

## **IRRIGATORS WELCOME NEW WATER COMPLIANCE REGIME CONSULTATION (14/03/2018)**

The NSW Irrigators Council has warmly welcomed yesterday's launch of the public consultation phase for the NSW Government's Water Reform Action Plan by Regional Water Minister, Niall Blair.

Public consultation across regional NSW over the next month will focus on four key Action Plan components - a new Water Take Measurement and Metering regime; Transparency Measures to give better public access to water information; Better Management of Environmental Water; and implementation of a new Floodplain Harvesting Policy in five northern NSW valleys. NSWIC has applauded the start of the consultation process which it believes will see the establishment of a world leading water regulation system that will re-establish public and industry confidence in water administration across NSW.

NSWIC CEO, Mark McKenzie, said the Council and its 26 irrigation Member organisations were strongly united behind the Government's new water compliance strategy because they have a zero tolerance for illegal extraction of water.

"It is essential that we have a stringent and well administered water compliance system that underpins irrigators' water rights; prevents water theft that denies water to other water licence holders and the community; and establishes a strong independent water regulator which will audit water extraction and provide a very strong disincentive for anyone to break the rules."

"We strongly embrace the new regulation and compliance system announced by Minister Blair because water theft is abhorrent to the irrigator sector, and the recent fallout over allegations of water theft has unfairly tarnished the reputation of irrigation farmers generally – damaging the reputation of the many thousands of irrigators who abide by the rules and follow their licence provisions to the letter."

"NSWIC is committed to working with the Government and the new Natural Resources Access Regulator as the new water compliance regime is rolled out, and we will play a leading part in ensuring the new regulation system is well understood and supported on the ground by irrigators. As a first step we strongly encourage irrigators to attend the regional consultation sessions and provide formal feedback on the options under consideration through submissions to the Department of Industry," Mr McKenzie said.

Public consultations commence in Dubbo this Friday (March 16), followed by Broken Hill (March 20), Bourke (March 22), Moree (March 27), Coffs Harbour and Gunnedah (March 28), Wentworth (April 4) and Griffith (April 6). Submissions on the range of options under consideration by the Government close on April 15.

ENDS.

For further information:

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