

18 April 2017

Ms Tracey Horsfall  
National Water Reform Inquiry  
Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Horsfall

Submission on the National Water Reform Issues Paper

Irrigation Australia Limited (IAL) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the Productivity Commission's National Water Reform Issues Paper.

Irrigation Australia Ltd was founded in 2007, following the merger of ANCID and the Irrigation Association of Australia, and is Australia's peak national organisation representing the Australian irrigation industry in all sectors from water users, consultants, designers and installers through to educational institutions, government, manufacturers and retailers. IAL is also the Australian representative body of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID). Irrigation Australia is a member based, not-for-profit, organisation with its national office in Sydney Australia.

In this submission, IAL primarily addresses two matters under the Water Services section of the Productivity Commission Issues Paper Preliminary Framework:

- Rural Water Services,
- Urban Water Services

**(1) Rural & Urban Water Services**

Irrigation Australia supports the adoption of Certified Irrigation Professional standards for both design and implementation of irrigation water services. We submit that these standards should be recognised across all levels of Government as the minimum standard to apply in the design and installation of rural irrigation water services to ensure professional and efficient outcomes. Irrigation Australia seeks government support for the Certification Program with the longer-term objective of this becoming a mandatory requirement.

Irrigation Australia provides and administers a Certification Program that is a voluntary, national program of industry recognition. Certification is a designation earned by a person to certify that he or she is qualified to perform a job. Certification indicates that the individual has a minimum set of knowledge, skills, or abilities in the view of the certifying body to perform their job to the satisfaction of water managers and customers.

IAL is working towards a future for irrigation in Australia where all commercial-scale irrigation systems are:

- Developed by Certified Irrigation Designers;
- Installed by Certified Irrigation Contractors or Installers;
- Run by Certified Irrigation Operators or Managers’;
- Provided with product advice from Certified Irrigation Retailers and Agronomists.

Irrigation Australia currently has over 440 irrigation professionals in eight disciplines in its Certification Program as follows:

1. Certified Irrigation Designer
2. Certified Irrigation Agronomist
3. Certified Irrigation Contractor
4. Certified Irrigation Installer
5. Certified Irrigation Manager
6. Certified Irrigation Operator
7. Certified Irrigation Retailer
8. Certified Meter Installer and Validator

Irrigation Australia contends that if local, state and federal governments insisted on a Certified Irrigation Professional as a minimum standard, then this would lift the professionalism, standard of work and water use efficiency of the irrigation industry.

## (2) Urban Water Services

According to the Water Services Association of Australia, Australian households, on average, use 20% of domestic water on showering; 20% in toilet use; 12% in the washing machine; 34% in the garden and the remaining water on other household water devices.

There is a high level of variability of domestic water use per capita between Australian cities (see below) and Irrigation Australia supports an extension of the *Waterwise Program* in Western Australia that is designed to improve the efficient use of urban water in irrigation to other Australian jurisdictions. Water use per capita has fallen in Perth since the introduction of the Waterwise program. The Waterwise program is in two parts:

- a) The **Waterwise Garden Irrigator Program (WGIP)** is a joint initiative of the WA Region of Irrigation Australia and the Water Corporation in Western Australia. (WGIP) is one of the Water Corporation’s family of ‘Waterwise’ Programs designed to optimise water-use efficiency and reduce water use in the home. Underpinning the program are the design principles, system specifications and installation standards which aims to optimise the water-use efficiency of domestic watering systems installed in Western Australia.
- b) The **Waterwise Irrigation Design Shop (WIDS)** program was developed in Western Australia by the Water Corporation and Irrigation Australia Ltd (WA Region) to improve water-use efficiency in garden watering systems in Western Australia by raising the standard of design and advice offered by specialist irrigation retailers through education and compliance to the programs’ standards.

Water use for irrigation in Australian cities and towns is generally very inefficient and programs such as the Waterwise initiative in WA should therefore be very successful in reducing the amount of water use which has a substantial cost benefit for governments, councils and consumers.

Irrigation Australia seeks similar government funding provided in Western Australia, in other states and territories to enable the introduction of water saving programs.

The following statistics for domestic water use in 2012/13 are provided by the ABS.

- **NSW:** Household water consumption per person increased from 70 kL in 2011-12 to 77 kL in 2012-13, just below the Australian average of 80 kL.
- **VIC:** Estimated household water consumption was 357 GL, or 8% of the state's total water consumption, a 13% increase from 316 GL in 2011-12.
- **QLD:** Household water consumption per capita was 77 kL, just below the Australian average of 80 kL.
- **SA:** Household water consumption per capita increased from 72 kL in 2011-12 to 77 kL in 2012-13, which was just below the Australian average of 80 kL per capita.
- **WA:** Household water consumption per person in Western Australia was on par with the Northern Territory as being the highest of all the states and territories, at 132 kL
- **TAS:** Household water consumption per capita in Tasmania was 76 kL, 5% lower than the Australian average of 80 kL per capita. Tasmania had the largest percentage decrease (30%) from 2011–12 in household water consumption per capita of all the states and territories.
- **NT:** Household water consumption per capita during this period was 132 kL. This was on par with Western Australia as being the highest of all states and territories, but was a 9% decrease from 2011-12 when it was 145 kL per capita.
- **ACT:** Household water consumption per person in the Australian Capital Territory in 2012-13 was 79 kL, which was the third highest of all the states and territories but slightly below the Australian average of 80 kL per person.

Irrigation Australia would be pleased to provide further information on the above matters if required.

Bryan Ward  
**Chief Executive Officer**