

My business has been impacted by the cumulative impacts of water reforms and years of extreme drought, and I am concerned about the affordability of the large price increases.

❖ Water users share of the costs is disproportionate and extreme (e.g. 80% of the costs for items like environmental planning and protection, fish passage, water quality monitoring, etc). Water management is in the public interest, and these services would need to be provided regardless of irrigators. Government must pay a larger share.

❖ The idea of 'impactor-pays' (i.e. whoever creates the need for the cost, pays it) is not appropriate nor practical for water management. The cost-drivers in water management are complex, diverse, external, and not singular (including changing public expectations, societal values, and changing climate), which cannot practically be incorporated into this framework. This results in irrigators paying more than our fair share.

❖ NSW is a signatory to the National Water Initiative, and I expect NSW to be meeting these best practice guidelines.

❖ A key driver of increased costs is the need to adjust to climate change, particularly more frequent and more severe dry periods. During extreme dry periods, my irrigation allocation is significantly reduced (even down to 0%) typically for consecutive years. Water management during these extreme dry periods is not to service extractive users, but for high priority needs (who do not pay these charges), such as river operations, stock & domestic supplies and the environment. It is not fair, nor sustainable, to ask extractive users to pay for these, particularly since irrigators are the first to be cut off during these dry periods (which are forecast to become more frequent).

❖ I feel let down by Government previously under-delivering on their roles and responsibilities for water management, including services we have long paid for, and feel it is unfair to ask irrigators to pay more to make up for this poor performance.

❖ I expect that compliance should be paid for by Government, as this is a fundamental Government role to ensure law enforcement, similarly to the police.

❖ Irrigators are already incurring significant costs to become compliant with new metering requirements, and I was of the understanding that the Government was to meet the start-up costs of implementation for administering the scheme.

❖ I support the submission of the NSW Irrigators' Council outlining the technical information.