

Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association Inc.
making every drop count

What does the Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association do?

The GVIA represents all irrigators who own water access licences for irrigation within the Gwydir Valley, including regulated, un-regulated and groundwater entitlements. We have in excess of 400 water entitlement holders in the Gwydir Valley across seven water source areas.

Our vision is for the local irrigation industry, the environment and the Gwydir Valley community to have a secure vibrant future, with Gwydir Valley irrigators recognised as industry leaders.

Our purpose is to represent the irrigation interests of our members at a local, State and Federal level to:

- Secure, protect and enhance your water rights for irrigation;
- Ensure the efficient management and operation of our valley's water resources; and
- Encourage industry profitability and sustainability.

Our services include:

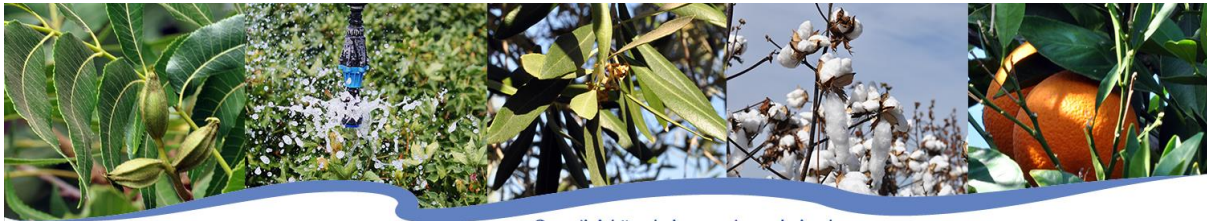
- Member communications and dealings;
- Policy and advocacy;
- Coordination, facilitation and participation; and
- Education, research and extension.

The Association is managed by a committee of a minimum of 11 irrigators and employs an executive officer and a part-time administrative assistant, as well as hosting an externally funded part-time Project Officer position.

The committee oversees the governance of the Association's resources in the interest of all members. The majority of the organisations funds are sourced directly through membership levy requests based on a cost per megalitre of entitlement with 80-90% return rate.

A significant part of the committee's role is to help develop and set the policies and strategies for the Association, of which the Executive Officer implements – some examples of this are provided on the following page. The Executive Officer and committee also provide representation on behalf of members at forums, like the WaterNSW Customer Advisory Group, the Gwydir Environmental Water Advisory Group, the Stakeholder Advisory Panels for surface and groundwater sharing plans, the NSW Irrigators Council and National Irrigators Council meetings and North West Local Land Services Community Advisory Group.

As a member you get a unified voice on industry issues with an aim of securing and protecting your water rights. You will receive regular communication on relevant issues, opportunity to raise issues and provide feedback, as well as the above-mentioned representation.



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Key issues and what are we doing about them?

A key issue, is an action or policy that that can either threaten or enhance any of our core purposes, now and into the future. Some of our current key issues being address include:

Healthy Floodplains project and Floodplain Licencing program

The GVIA, in partnership with other northern NSW irrigator groups, has been working with the DPI Water (now Crown Lands and Water Division) to finalise the implementation of the NSW Healthy Floodplains project to incorporate legitimate floodplain harvesting access into the NSW licencing framework. Our aim is to allow for the continuation access arrangements for all legally determined floodplain harvesters, with no one being worse off and future access arrangements secured. Achievement of this goal will require careful engagement with the NSW Government on these key areas:

- Finalisation of a definition and regulation of exemptions;
- Finalisation of a fit-for-purpose, effective measurement strategy; and
- Consistent implementation of the project across project areas.

We are still working towards simultaneous implementation with other Northern NSW valleys by 1 July 2019, with the start of new Water Sharing Plans.

Review of Water Sharing Plans and development of Water Resource Plans

All Water Sharing Plans in the Gwydir Valley, except for Great Artesian Basin Water Source are either being reviewed or due for review, prior to the development and implementation of surface and groundwater Water Resource Plans on 1 July 2019.

We are participating in the surface and groundwater stakeholder advisory panels to provide advice and feedback on possible changes on behalf of the industry. Our involvement is essential to ensure the continuation of access arrangements that allow our industry certainty and that there are no third-party impacts associated with any changes.

We will provide public submissions for review by members and opportunity for feedback throughout this process.

Community and Government Engagement with Irrigation Industry

We are acutely aware of the public's negative perceptions of the irrigation industry. We are working with other Northern NSW irrigation groups to develop a program to promote and communicate the value of irrigated agriculture to the community and economy, whilst also re-building support for the water management framework that protects the rights of NSW irrigators and water users.

We believe that consumers need to be reconnected with the agricultural sector to promote our social licence to continue to operate. We are proud what you do as irrigators, we need to get better at communicating that to a broader audience to influence better outcomes.

www.gvia.org.au

@GwydirValley

