsible, vibrant irrigation industry and thriving rural and regional Australia. We actively engage with policymakers to represent our members' needs and identify risks and opportunities for the industry. Our goal is to enhance the efficiency, viability, and sustainability of Australian irrigated agriculture by developing policies and projects aligned with our principles.

We promote the economic significance of irrigated agriculture, encourage technological advancements, and advocate for sustainable water use across all sectors. Through public relations efforts, we showcase the contributions of irrigated agriculture domestically and internationally, aiming to achieve a \$100 billion agricultural production target by 2030.

Our commitment as an industry representative, extends to promoting sustainable water use across all sectors, including local communities, First Nations people, the environment, and the economy. We must all strive to work together to make every drop count.



**FIND
OUT MORE**
Visit us online
www.irrigators.org.au





How we operate

NIC is committed to representing all irrigators and the irrigation industry, no matter where they are or what they choose to grow with their water right.



Irrigated Ag & the Economy

- \$4.2 billion **Fruit & Nuts**
- \$3.4 billion **Vegetables**
- \$2.3 billion **Cotton**
- \$2.2 billion **Dairy**
- \$1.4 billion **Nurseries, Turf & Flowers**
- \$380 million **Sugarcane**
- \$390 million **Cereals**
- \$291 million **Hay & Broadacre Crops**
- \$246 million **Rice**



All matters of Public Policy are decided by Special Resolution, ensuring the highest decision-making test for these critical elements of what we do. The Council meets regularly to discuss, and debate matters as well as learn from each other and network. All meetings are provided as hybrid options to allow maximum flexibility for Members.

NIC is managed by a Board of Directors and has a mix of state representation and skills-based experience. The CEO manages the administration of the Council with the Chief Executive Officer handling day-to-day operations. With a presence in Canberra and the added flexibility of regional and remote employment options, NIC has both the direct access to decision makers at a political level and a clear practical understanding of the challenges facing our Members and their communities. This ensures the voice of irrigators across Australia is relevant, meaningful and communicated to decision makers that can make a difference.

Our constitution is available [here](#).



Vision

Our vision is for a responsible, vibrant and sustainable Australian irrigation industry.

Mission

Our mission is to be irrigation industry leaders in securing and protecting water rights to ensure the long-term interests of our Members, our industry, our irrigation water dependent communities and our nation.

Values

Community

We want strong, healthy and vibrant communities, our members are locals too.

Collaboration

We want collaborative partnerships, to inform and develop well-rounded solutions that drive quadruple bottom line outcomes.

Integrity

We will engage and communicate with trust, honesty, truth and respect, and expect the same in return.

Leadership

We will be a united voice for a strong, sustainable, innovative and responsible irrigation industry and their local communities.

Sustainability & Innovation

We will encourage continued innovation of the industry and promote new technology and best practice in water use and management.

Objectives

Our objectives are complementary to each other. Each objective and action together with the annual prioritization of activities will build towards the NIC being the organisation it wants to be in 2028.

Growth and Sustainability

Be a sustainable and well governed organisation fit for the future.

Influence

Be the trusted national voice on water property rights and the irrigation industry.

Leadership

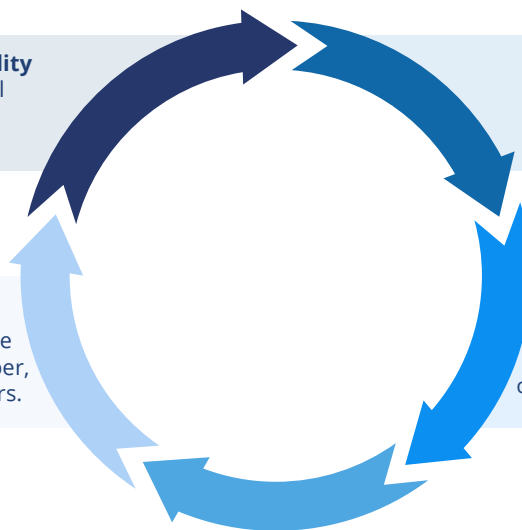
Lead by example effective collaboration with Member, partners and stakeholders.

