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## Farmers blindsided

Less than a week away from what was promised to be a 15 per cent cut to irrigation prices for sugar cane farmers, Member for Burdekin Dale Last has revealed farmers are about to be blindsided with at least a 3 per cent increase.

Instead of being met with a promised 15 per cent reduction in irrigation costs on July 1, Mr Last said sugar cane farmers had begun contacting him to divulge that Labor's 'watertight' commitment of a reduction had been absorbed by an 18 per cent increase in Sunwater's irrigation charges.

"Six months after the state election and we are already seeing the incentives the state government offered on one hand, now being taken by the other, and it's nothing short of a disgraceful," Mr Last said.

"We heard the Premier stand up and promise a re-elected Labor Government would ensure lower water charges and in one foul swoop a slug on water costs is not only complete absorbed, it's actually managed to increase the costs of irrigation."

"Our farmers are the backbone of so many communities in the state including the Burdekin where costs to primary producers and sugar prices determines how much money flows through to retailers."

"When their costs increases, 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."

Mr Last said the underhanded promise of a reduction for irrigators should be called out for exactly what it was, simply an 'election stunt'.

"With the insincere promise of a cut to water costs for all irrigators already unveiled and a budget handed down almost two weeks ago, it makes you wonder how much more deceit this government is going to reveal and how many more communities and industries will be targeted."

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