

# Guy Barnett MP

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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

## A strategy that recognises the importance of water resources

The Tasmanian Liberal Government recognises the importance of freshwater resources to the State's economy, environment and way of life for many Tasmanians.

Our goal is to grow the annual farm-gate value of agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050 with new investments in water resources, sustainable irrigation and in natural resource management.

The Government is pleased to announce that we have reached a new record, sustainably delivering 921,721 megalitres of high surety irrigation water in 2020-21. This is an increase of more than 51,000 megalitres from 2019-20, or greater than 5.5 per cent, and 20,000 megalitres more than the 2020-21 target.

With our continued investment, it is anticipated that this will increase to more than 960,000 megalitres in the next 12 months.

This means that thousands of farmers across the state are able to expand the area planted to high-value crops, increase rotations, boost yields, and diversify into new enterprises, such as wine grapes, leafy-green vegetables and berries.

The 2021-22 Tasmanian Budget is investing more than \$30 million to continue delivering our nation-leading Pipeline to Prosperity irrigation projects across our State, while also protecting environmental values and river health.

When completed, Pipeline to Prosperity is expected to provide more than 78,000 megalitres of

water, create up to 2,600 full-time jobs, trigger an additional \$150 million in on-farm private investment and inject an estimated \$114 million each year into the sector and economy more broadly.

This Government's irrigation infrastructure is the envy of the nation, having delivered 16 new irrigation schemes and the Greater Meander Valley Irrigation Scheme. Since 2010, Tasmania has delivered more irrigation schemes than all the other states in Australia combined.

The Tasmanian Government is also committed to the wise use of water and importantly, increased water use does not necessarily mean more water out of rivers.

Contemporary water strategies see water used for energy generation then being diverted to irrigation, and irrigation schemes using dams to store plentiful winter water for use during drier summer periods.

We acknowledge there are challenges in water management, which is why we have proactively identified these challenges and we are taking actions to address them, including:

- Launching the Rural Water Use Strategy which will ensure Tasmania's environmental values and river health are protected;
- Launching the Rural Water Roundtable made up of water users, stakeholders and environmental managers who will provide direction and advice on appropriate, sustainable water use including river health monitoring and management; and
- Investing an additional \$1.5 million to deliver initiatives from the Rural Water Use Strategy and establish a River Health Advisory Project.

While Labor, at both a State and Federal level, continue to spread misinformation about our nation leading irrigation projects, the Tasmanian Liberal Government is getting on with the job of securing Tasmania's future.