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Date of submission: Wednesday, 14 April 2021

Submission:  My business has been impacted by the cumulative impacts of water reforms and years of drought and I am concerned about the sustainability of the large price increases.

The water users share of costs is disproportionate and extreme for some of the activities (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 for water management. The cost-drivers in water management are complex, diverse, external, and not singular (including changing public expectations and societal values, and changing climate), which cannot practically be incorporated into this framework. This results in irrigators paying more than our fair share.

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 as government prioritises critical human needs, the environment, town water supply and high security irrigation supply ahead of my water supply. Yet I am being asked to contribute significantly more while I am receiving less water.

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

CICL irrigators fund the costs of metering and compliance. I was of the understanding that the Government was to meet the start-up costs of implementation for administering the new metering arrangements.

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.