

# Media Release



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## Time for Transparency on Inter Valley Water Trades

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is calling on the Victorian Government to announce the closing date for tagged water trades from the Goulburn to the Murray system.

It comes on the back of Water Minister Lisa Neville's announcement of an interim operational regime for the Goulburn River with all trades from the Goulburn system including tagged accounts being treated consistently with Inter-Valley Trade (IVT) rules from December.

VFF Water Council Chair Richard Anderson said that with December fast approaching, the VFF are demanding clarity for irrigators on the date tagged water trades will be subject to the IVT rule.

"The VFF is calling on Minister Neville to urgently announce a date when these IVT rules will apply to tagged water accounts and clarify how the IVT rule will be implemented."

"In such extremely dry times when farmers are under intense pressure, they need certainty. The Government must provide clear and definitive advice," Mr Anderson said.

Murray irrigators within the Goulburn and Murray Irrigation District (GMID) who also owned Goulburn water have been able to 'tag' their Goulburn water into their Murray account for use in the Murray system.

This tagged Goulburn water was not counted against the IVT rule, which limits how much water can leave the Goulburn River to the Murray.

In August, Minister Neville acknowledged the environmental damage along the Goulburn River due to large amounts of water trading to the Murray and announced all water trades including tagged accounts would be subject to the IVT rule from December.

Irrigators in the Mallee that also own Goulburn water had never been able to tag their Goulburn water for use in the Murray system. Yet they were given permission recently to tag water from the Goulburn to the Murray which has driven the price of Goulburn water from \$500 per megalitre to over \$700 per megalitre.

"The uncertainty of this loophole is creating winners and losers. Permanent plantings in the Mallee are driving up higher water prices on the Goulburn, Mallee irrigators are unclear how long they can keep accessing this water for and Goulburn irrigators that had planned for summer crops and budgeted on water staying around \$500 per megalitre are now disadvantaged," Mr Anderson said.

"We have some on the Goulburn selling water and happy to take a higher price, but others who had planned on it being lower so they could plant summer crops, Mallee irrigators also need time to plan."

“Farmers need to understand their water position now because government interventions in the water market mid-season are challenging. That’s why the VFF is calling for the Minister to give farmers certainty,” Mr Anderson concluded.

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**About the VFF**

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is dedicated to representing the interests of farmers and making a positive difference to their businesses and communities. We strive to create an environment for our members, our farmers, that enables profitable, safe, sustainable production to ensure an enduring social licence in a community that respects and values the sector.