
Media Release

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Transparency is key to confidence in the water market

Irrigators need a transparent water market to level the playing field and be confident they are not being gamed, according to Independent MP for the District of Shepparton Suzanna Sheed MP.

“Water entitlements are a property right, no different to land ownership,” Ms Sheed said. “So, it should be just as easy to find out who owns what, where and how much, and the trading history.”

“Claims that animal rights or environmental activists will somehow use water ownership information to interfere with farms are overblown.”

Water entitlements are not tied to land, so do not necessarily identify farm locations, according to Ms Sheed. Water use is tightly regulated and monitored, the environment owns 28 per cent of entitlements and irrigators are highly efficient water users. Extreme actions such as farm invasions are illegal.

Ms Sheed said the Victorian Government must ensure the water market is working in the best interests of all irrigators, large and small.

Concerns about brokers abusing transparency to target vulnerable irrigators are valid, and any such behaviour should be reported and punished. Unlike real estate agents, there is minimal regulation on the behaviour of water brokers, and it is about time governments did something about this.

Ms Sheed urged the Victorian Government to look past those trying to stoke unfounded fears about water owners and users’ privacy.

“We need total transparency on entitlement and allocation accounts. It’s the only way to get the market working for everyone, and not just the big end of town,” she said.

“The risk of market failure is acute, especially in droughts. The lack of transparency on ownership and transactions just makes it worse.”

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