

Dear Ipart members,

I am writing regarding the Lachlan State Water Charges proposed increases.

Firstly I would like to tell you that I am a landholder (grazier) with a general security water license in the lower Lachlan region. The Lachlan catchment has been and still is severely affected by the drought and the inflows into the upper catchment. Irrigators have had little allocation with only a total of 22% in the last 8 years. The situation is still desperate with very little income generated from irrigation water. We have seen the waving of fixed water charges this year due to the inability of landholders to pay these charges when they receive no water.

Many landholders are receiving exceptional circumstance relief payments, interest subsidies and freight subsidies. Their debt level has also been increasing. The viability of landholders needs to be considered when imposing substantial increased water charges.

The security of water in the lower Lachlan region is less than the upstream communities therefore the ability to grow high value crops is not an option. Maybe a tiered charge scheme would be fairer as you move downstream. Industry hasn't developed in the lower Lachlan due to no water security. The ability to shut the river at Condobolin has divided the catchment. The substantial increase in charges is not justified and fair. There are other users along the river that need to share the maintenance charges such as the environmental benefits and communities.

Regards Matt Ireson