Information

Deliver value by providing information and analysis on current and emerging water issues.

Advocacy

Advocate for sustainable water policy and practices in line with our principles and values.



Influence through being the trusted national voice on water property rights and the irrigation industry

- NIC will contribute on all national water and irrigation policy matters where our principles are challenged or can be enhanced.
- NIC will promote member developed public policy platform and seek adoption
- NIC will participate in national conferences on water and irrigated agriculture
- NIC will build and maintain relationships across government and stakeholders to deliver policy outcomes

Information will deliver value by providing facts and analysis on current and emerging water issues.

- NIC will strategically identify and develop public policy with Members that address current and emerging risks
- NIC will provide national policy background information in a timely manner
- NIC will be a source of information on national water reform programs and strategies and risk
- NIC will communicate with integrity, providing informed and if needed frank advice

Advocate for sustainable water policy and practices in line with our principles and values

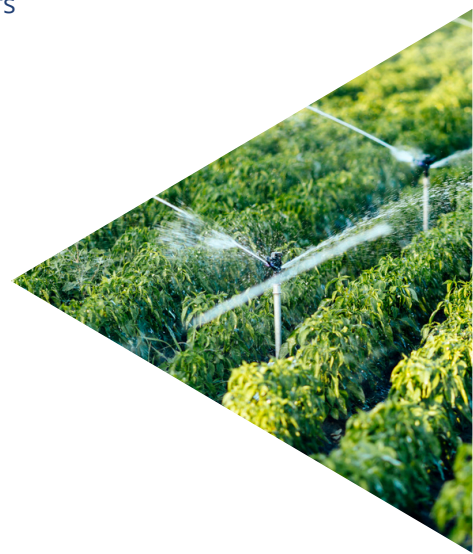
- NIC will champion holistic and efficient water management including complementary measures
- NIC will seek funding for on-ground environmental outcome measures
- NIC will promote best practice and innovation
- NIC will promote quadruple bottom line policy outcomes

Leadership through demonstrating effective collaboration with our Members, partners and stakeholders.

- NIC will develop collaborative policy positions
- NIC will provide networking opportunities to build relationships, partnerships and learn from each other
- NIC will seek strategic partnerships with likeminded organisations and implement these to amplify our voice
- NIC will develop and implement an external sponsorship program

Grow and be a sustainable, well governed organisation fit for the future

- NIC will maintain resources for high priority core value for Members
- NIC will strategically build and grow its membership
- NIC will invest in our regions to deliver our services and resources
- NIC will maintain a neutral to surplus operating budget





National Irrigators' Council STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

Vision Our vision is for a responsible, vibrant and sustainable Australian irrigation industry.

Mission Our mission is to be irrigation industry leaders in securing and protecting water rights to ensure the long-term interests of our Members, our industry, our irrigation water dependent communities and our nation.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Influence	Information	Advocacy	Leadership	Growth and Sustainability
Be the trusted national voice on water property rights and the irrigation industry.	Deliver value by providing information and analysis on current and emerging water issues.	Advocate for sustainable water policy and practices in line with our principles and values.	Lead by example effective collaboration with Member, partners and stakeholders.	Be a sustainable and well governed organisation fit for the future.
NIC will contribute on all national water and irrigation policy matters where our principles are challenged or can be enhanced.	NIC will strategically identify and develop public policy with Members that address current and emerging risks	NIC will champion holistic and efficient water management including complementary measures	NIC will develop collaborative policy positions	NIC will maintain resources for high priority core value for Members
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NIC will build and maintain relationships across government and stakeholders to deliver policy outcomes	NIC will communicate with integrity, providing informed and if needed frank advice	NIC will promote quadruple bottom line policy outcomes	NIC will develop and implement an external sponsorship program	NIC will maintain a neutral to surplus operating budget






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