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News Release – for immediate release

Irrigation NZ welcomes the removal of roadblocks

The Prime Minister's 2010 statement to Parliament today is encouraging for irrigators.

Irrigation NZ (INZ) welcomes the government's proactive approach to sort the regulatory hurdles stalling progress on water storage and irrigation.

INZ chairman Graeme Sutton says the industry applauds government's indication that it will place a particular focus on the removal of regulatory roadblocks to progressing water storage and irrigation projects that have tangible economical and environmental benefit for everyone.

This will involve work as part of the next round of Resource Management Act reforms and take place in addition to work already in progress by the National Infrastructure Unit and the Land and Water Forum.

Water and its storage are clearly on government's agenda and that is particularly exciting, Sutton said.

"It is important for New Zealand that government enables these water storage and irrigation projects to happen in realistic timeframes and we look forward to the government's support in working towards making these projects happen.

The government will also take action this year to remove particular regulatory hurdles to water storage and irrigation in Canterbury alongside its overall commitment to ensuring that economic propositions for water storage and irrigation projects can happen in a decent time frame.

"Water storage is an area where current regulation has been stifling progress but the fresh water focus indicated in this statement today looks set to clear the way to move forward."

Harnessing water for good economical, environmental and recreational benefit is important and a key focus for the irrigated agriculture industry.

INZ is very happy to work with government and communities to ensure there is a win-win for everyone in these projects.

"This is not just about water for farmers this about multi-purpose water development projects that will grow the economy with tangible benefit for everyone," Sutton concluded.

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