

Views sought on water and sewerage prices in Broken Hill

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is seeking feedback on Essential Water's proposed water and sewerage prices in and around Broken Hill, and WaterNSW's proposed prices for the Murray River to Broken Hill pipeline, from 1 July 2019.

IPART's Chair Dr Peter Boxall said "we are determining both the maximum prices that WaterNSW can charge Essential Water for water delivered by the Murray River to Broken Hill Pipeline, as well as how those costs, along with the expenditure proposed by Essential Water, can best be met".

IPART has identified a number of issues with the proposals. In particular, we are seeking views from the community about Essential Water's proposed prices and service standards. We are also seeking views on the cost of WaterNSW's Murray to Broken Hill Pipeline and how they should be shared.

Essential Water has proposed a 6.8% average annual increase in residential water and sewerage charges, resulting in an average \$93 per year increase from 2019 to 2023. The increase for non-residential customers would be 6.8% per year.

Essential Water's proposed prices do not include any costs associated with the construction and operation of the Murray River to Broken Hill Pipeline and consequential works that might be required as a result of the new pipeline.

"What customers can afford to pay is a key focus of our review into water and sewerage charges in Broken Hill and the surrounding communities," Dr Boxall said.

"In order to keep prices affordable for Essential Water's customers we are looking at how WaterNSW and Essential Water can deliver water and sewerage services in the most efficient way. We are also considering what share of the costs of providing water and sewerage services to Broken Hill, including the costs of the pipeline and consequential works, should be paid by the NSW Government, and how to best structure the prices different types of consumers have to pay."

Feedback is being sought on a range of issues with public submissions able to be made until 30 October. IPART will consider this feedback and further consult with the community at a public hearing in Broken Hill on both the pipeline review and the prices proposed by Essential Water on 20 November 2018.

Full copies of the pricing proposals put forward by both WaterNSW and Essential Water, and IPART's Issues Papers for its reviews of these prices, are available at ipart.nsw.gov.au. Draft prices will be released in April 2019, with final prices to apply from 1 July 2019.