

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Irrigators encouraged to participate in water sharing plan survey**

Wednesday 13 May 2009

Water Minister Phil Costa today encouraged irrigators from areas across NSW to participate in a voluntary survey that will help build a more detailed profile of the State's irrigation industry.

Mr Costa said the survey is open to 15,000 irrigators from more than 1,800 towns across the State that have become part of a water sharing plan since 2004, or plans that will be implemented before 2012.

*(Please see over page for list of relevant water sharing plans)*

"This is an opportunity for water licence holders, namely irrigators, to contribute to water management planning and better inform future State Government decisions on water issues," said the Minister.

"Water users will be asked about their operations, enterprise, water use efficiency, water trading, employment and other economic and social indicators.

"The responses will be used as baseline information to evaluate water sharing plans into the future," he said.

The NSW Irrigators' Council Chief Executive, Andrew Gregson said this initiative comes at a time when members have been calling out for more research into their professions.

"It's an important study, and we will certainly be actively encouraging our members to participate," Mr Gregson said.

Participation in the 20 minute phone interview is voluntary and responses will remain anonymous.

"I strongly encourage people to participate in the survey and give 20 minutes of their time for this important baseline study," Mr Costa said.

A similar survey was undertaken in 2006 and received a welcome response from industry.

Mr Costa said water sharing plans establish rules for sharing water between the environmental needs of the river or aquifer, water for towns, stock, industry and irrigation.

"Already there are more than 40 water sharing plans in place, covering 90 per cent of NSW and we are actively working to finalise all plans," he added.

**... Continues**

**Irrigators that will be part of the following ground and surface Water Sharing Plans (WSPs) have been invited to participate in the survey:**

- Border Rivers WSPs
- Peel WSPs
- Belubula WSPs
- Barwon-Darling River between Mungindi and Menindee WSPs
- Lowbidgee WSPs
- Castlereagh River WSPs
- Narran/Culgo/Moonie WSPs
- Gwydir WSPs
- Lachlan WSPs
- Lower Murray Darling WSPs
- Macquarie/Bogan Rivers WSPs
- Murray River WSPs
- Murrumbidgee WSPs
- Namoi WSPs
- Paroo/Warrego WSPs
- Murray Darling Basin Fractured Rock WSP
- Murray Darling Basin Porous Rock WSP

NB: The above water sharing plans have either been implemented since 2004, or will be implemented before 2012.

ENDS

Contact Peter McCabe 0439 707 101