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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Irrigation taps into wise use of water

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is committed to the wise use of water, including when it comes to irrigation projects.

Tasmanian Irrigation plays a vital role in our plan to secure Tasmania's future, by future proofing agriculture against drought and climate change, while also supporting our agricultural businesses to grow and be more efficient.

Tasmanian Irrigation has a dedicated Environment Team which monitor environmental compliance and in 2020-21 reported no discernible impacts from Tasmanian Irrigation operations and no incidents of environmental harm.

Rather than draining our rivers, Tasmanian Irrigation in fact regularly increases water flow rates in Tasmanian rivers during dry periods.

Fundamentally, Tasmanian Irrigation is about using water better, developing schemes which store water in winter when it is abundant, and releasing it during summer when it is scarce.

Tasmanian farmers know that water is liquid gold and we are sustainably delivering it to more farmers than ever before, with an increase in the number of irrigators serviced in 2020-21 to 951, up from 854 in 2019-20.

This is an 11 per cent increase and means that hundreds 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.

This is directly creating more investment and more jobs in regional areas all over Tasmania. Despite the global pandemic, demand remains high for Tasmania's high quality produce both locally, across the country and internationally and this Government is committed to doing everything we can to help farmers sustainably produce more.

At its core, Tasmanian Irrigation supports and facilitates Tasmanian farmers and businesses owners, so it is little surprise that the business has spent more than \$28 million with Tasmanian businesses in 2020-21, more than 93 per cent of all Tasmanian Irrigation purchases.

But there is more to do, which is why the Tasmanian Budget 2021-22 is investing more than \$30 million to continue delivering our nation-leading 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 Tasmanian Liberal Government recognises that water is the key to secure the future of our agricultural industries and vital for the environment and river health.