



Media release

Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
The Honourable Dr Anthony Lynham

Price freeze offers further relief for farmers

Thousands of Queensland farmers will see their irrigation water prices remain the same or fall next year thanks to a Palaszczuk Government price freeze.

Natural Resources Minister Dr Anthony Lynham said the Palaszczuk Government would freeze irrigation prices for a year and absorb dam safety costs as part of ongoing measures to support Queensland business and industry through the COVID-19 crisis.

"Our farmers are doing it tough as they deal with the fallout of long-running drought, bushfires, severe weather events, volatile markets and now, the impacts of COVID-19," Dr Lynham said.

"We need to keep our farmers in business for our food and fibre and to create jobs, just like other Queensland employers."

"The Government will invest \$14.7 million ---- about \$2300 per farmer --- in 2020-21 to keep prices low for irrigators.

"In effect, the government's decision means that irrigators will, on average, be roughly \$400 a year better off in 2020-21 than this year."

The independent QCA recommended irrigation water prices for irrigators over the next four years from 1 July 2020 to 30 June, 2024. The prices are to contribute towards the cost of supplying water to the state's 35 irrigation schemes supplying 6400 farmers from (Mareeba in Far North Queensland, west to Cunnamulla and south to Yelarbon)

The Government will:

- absorb price increases in 2020-21 recommended by the Queensland Competition Authority.
- pass on any price decreases recommended by the Queensland Competition Authority
- subsidise \$42 million worth of dam safety upgrades across the state over the next four years rather than ask irrigators to contribute towards them.

Dr Lynham said consultation with industry bodies had made clear irrigators' concerns around affordability and government had responded to those concerns.

"The freeze is a temporary relief measure, just as other Queensland businesses are receiving because of COVID-19," he said.

"The government will monitor conditions over the next 12 months before it re-assesses and decides on prices to apply from 2021-22."

Dr Lynham said the price freeze came on top of the \$3 billion in COVID-19 relief the Government was already investing to protect Queensland jobs and businesses, which includes:

- \$1 billion industry support package
- \$950 million payroll tax relief
- \$500 million worker retraining and assistance
- \$500 million COVID-19 jobs support loans
- \$100 million electricity bill relief for small and medium businesses

For more information on advice and assistance for agriculture businesses during the COVID-19 emergency, including financial and wellbeing support, visit <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/coronavirus-support>

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