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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

2 September 2021

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Labor's irrigation funding process blunder

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is delivering an ambitious irrigation plan that is underpinning the growth of the farm-gate value of Tasmanian agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050.

The question today from Labor member for Bass, Janie Finlay, on Tasmanian irrigation demonstrates an embarrassing lack of understanding from her state and federal colleagues regarding federal funding processes.

Either that, or Labor is simply consigned to deliberately dishing out misleading information, even if they know it is wrong!

For the record, the Commonwealth has already committed \$100 million to advance our Tranche 3, Phase I projects; Don, Fingal, Northern Midlands, Sassafras/Wesley Vale and Tamar in the 2019 budget, and we are advocating the case for a further \$100 million to supersize Phase I, in line with the increased demand for irrigation water.

To support this process, a business case for each specific project needs to be submitted to the Australian Government National Water Grid Authority (NWGA) for assessment and it formally considers them twice year with the next round of proposals to be considered in January 2022 (in the lead up to the Federal Budget).

Labor clearly doesn't grasp good governance and process, however, the facts remain the Tasmanian Government is following the rules and we are getting on with the job of developing the required businesses cases to activate this additional Commonwealth funding.

The Tasmanian Government is the biggest supporter of our farmers and nation leading irrigation scheme, committing \$23.7 million to irrigation in the 2021-22 State Budget, and we remain on track to secure the additional funding.