



Media Release

Senator Mathias Cormann

Liberal Senator for Western Australia

STOP IGNORING SELF-SUPPLY IRRIGATORS!

Western Australian Senator Mathias Cormann has called on the WA State Government to stop ignoring the legitimate views and aspirations of WA's self-supply irrigators.

Senator Cormann made the call following State Water Minister John Kobelke's dismissive response to criticisms of his approach to WA water licensing fee arrangements.

State Minister Kobelke had suggested that *"what Senator Cormann and some people are saying is actually, 'why don't you shift the burden from these irrigators to other irrigators'"*

"Well the State Minister has got it wrong," Senator Cormann said.

"What I am saying, and what others are saying to the WA State Government is to spread those 'cost recovery' fees more fairly across all irrigators rather than targeting those who have private dams on their own properties and who essentially self-supply their water needs."

"Why should irrigators in the Ord tapping into publicly built dam infrastructure pay less than 1 cent per megalitre in licensing fees when irrigators in Manjimup and Pemberton who have spent their own resources, often in the face of significant personal sacrifice, are being asked to pay \$6.40 per megalitre?"

"I did not hear the Minister answer that question," he said.

"The WA Water Minister should stop ignoring self-supply irrigators when putting together Government policies on water. They are a critically important part of our agricultural industry in Western Australia," he said.

"Last Friday I met with a delegation speaking for the Pastoralists & Graziers Association, the WA Farmers Federation, the WA Fruit Growers Association and for Vegetables WA.

"I was advised that those four peak bodies represent all of the self-supply irrigators, and in fact represent 70% of irrigated land in Western Australia and 55% of irrigated water use."

"Even though they are very clearly significant stakeholders when it comes to water planning, the State Minister and the WA State Government have totally ignored that important section of the Western Australian community when putting together their approach to Water Planning, including their approach to water licence fee arrangements."

"Rather than to arrogantly patronise me as a new Senator the Minister should have a serious look at the issues raised and reflect on whether there is a better and fairer way to deal with them," Senator Cormann said.