

10th May 2024

Turf Growers Associations of NSW response to the proposed National Water Agreement 2024

Turf NSW is the industry representative body for turf producers in New South Wales. This letter is in response to the proposed National Water Agreement 2024, and we wish to acknowledge and support the response from our national body Turf Australia and additionally we provide the following comments:

- We acknowledge recognition of Indigenous cultural stewardship of waterways as part of sustainability priorities, but simply setting objectives isn't enough. Clarity in the processes, management and cost implications is crucial.
- Turf NSW is concerned with the absence of a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis for proposed changes within the agreement. Turf producers heavily rely on irrigation from surface and/or groundwater sources and seek assurance that any forthcoming reforms will yield proportional benefits without imposing undue burdens through measures such as amended allocations and associated costs.
- A fiscally responsible, evidence-driven approach is crucial to safeguard stakeholders' investments in advancing sustainable water management reforms that support agriculture and horticulture industries, not just turf producers. These proposed changes call for a meticulous evaluation of the economic, social, and environmental cost outcomes.
- We are concerned with the language used, specifically the word 'own'.

*Objective 2 – Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' water interests and values: Outcomes - Water reform elevates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultural, spiritual, social, environmental, and economic water interests and delivers world-leading strategies that build capacity and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to honour their customs and moral obligations to care for, manage, **own** and protect water.*

- We are concerned at the lack of public and industry awareness of this program despite the immense impact this plan could have to all levels of community, industries, local and state government authorities. Turf NSW is involved with the Lower Nepean and Hawkesbury Water Users association and involved in the Greater Sydney Customer Advisory group with Water NSW but was unaware of the proposal prior to notice from our nation industry body. We support strong collaboration between industry and government at all levels to address concerns and ensure the initiatives are effective and sustainable. Working together, we can create solutions that benefit everyone involved while respecting Indigenous cultural stewardship.

Jenny Zadro
Executive Officer
Turf Growers Association of NSW Inc.