



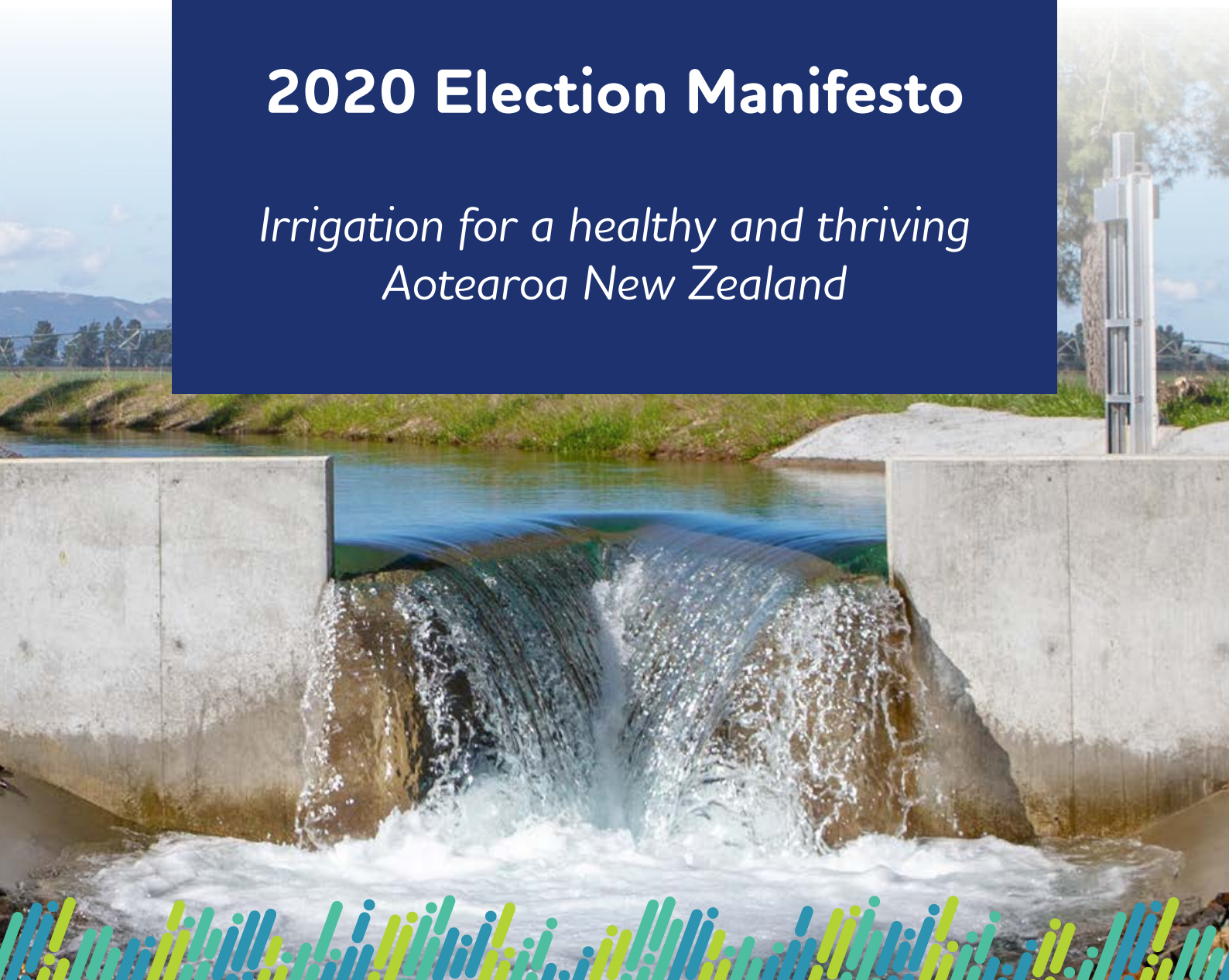
IRRIGATION NEW ZEALAND

Water • Food • Fibre • Life



2020 Election Manifesto

*Irrigation for a healthy and thriving
Aotearoa New Zealand*





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OUR VISION

Irrigation for a healthy and thriving Aotearoa New Zealand.

OUR MISSION

To ensure irrigation remains an integral part of New Zealand's well-being, and to support the wise use and management of water for sustainable food and fibre production.

WHO WE ARE

We are a not-for-profit national-level organisation that represents 3,500 members across the irrigation sector, including irrigation schemes, individual farmer-irrigators, growers, and the irrigation service sector. We support the critical role our members play in producing sustainable food and fibre for a healthy and thriving Aotearoa New Zealand.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Advocacy – championing the irrigation sector

We will advocate on behalf of our members with decision-makers and people of influence at the national level as a priority, but we will also support our members in regional advocacy. This will include advocating for new irrigation and water infrastructure development.

Setting the standards

We will develop a clear, recognised and unambiguous set of standards for irrigation, to ensure efficient and effective water use that minimises adverse environmental effects and work to ensure widespread adoption of the standards.

Thought leadership and connectivity

We will develop an engagement and communication programme for existing and potential members, stakeholders, and the wider community. This will increase our membership, our influence, and community understanding of the benefits of irrigation.





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WHAT WE ARE SEEKING

- A **national water strategy** that guides the future of water management and investment across Aotearoa New Zealand.
- A focus on **water storage** to ensure our communities are resilient to **climate change**.
- Policies that **support irrigation and the environment**, through monitoring, farm environment planning, innovation, and adaptation.
- A **resolution** to Māori rights and interests in freshwater.
- An **allocation framework** that provides certainty and reliability of supply, whilst providing for multiple uses and benefits for economic, social, cultural, and environmental well-being.



