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## **Majority of Australians want Murray Darling policy to prioritise food security and family farms**

New research released today by The Australia Institute shows that the vast majority of Australians prioritise production of food for Australian consumption, and support for family farms in the Murray Darling Basin.

**When respondents were asked to rank agriculture and water policy goals:**

- **Top water policy priorities for the Murray-Darling Basin include:**
  - Three quarters of Australians (75%) ranked ‘producing food for consumption in Australia’ in their top three priorities;
  - More than seven in ten Australians (71%) ranked ‘ensuring small and family farms can compete with corporate agribusiness’ as a top three water policy priority.
  - Majority of Australians (61%) ranked the viability of regional communities is a top three priority.
- Meanwhile, only 26% of Australians ranked ‘maximising GDP from agriculture’ as a top three priority and only 25% ranked ‘maximising agriculture exports’ as a top three priority.

“The current Murray Darling Basin policies are the exact opposite of what Australians want,” said Maryanne Slattery, Senior Water Researcher at the Australia Institute.

“The current policies work to maximise GDP and maximise exports, while Australians want governments to prioritise food to eat here and the viability of small farms and communities.

“Australians would be mortified to realise the devastation the current water reforms are wreaking on the Murray-Darling Basin’s agricultural sector, family farms and regional communities.

“We are seeing citrus growers in the Lower Darling are pulling out their trees now as they pick their fruit for the last time.

“In the Murray, fourth and fifth generation dairy farmers are walking off their farms in droves and those that remain will be lucky to survive another few months. Meanwhile, Australia’s rice industry is not far behind.

“Our nation’s food bowl has become dominated big, often foreign-owned, business producing cotton and nuts. Is that what Australians want the food bowl of our nation to become?”

“Australia’s water policies are failing our regional communities, generational family farmers and threatening our food bowl. They are also not what voters want.”