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## MEDIA RELEASE

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# NSWIC call to re-establish DPIE regional managers

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DPIE-Water should reappoint regional managers for each NSW river valley to improve confidence and trust in the Department.

“This structure operated successfully and effectively in the past but was abandoned to the detriment of the department’s reputation and community trust,” NSW Irrigators’ Council (NSWIC) CEO Claire Miller said.

“Each valley in NSW is unique, with specific management and policy issues. This requires department staff with a strong understanding of local issues, circumstances and concerns.

“The Murray Valley, for example, is a shared resource between three States, with its own specific and complex management and policy issues.

“Irrigators and communities there have borne the brunt of perverse and cumulative impacts from more than a decade of water reforms.

“A NSW Murray regional manager would have the insights and relationships necessary to provide regionally specific advice on policy design and implementation to the Department, and to work with communities through that process.

Regional managers in the past were responsible for the staff in each valley, playing a coordination role and providing a single point of contact for regional people. This structure provided accountability, giving water users and communities more confidence and trust.

Ms Miller noted that agencies have proposed substantial increases in the fees and charges water users pay for water administration in this year’s IPART Pricing Determination, despite services at the policy level continuing to deteriorate and growing dissatisfaction among communities.

“If water users are being asked to pay more in water management charges, we expect a higher level of service,” she said.

The NSWIC’s position supporting the re-establishment of regional managers was formally moved at the NSWIC Annual General Meeting last November by members from the NSW Murray Valley, and carried by the Council.

NSWIC has written to the Department urging regional managers to be re-established.