IrrigationNZ is the peak industry organisation that representing agricultural and horticultural water permit-holders across the country. IrrigationNZ and its members firmly request that their voice be heard by Government in relation to water management and investment.

Irrigating growers and farmers represent 800,000 hectares across New Zealand (equating to seven percent of farmland) and directly contribute an estimated \$5.4bn to our GDP (or 20 percent of total agricultural and horticultural contribution). This significant contribution to our economic wellbeing means that we must be a part of collaborative, fair processes to develop water policy and the development of a national water strategy.

In support of this, IrrigationNZ is offering to share its knowledge, expertise, and data in relation to:

- Farm environment plans and the freshwater modules within them
- Water storage solutions
- Water allocation issues





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A Water Strategy

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Water is a critical resource in New Zealand which holds cultural, social, environmental and economic value and as such, urgently requires a long-term, depoliticised strategy to enable its fair and sensible management.

Irrigation New Zealand believes that an overarching **national freshwater strategy** to guide and lead decision-making and funding allocation at the central, regional, and local levels. The strategy could be developed and led by a bi-partisan, independent water commission.

A water strategy will be critical if New Zealand is to successfully adapt to climate change effects, particularly in relation to water availability for multiple purposes, including for drinking and domestic uses.

As experts in water management for agricultural purposes and the body representing the agricultural water permits, IrrigationNZ and its members firmly believe that they should be at the table for the development of the water strategy.





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Irrigation and the Environment

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It is essential there is a **national framework** for collecting data on water use and quality which then allows for consistent monitoring and can be used to inform regulations, and assist in their enforcement, whilst driving improvements in outcomes. IrrigationNZ would like to work with others to ensure this occurs.

With access to multiple data sources across its membership of irrigation schemes (representing thousands of farmers and growers) and hundreds of independent irrigators, IrrigationNZ is perfectly positioned to lead this process in collaboration with national and regional government agencies, with adequate funding support.

Farm Environmental Plans (FEPs) are the best way for farmers and growers to farm within environmental thresholds that achieve catchment-specific outcomes. Irrigation schemes are the leaders in the development and implementation of FEPs. Our members are able to assist with a national roll-out, lead the changes in the agricultural sector, and share our lessons learnt.

IrrigationNZ supports the establishment of a **sector-led solution for nutrient management and allocation** guided by the following core principles:

1. Equity must underpin the allocation approach. Any allocation method must be fair and reasonable for all land uses, taking into account investment already made, potential capability, and environmental and cultural needs.
2. What can be allocated should not exceed the catchment load. The catchment load must take into account community and iwi values. It must also take into account water quantity. In-stream loads are a function of flow; therefore, this must also be considered at the same time.
3. All farms must be operating at good management practice as a minimum standard.
4. Nutrients allocations are not a property right.





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Water Storage and Climate Change

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New Zealand requires more water storage so it can meet growing freshwater challenges and multi-purpose needs, which will be exacerbated in the future due to climate change (more frequent and prolonged droughts, punctuated by more intense flood events).

Water storage should be multi-benefit, providing for cultural, social, community, environmental and economic needs (including energy generation). Sensible and sustainable water storage can capture water in times of high precipitation and inflows, thereby supporting river flows and aquifers during dry periods.

A high-level water storage strategy (including location, purpose and cost) for New Zealand could be guided by an independent water commission. However, this should not prevent the ongoing development of storage projects already proposed or being investigated in the interim.

There are multiple ways of undertaking water storage including reservoirs, aquifer storage, and dams.

Well managed water distribution infrastructure and ensuring access to water will be critical in ensuring New Zealand can adapt to, and mitigate the negative effects of, climate change.

Many existing and developing irrigation schemes utilise water storage. Our members are well-positioned to share knowledge and expertise on water storage development.





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Māori Rights and Interests

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IrrigationNZ broadly agrees with the points of agreement between the various parties to the Freshwater and Geothermal Resources Claim to the Waitangi Tribunal (WAI2358), as set out in the Tribunal's Stage Two Report:

- The issue of Māori rights and interests in freshwater bodies needs to be addressed;
- Māori values are generally not being reflected in freshwater decision-making, and that the decision-making framework should better reflect those values;
- The role of Māori in freshwater management and decision-making should be enhanced;
- Under-resourcing is preventing Māori from participating effectively (or at all) in many RMA processes;
- National direction to councils is required;
- Māori interests in water entails economic benefits (noting that there was not agreement between the parties to the proceeding as to what form or to what extent this is).

IrrigationNZ considers that it may be appropriate for these matters to be resolved through an independent, bipartisan or apolitical water commission.

IrrigationNZ also wishes to work with iwi, hapū, and whānau groups to support Māori economic and social development through access to water and efficient, effective, environmentally sensitive irrigation development, where appropriate and beneficial.





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Allocation

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Any changes to our system of allocation need to be considered fully, in terms of policy planning, implementation and transition.

As any changes will have implications for sunk investment, future investment, reliability of supply, economic and productive certainty, changes must take account of all of these issues.

Changes to allocation should not just be driven by a philosophy of always moving water to its “highest value” use in terms of economic value. Other types of value (such as social, cultural, and environmental value) need to be considered under an allocation framework, in order to prevent water or land use monocultures.

Allocation frameworks should allow for transfer of water between users and uses, both in the short and longer terms. However, it should be noted that water markets will not be effective in reducing or solving over-allocation in all catchments.

The allocation framework must take account of, and allow for, differences between regions and catchments.

The allocation framework must provide for Māori rights and interests in freshwater.

IrrigationNZ has expertise in managing complex changes to allocation frameworks in specific catchments with multiple stakeholders and water uses. Therefore, IrrigationNZ is well positioned to assist agencies with this policy work.

