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Your submission for this review:
The Local Government Engineers Association (LGEA) is a registered industrial organisation representing professional engineers, engineering staff and related technical professionals working in local government in NSW. We welcome the opportunity to participate in the review of IPART's rate peg methodology. It is critical that local governments have the resources, including sufficient qualified staff, to deliver the assets and services required by their communities in an efficient and effective manner. This includes responsibility for more than $150 billion of infrastructure assets, ranging from roads and bridges, cycle networks, parks and recreation facilities, water and sewerage utilities, and more. These assets not only need to be designed and constructed well, they also need to be maintained throughout their life cycle to optimise their reliability , safety and operational performance. Due to the current funding settings, the industry is losing the battle to attract and retain appropriately qualified staff, particularly skilled professionals, to deliver these services effectively. It is not realistic to expect the industry to continue to look after an expanding asset base when it is not able to employ the staff it needs to do the work. Something needs to give - either more funding needs to be injected into the industry or service levels and/or areas of responsibility must be reduced. Our members are central to the delivery of infrastructure services and they are telling us that the industry is under unsustainable pressure and that wholesale change to the way in which the current peg is set is required. That is why we are supporting the analysis and recommendations set out in Professor Brian Dollery's report commissioned by the United Services Union (USU) for this review. In our opinion, the report raises many important issues which should be carefully considered by IPART through this review process.