



Murrumbidgee Valley Food and Fibre Association

MVFFA represents business owners in the Murrumbidgee Valley. Many of our members are directly engaged in irrigated agriculture, producing a wide range of agricultural commodities. Our membership also includes those engaged in related businesses including processing, marketing and provision of professional services, from towns and cities within the Murrumbidgee Valley. Our focus is on water policy at all levels of government because the ecological, economic and social sustainability of communities like ours is dependent on how water is managed.

MVFFA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the IPART draft report on rural bulk water services and charges.

We note that organisations such as NSW Farmers, NSWIC and others have submitted detailed reports which MVFFA support.

The key points that our organisation believes IPART needs to consider are:

- 1) Cost shares for water management and water reform remain inequitable under the 'impactor pays' principle in NSW. Water management is in the 'public interest' and has become increasingly so since the water reform process began in the 1980s. MVFFA submits that NSW could look towards the SA model that recognises this very basic 'public interest' principle and charges across all demographics for all services.
- 2) In the NSW 'regulated' Southern Basin, irrigators have been subject to paying for State run metering and monitoring via programs such as CARM and IQQM for many years. The fact that the Mathew's report has outlined that a significant number of State government owned meters in the Southern Basin are not up to acceptable standards should be, once again, funded by the whole community as a whole of community expectation and whole of community service, not just irrigators.
- 3) Cumulative State and Federal Government water reforms have led to a reduction of water deliverability and reliability to Irrigators in the NSW southern Basin, particularly the bulk GS licences. Directly passing through these "water reform" charges, particularly but not only the MDBA charges, especially in the face of recent drought and Covid 19 challenges is creating a situation not dissimilar to the "fees for no service" findings in the Banking Royal Commission. MVFFA submits that it's well past time for NSW State Government formulas for

charging to be updated to appropriately charge for changes caused by water reforms,
including water trading.

MVFFA

President.

Mrs Debbie Buller

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