

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Dams will facilitate Northern development

The Coalition's draft discussion paper on water management, reported in today's media, is a welcome recognition of the important role dams could play in revolutionising Northern Australia's economy, according to the Institute of Public Affairs.

"Australians for Northern Development and Economic Vision (ANDEV) have been calling for the creation of dams for over two years and it is refreshing for a major party to finally acknowledge the important role they can play in driving development in Northern Australia," said Dom Talimanidis, Director of the joint ANDEV/IPA North Australia Project.

"Militant green groups have successfully campaigned to take dams off the policy agenda in recent decades; however demonising this policy initiative ignores the positive role dams can play in electricity production, flood aversion and irrigated agriculture – outcomes that benefit all Australians," Mr Talimanidis said.

According to a 2010 OECD report, by 2020 more than half the world's middle class will be in Asia and Asian consumers will account for over 40 per cent of global middle class consumption.

"That's a lot of mouths to feed, and as their quality of life improves this middle class will begin to demand many of the high quality products that Australia produces, offering a tremendous opportunity to diversify our export base," Mr Talimanidis said.

Irrigation is pivotal to increasing agricultural production. 28 per cent of Australia's agricultural production is produced from the half a percent of land that is used for irrigation.

"But most of Australia's rainfall flows unused into the sea from highly seasonal Northern Australian rivers. Australia has the third highest rainfall per capita in the world, more needs to be done to take advantage of the many opportunities this provides," said Mr Talimanidis.

There are areas of North Australia that receive almost double the annual rainfall of the Murray-Darling basin. If Australia's agricultural sector is to make the most of these exciting opportunities, we need to overcome this irrational aversion to building new dams.

The Institute of Public Affairs, in conjunction with Australians for Northern Development and Economic Vision (ANDEV), has been calling for the establishment of a Northern Special Economic Zone (SEZ) with lower taxes and a reduced regulatory burden. For more information visit [www.andev-project.org](http://www.andev-project.org).

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