

22 MAR 2011

Ref: 11F017 - DW  
(in reply please quote)

Mr A Gregson  
NSW Irrigators' Council  
Level 9, 15-17 Young Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Andrew,

I refer to your letter of 3 March 2011 in which you seek a response to a questionnaire on water policy so that you can distribute this to your members.

As you may be away the Liberals and The Nationals regional water policy was released through The Land Newspaper on 19 March 2011. I have attached for your information, and for the information of your members, a one-page summary of our policy.

I think you will find that most of the issues which you have raised with me have been included and I look forward to continuing to work with the NSW Irrigators' Council to implement this policy. Thank you for your assistance and advice during the formulation of this policy.

Yours sincerely,



**KATRINA HODGKINSON MP**  
Member for Burrinjuck  
Shadow Minister for Natural Resource Management



## **The NSW Liberals & Nationals Long Term Plan for Regional Water**

Despite NSW having recently emerged from one of the worst droughts on record, the Keneally Labor Government still does not have a Regional Water Plan.

Labor has also chronically underspent its Country Town Water and Sewerage Supply program, with more than \$400 million worth of sewerage projects and improvements to country town water supply remaining unallocated.

In contrast to Labor, the NSW Liberals & Nationals understand the need to deliver long term security for regional communities over water infrastructure and assets.

That is why, if elected on March 26, we will develop a long term regional water plan to deliver security for regional communities.

Under our plan, we will:

- Ensure major regional centres in NSW have secure and long term supplies of potable water.
- Fund existing Country Town Water and Sewerage Supply projects that appear in budget forward estimates.
- Retain the Country Town Water and Sewerage Supply Scheme and prioritise remaining applications where there is a clearly demonstrated need or importance attached to its approval.
- Review the criteria for the waiving of fixed water charges in drought conditions and introduce mandatory trigger points.
- Review the current arrangements for the setting of bulk water prices to assess whether they should be retained or need to be replaced with alternative measures.
- Determine future water allocations by ensuring that equal consideration is given to economic, social and environmental factors.
- Consider the introduction of separate rules for Eastern and Western Fall Water as part of a review of coastal water allocations.
- Support the voluntary merger of regional water utilities where this results in significant benefit to the customer.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals will address further important water reform measures that Labor has neglected, including determining the issue of floodplain harvesting and supplementary entitlements, their definition and regulation.

Within the Murray Darling Basin, we will ensure a level playing field for farmers by seeking the support of COAG to ensure that existing NSW Water Sharing Plans will be retained until the Victorian Murray Darling Basin Water Sharing Plans expire, expected to be in 2019.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals understand that when it comes to water security, you need a long term vision.

Our long term plan for regional water security will end Labor's neglect and provide certainty for regional communities.