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Irrigators Welcome ABARE Report

The NSW Irrigators Council has welcomed the release by the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics (ABARE) of a report into the economic impact of the Commonwealth Government's water purchasing program.

Council Chief Executive Officer Andrew Gregson says that government policy at all levels must be underpinned by solid data to ensure that the policy is good.

"The data released today underpins a number of points that NSW Irrigators Council has been making. Importantly, it recognises that removing water from irrigated agriculture will have economic impacts.

"Whilst the report says that those impacts are relatively small in comparison to drought, it is important to remember that drought is temporary - water diverted from production to environmental use is permanent and so will be the economic and social impacts.

Mr Gregson says that the report highlights the need for a productivity focus on environmental water requirements.

"We've maintained for many years that efficiency projects provide water for environmental use whilst maintaining the productivity of irrigated agriculture. It's about providing more for everybody - including the environment - through efficient infrastructure."

Mr Gregson also noted that the report shows the majority of impacts are being felt in NSW.

"The Water Act and the Basin Plan process requires the cooperation and involvement of all States. It is vital that the Commonwealth secure that. Irrigators in NSW are prepared to shoulder their fair share of the burden - but no more."

ENDS

Andrew Gregson
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