



NSWIC
NEW SOUTH WALES
IRRIGATORS'
COUNCIL

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Briefing Note

NSW GOVERNMENT MINI-BUDGET 2008-09

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EFFECT ON THE WATER PORTFOLIO

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Policy Analyst

Member Organisations: Bega Cooperative Limited, Border Rivers Food & Fibre, Coleambally Irrigation Co-Op Ltd, Cotton Australia, Gwydir Valley Irrigators' Association Inc., Hunter Valley Water Users' Association, Lachlan Valley Water, Macquarie River Food & Fibre, Murray Irrigation Limited, Mungindi-Menindee Advisory Council, Murray Valley Water Diversers' Association, Murrumbidgee Groundwater Preservation Association, Murrumbidgee Horticultural Council Inc., Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd, Murrumbidgee Private Irrigators' Inc., Namoi Water, NSW Farmers' Dairy Committee, NSW Farmers' Association, Ricegrowers' Association of Australia, Richmond Wilson Combined Water Users Association, Riverina Citrus, Southern Riverina Irrigators, South Western Water Users', West Corrgan Private Irrigation District, Wine Grapes Marketing Board.

Detail

The NSW Government released a Mini-Budget 2008-09 to “strengthen the State’s fiscal outlook” and address “developments since the 2008-09 Budget”.

NSWIC has reviewed the changes put forth by the Mini-Budget and has spoken with key departments dealing in the water portfolio. Council can find two possible points that this Mini-Budget raises:

1. Budget Expenses

Section 4 - 7

This section highlights how the projected budget expenses are now higher than estimated and talks about where these major expense variances are.

Within “Additional expenses in a range of core government activities” is listed “Water and Energy (increase in Groundwater Structural Adjustment payments delayed from 2007-08)”.

We understand that this is about the ASGE settlements for groundwater, which were received by irrigators later than expected.

2. Infrastructure Australia priorities

Section 5 - 4

This section deals with priority projects which were submitted to Infrastructure Australia and are “seeking substantial funding from the Commonwealth Government’s Building Australia Fund”. Without this funding, projects will not proceed prior to 2012.

Listed within this section is mention of working with the Commonwealth Government and Infrastructure Australia to set priorities and funding levels for other NSW submitted priorities, such as Regional water projects. No explanation is given as to what water projects they are talking about and therefore some clarification of this is required.

Summary

Discussions with David Harriss from DWE, Dan Berry from State Water and David Halliday from Phillip Costa’s office did not highlight any further changes to the water portfolio from the Mini-Budget 2008-09.

The area NSWIC thought might be of a concern to them, was not, the potential of a 20% reduction in Chief Executive Service / Senior Executive Service. They are confident their staff levels will not change.

