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MEDIA RELEASE

World Water Day: EnvIrrigators Campaign launched

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On World Water Day (Friday, 22 March), irrigation farmers will celebrate their contributions to water efficient food production and environmental stewardship.

The NSW Irrigators' Council will be launching the *EnvIrrigators Campaign* to show why irrigation is vital for sustainable food production by maximising water use efficiencies while managing and improving their land and environment.

CEO of the NSW Irrigators' Council, Luke Simpkins, said "We have tremendous examples of irrigation farmers carefully managing their local environment."

"Many of our farmers have wetlands on their property and work with the Office of Environment and Heritage to water the area to make a drought refuge for wildlife."

"We have irrigation farmers in NSW undertaking Native Revegetation Programs on their farms to promote biodiversity."

"Recently we visited Yanco Creek where irrigation farmers are collaborating to improve platypus habitat in their waterways. This involves over 150 landholders voluntarily contributing through levy payments to improve the health of the creek system."

"These irrigation farmers highly value wetland ecosystems and the populations of threatened species in the catchment, such as the nationally endangered Trout Cod while at the same time producing high yielding, high quality food and fibre."

"This World Water Day we must recognise the role of irrigation in sustainable food production, as well as the environmental stewardship of our farmers by protecting biodiversity, providing drought refuges for wildlife, and in conserving native species."

"We have a lot to celebrate this World Water Day – our irrigation farmers in Australia are some of the most water efficient in the world."

“Irrigation means water can be used most efficiently, and thus most sustainably. With a growing population and food demand, ensuring optimal *crop per drop* is crucial”, Mr Simpkins said.

NSW Irrigators’ Council encourages all irrigation farmers to share their story, all consumers to show their recognition, and for the media to take part in sharing these stories.

For further information:

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Approved JC/TN

Further Details

Why irrigation is important for sustainable food production

- Irrigation is about getting the most amount of fruit, veggies, grains, fibre (and other produce) with the lowest amount of water resources.
- Irrigation lets farmers control their water so that it can be used optimally to get the most crop per drop. Water can be applied to a crop in the right quantity, at the right time.
- Irrigation underpins the production of many fruit, vegetable and cereal crops including soya, berries, nuts, legumes such as mung beans as well as supporting meat, dairy and fibre.
- Increasing food demand and increasing water scarcity means irrigation has a vital role at the nexus of food and water security into the future.
- Irrigation technology and infrastructure allows farmers to be more resilient to the harsh realities of Australia’s variable rainfall patterns and dry climate.
- Since the late 1960s, irrigation farmers have worked with governments through multiple stages of water reform, actively seeking to improve the environmental and productive resilience of their local regions.
- Irrigation in NSW contributes more than \$3.5 billion to the State’s economy¹ and employs tens of thousands of people across the production and value chain.

People can take part in the campaign using the hashtag #EnvIrrigators this Friday 22 March for World Water Day.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Gross Value Irrigated Agricultural Production 2016-17.