

Media Release

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Draft prices for WaterNSW regional and rural bulk water

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) has released its draft decisions on the maximum prices WaterNSW can charge for its regional and rural bulk water services from 1 July 2026.

Tribunal Chair Carmel Donnelly said WaterNSW owns, operates and maintains dams and bulk water infrastructure across regional and rural NSW, supplying bulk water to irrigators, local water utilities, environmental water holders and other customers.

"The Tribunal has considered a range of matters including the social impacts of WaterNSW's proposed prices and the efficiency of its proposed costs, as well as how costs should be allocated between customers and the NSW Government," Ms Donnelly said.

"Our aim is to set prices so that customers pay only their fair share of what WaterNSW requires to safely and sustainably deliver its regional and rural bulk water services. WaterNSW initially proposed a significant increase in average annual revenue for its regional and rural operations, that would require price increases of up to 37% plus inflation per year for five years. After thorough review, the Tribunal proposes to limit annual price increases no more than 10% per year plus inflation."

Under IPART's draft decisions, prices for WaterNSW's bulk water services — including charges passed through from the Murray–Darling Basin Authority and the Border Rivers Commission — would increase by up to 10% per year plus inflation over the next three years.

Ms Donnelly said the Tribunal appreciated that WaterNSW is dealing with significant cost pressures, including higher financing costs and the need for increased investment to maintain ageing assets.

"At the same time, we recognise that water users, including local water utilities and farmers, are also facing increasing cost pressures and challenging operating environments," she said.

"Our approach seeks to ensure that price increases occur in a measured way, allowing water users time to adjust to these higher prices."

Ms Donnelly said IPART's draft decision to cap price increases would limit bill impacts for customers but would also mean WaterNSW's efficient costs would not be fully recovered from prices alone.

"Our draft decisions would require the NSW Government to subsidise part of WaterNSW's costs while prices transition towards cost reflective levels," she said.

"Additionally, we have revised our approach to allocating costs between bulk water customers and the NSW Government. This has resulted in some changes in the proportion of costs allocated to the NSW Government, in recognition of the public benefits some WaterNSW services provide to the broader community."

IPART is inviting feedback on the draft report by Monday 11 May 2026, and will hold a public hearing on Tuesday 21 April 2026. The [draft report and supporting material](#) are available on IPART's website.

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