



QFF advocacy secures cheaper water for more irrigators

Following continued advocacy by the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) and its industry members, the Queensland Government has clarified that nuts, turf, flowers and nursery growers will have access to a 50 per cent price reduction election commitment for horticulture irrigation water users.

While QFF welcomed the government's announcement to reduce water bills for the state's irrigators serviced by Queensland's state-owned irrigation schemes by at least 15 per cent, there is still work to do to achieve fair and equitable pricing for all irrigators across all commodities.

QFF CEO Dr Georgina Davis commended the Queensland Government for listening to QFF's concerns and allowing more irrigators to access cheaper water to continue growing world class produce.

"However, the full 50 per cent discount will not come easily for horticulture irrigators who will have to apply for a rebate through the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA)," Dr Davis said.

“Further details are required regarding the facilitation of this process, and QFF is consulting with the government and QRIDA to ensure irrigators applying for the rebate do not face any additional administrative burden.”

“Further, the state government has delayed expected irrigation water price increases following the end of their 2019/20 price freeze on 30 June 2021, which would have left many irrigators no better off even if they qualified for the 50 per cent discount.”

“The government has recognised how expensive irrigation water is in the state, and instead of facing a two-year jump in water prices on 1 July, irrigators will see some price relief and only pay the 2020/21 prices.”

However, QFF maintains it is wrong to favour one agricultural commodity, or regional community over another by selectively providing favourable pricing and may result in unintended consequences.

“Despite extensive advocacy and detailed pricing data provided by QFF, this water pricing policy continues to exclude other irrigated primary produce including sugar cane and cotton from accessing the 50 per cent price reduction.”

“It is clear there is a long way to go for Queensland to achieve equitable and affordable water pricing, to ensure our food, fibre and foliage sector is sustainable into the future.”

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