

# Media Release



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## VFF backs tougher water compliance and enforcement

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has welcomed Victorian Water Minister Lisa Neville's announcement to adopt all recommendations in the Water Compliance and Enforcement Review completed by the former Victorian Auditor General Des Pearson.

VFF Water Council Chair Richard Anderson said Victorian farmers expect to see all state governments taking similar action to stamp out unauthorised overuse of water.

"We need all governments across the Murray Darling Basin to take a strong stance on unauthorised overuse and the VFF calls on all Basin States to adopt a similar approach to Victoria."

Earlier this year the VFF wrote to all Basin State governments calling for tougher enforcement on irrigators who do the wrong thing by taking water they do not own.

"Some irrigators who divert directly from the Murray River are using more water than they have in their water accounts and are then paying it back later in the season," Mr Anderson said.

"For example, overuse in South Australia causes a spike in water prices as irrigators scramble to top up their accounts."

"This means some irrigators have purchased water late in the season to top up their over-use, saving them \$400 per megalitre than if they bought the water around the time they actually used it".

"For large corporates this can save them multiple millions of dollars, by simply taking someone else's water," Mr Anderson said.

Mr Anderson said although the review found low levels of unauthorised overuse in Victoria, it did find differences in the amount of overuse across the different water corporations.

"The Minister agreed to the review's recommendation to establish a zero tolerance approach across all water corporations and this is a positive step. All irrigators, irrespective of where they are, should follow the rules."

Mr Anderson concluded by saying he wanted to ensure farmers will be represented with a series of workshops proposed to take place between government and water corporations

"It is important that a farmer voice is present at all of these discussions. As always, we'll be seeking a seat at the table for the VFF," said Mr Anderson.

**ENDS**

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