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MEDIA RELEASE

Promises watered down by price hikes

With indications that reductions in water pricing promised by Labor will not be honoured, farmers in the Burdekin and Bowen areas have been assured the government will be held to account.

Member for Burdekin, Dale Last, was joined by Shadow Minister for Water, Deb Frecklington, and Shadow Minister for the Environment, Sam O'Connor in meeting with grower groups and water supplier representatives earlier this week to discuss the affect the broken promise would have.

“During the election campaign, Labor promised a 15% reduction in water pricing for agriculture and a 50% reduction for horticulture,” Mr Last said. “Now the government is ‘tinkering at the edges’ with changes to definitions and some primary producers may actually face a price increase.”

“Our primary producers are the backbone of many regional communities, particularly the Burdekin and Bowen region, and to try and pull the wool over their eyes is an absolute disgrace.”

Although increases recommended by the Queensland Competition Authority were put on hold as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr Last, Ms Frecklington and Mr O'Connor heard firsthand from farmers about the impact these price increases will have.

“In some places the price increase that will come is more than 40%,” Mr Last said. “That doesn't just affect the producers, it trickles down into the communities that rely on industries like cane and horticulture.”

“When their costs increase, producers can either pass on the cost to consumers or they have to cut down on what they spend. Either way, the effect is felt throughout the community because families will pay more for food, or we see jobs in the community vanish.”

“It's time for the government to admit that their promised discount was, for most growers, nothing but an election stunt. They just don't understand the role of water in regional communities.”

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