

Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy  
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25 November 2020

**Submission on *Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) Bill 2020* and *Climate Change (National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation) (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2020***

Dear Committee,

The NSW Irrigators' Council (NSWIC) is the peak body representing irrigation farmers in NSW. NSWIC represents over 12,000 water access licence holders in NSW, across our membership of valley water user associations, food and fibre groups, irrigation corporations and commodity groups. Our vision is for a sustainable, secure and productive irrigation farming sector.

Climate change is one of the greatest risks to water security, and thus the farming sector in NSW. Irrigators are on the frontline of the impacts and must be at the frontline when it comes to the national climate change conversation, and policies for adaptation and mitigation.

Climate change imposes a significant risk on water security due to the warming, drying trends with longer, hotter drier summers interspersed with fewer wet years and more intense rainfall events.

Irrigation farmers have a lot to lose from an inadequate national policy response to climate change. They are the last in line to receive water after all other users (including towns and the environment) and the first to miss out during dry times (see *Water Management Act NSW*, Clause 60<sup>1</sup>). Their water shares are automatically adjusted to reflect variable climatic conditions (see State water allocation policies), and they carry the full risk of reduced water access due to changes in climate (see Schedule 3A – *Water Act 2007 Cth*<sup>2</sup>).

Australia needs to consider how best to support farmers to continue producing food and fibre under more extreme conditions. A critical part of this is establishing a National Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Framework, and the other measures outlined in these Bills.

NSWIC recommends that the Climate Change Commission proposed to be established has adequate resourcing with appropriate expertise in water resource management, including a sound understanding of the current water management framework.

Yours sincerely,



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2000-092#sec.60>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00151>