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## MEDIA RELEASE

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# NSWIC preparing Blueprint for Government

**08/04/2020**

The NSW Irrigators' Council *Food Security Response Taskforce* met yesterday to discuss the growing concerns about food supply and demand in Australia.

CEO of the NSWIC, Luke Simpkins, said "NSWIC are rapidly developing a blueprint for Government on what irrigation farmers urgently need to support Australia during this crisis."

"Our irrigation industry can and must have a large role in responding to this crisis, by continuing to supply Australians with food, and by holding up the national economy."

"But to do this, we need water."

"You can't feed a nation without water."

"Aussie irrigation farmers produce 82.5% of our veggies, 92.5% of our fruit and nuts, 92% of our grapes, 92% of our cotton, 100% of our rice, as well as most of our dairy and sugar cane."<sup>1</sup>

"However, most irrigation farmers remain on a 0% water allocation, meaning they are without any access to water to grow food or fibre during this crisis."

"On top of that, years of reforms mean that even at the best of times, 1 in every 3.5 litres of water that was once available to grow food and fibre is no longer available."

"The irrigation industry contributes \$17.7 billion to the Australian economy each year and employs hundreds of thousands of people, and we are here to help during this crisis by keeping food on shelves, money in the economy, and jobs along the supply chain."

"But again, to do this, we need water, and genuine action from Government to improve water policy so this is possible."

"Any option to find emergency water, would of course need to respect the property right of whomever currently holds that water."

"There is no need to panic buy, but we are facing a real issue here with our farmers being without water, and government must act now, before the flow on effects hit supermarket shelves."

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2019, May 31). Gross Value of Irrigated Agricultural Production, 2017-18. Retrieved from [www.abs.gov.au: https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4610.0.55.008](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4610.0.55.008); Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2019, April 30). Water Use on Australian Farms, 2017-18. Retrieved from [www.abs.gov.au: https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4618.0](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4618.0)

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