



MEDIA RELEASE

Budget fails by both sides must be addressed by a future 48th Parliament

28 March 2025, Canberra, ACT – National Irrigators' Council (NIC) calls on all parties and independents to re-dress this week's budget fails during the Federal Election campaign and commit to safeguarding Australia's food and fibre future for the benefit of all Australian's.

NIC CEO, Zara Lowien said, "During this week's budgets both sides of government claimed they want to strengthen our economy and build Australia's economic resilience, but neither provided any real plan to harness Australia's world-leading water management systems and technologies to secure our nation's future".

"Population growth, climate variability and increased global uncertainty, means water for agriculture will be essential, if we are to meet the increasing demand for clean, green, affordable food and fibre".

"In the Murray-Darling Basin, reform means one in three litres of irrigation water is now returned to the environment to meet the Basin Plan's sustainability targets – with a \$13 billion taxpayer price tag that will continue to cost the economy between \$602 million - \$914 million per year due to reduced productionⁱ, and the targets now achieved – it is time to look beyond these old solutions of just adding more water from farmers to the environment to achieve sustainability."

"Our future Australian Government must recognise our progress and look to the alternative ways to ensure sustainability and prosperity of our nation, we must safeguard Australia's food and fibre future through these three key investments," said Ms Lowien.

1. **Secure Water for Agriculture for Australian's:** NIC is seeking support for policies that secure water for agriculture and plan for Australia's future water and food security. NIC welcomes the Albanese Government's \$3.5 million investment in a National Food Security Strategy as a step towards a 'National Food Security Preparedness Strategy'.
2. **'Beyond Water - Restoring our Rivers Action Plan':** NIC is seeking \$500 million per year over four years to plan and implement a comprehensive action plan that goes beyond simply adding more water to address environmental issues.
3. **'Regional Australia Productivity and Welfare Benchmarking Program':** NIC is calling for data collection to establish a benchmarking program to monitor and assess the impact of policies on regional and rural communities to ensure effective support for at-risk areas.

For more information, please visit our Federal Election [webpage](#).

Ends.

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ⁱ As outlined in the Government's Regulatory Impact Statements