

MANAGING OUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE - WATER

Position:

- FAMILY FIRST worries that families are becoming the victims of cost shifting, where governments are not meeting their obligations to provide essential services like water but are expecting families to pay more themselves to solve the problem. It is the role of government to provide essential services and infrastructure. That is what families pay taxes for;
- FAMILY FIRST is concerned that governments deal with our water crisis via market-based solutions like water markets, which threaten the livelihoods of family farms as big business farms have more cash to pay for this scarce resource. The price of water also increases, putting extra pressure on family budgets;
- FAMILY FIRST acknowledges that a total of 70 per cent of water use is accounted for by irrigated agriculture and believes we must help farmers use water more efficiently, without threatening their livelihood.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST calls for new dams to be built to boost water storage across Australia;
- FAMILY FIRST supports the Government's \$10 billion water plan to fix the Murray-Darling Basin, as it makes sense to streamline control, reduce bureaucracy and simplify the system;
- FAMILY FIRST will monitor Australia's water management to make sure that there are adequate incentives for investment in water infrastructure, that there is proper allocation of water for environmental flows and that water users employ reasonable methods to conserve water;
- FAMILY FIRST supports substantial funding to improve irrigation systems and save water, but is concerned the needs of regional and rural communities can come second to metropolitan areas. There are good arguments that we can save huge volumes of

water by investing in agricultural infrastructure to make our water systems more efficient.