

Anonymous customer feedback received for the 2020 Sydney Water IPART price review

Feedback	What has Sydney Water proposed?	What does Sydney Water's proposal mean for water prices and your bill from 1 July 2020?
1	<p>I note Sydney Water is proposing an unprecedented spend on servicing new properties - \$1.6 billion – a 54% increase on the last 4 years. I also note, in most other Australian cities, property developers pay for some of the costs of extending the water and sewerage network in new homes and businesses.</p> <p>But I learn in Sydney these costs are spread across all of Sydney Water's customers through higher prices. I suggest there should be an introduction of developer charges. If the NSW Government has plans for 144,00 new dwellings to be built in Sydney over the next 4 years in Sydney's southwest, northwest and around the new western Sydney airport, then it is these areas that should be funding the servicing of the new properties.</p> <p>Perhaps developers then wouldn't be paying such exorbitant prices for land in these areas if they knew that they had to cover the cost of providing services to these areas. And the few people making vast profits from selling their land in these areas would simply have to settle for slightly less profit, allowing services to be provided - but not funded by the broader customer base of Sydney Water. This would surely be far more just and equitable for all concerned.</p>	
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3		<p>As Sydney Water is a function of the NSW government, I would like to see Sydney Water provide a discounted price to NSW Seniors Card Holders. Currently one has to have access to Commonwealth Benefits to gain access to Pensioner rebates, however Self Funded Retirees who do not benefit from Commonwealth "Cards" receive no benefit at all.</p> <p>Many Self Funded Retirees who had the benefit of being double income families prior to retirement are now single income families and under Commonwealth initiatives the Commonwealth Cards are based on grossed up family income. In an era of diminishing interest rates and shareholder returns (due to Commonwealth</p>

		Gov pressures) perhaps Sydney Water would do well to understand the impact on NSW Senior Card holders and provide a discount as businesses are encouraged to do so.
4	Sydney Water will need to be more proactive in providing services to future greenfield areas. At the moment Sydney Water is reacting to developer's requests for services provisions. Sydney Water in consultation with large developers may drive the selection of future greenfield developments and provide solutions in advance and then gradually expand their assets in a controlled way. At the moment we see an erratic and fragmented expansion of Sydney Water assets that may cost more money to build.	Fair
5	<p>I am perplexed to note in the Issues Paper that that there seems to be an implicit assumption that it is in the best interests of the environment and society to achieve a 4% reduction in individual customer water bills. (Issues Paper p. 04.) I actually believe it is more desirable that any cost savings by Sydney Water should be retained and reinvested in drinking water delivery and waste water treatment and recycling infrastructure up grades, for the sake of greater social, health and environmental benefits.</p> <p>I consider the proposed \$150 million expenditure to improve waterways and \$2.7 billion to renew critical assets may well be inadequate for these purposes. I thus respectfully request a very rigorous expert peer review of the plans to achieve these objectives and a layperson friendly and transparent reporting of this to the public.</p>	The price of water to customers should not be driven down at the expense of better programs and infrastructure for improved water quality in waterways and water security.
6	<p>Sydney Water's proposal does not clearly address drought. How will Sydney Water be investing to deal with drought?</p> <p>I support Sydney Water investing to improve waterways, meet the needs for growth and renew critical assets. I assume the update to digital technology is required.</p> <p>I am also interested in understanding how Sydney Water is investing to create a cooler green city - we should be using water to irrigate open spaces. We should have more water available for demands like green open space. We need to plan to keep our city cooler.</p>	I am surprised the bills will remain low compared to my other utility bills.

Feedback (cont.)	We are particularly interested in your views on some key issues	Other comments and feedback
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2		Implement water recycling for drinking water like the rest of the major cities in the world! It's much cheaper and more sustainable than desalination.
3	<p>In the 1950's I believe Sydney Water passed on the costs of water and sewerage connection to building allotments that did not have these services passing the door. My wife and I have just constructed a house in a new subdivision where the subdividers were obliged to ensure water and sewerage services were supplied to the door.</p> <p>With the increase in the volume of home building developments there is no reason as to why the developer of the subdivision should not shoulder the costs for providing services. Sydney Water would obviously have to oversee the the work and workmanship to ensure there are no ongoing problems.</p> <p>Sydney Water and the NSW Government (from the last 30 years) should have been well prepared for drought and increase population densities. The building of new dams is crucial to NSW as a whole and now is too late to consider now - we need to consider all ramifications for building water storage in NSW for the long term future even if it is detrimental to the local flora and fauna.</p> <p>There are many instances where local flora and fauna became the focal issue yet they survived and caused the creation of additional expense when infrastructure needed reconfiguring.</p>	

<p>4</p>	<p>We are of the opinion that Sydney Water is protecting the environment. However some of their existing assets are very old and their integrity is compromised. This results in sewer leakages that impact on the environment.</p> <p>Sydney Water will need to be more proactive in providing services to future greenfield areas. Sydney Water in consultation with large developers may drive the selection of future greenfield developments and provide solutions in advance and then gradually expand their assets in a controlled way. At the moment we see an erratic and fragmented expansion of Sydney Water assets that may cost more money to build.</p> <p>Recycled water reuse will be more efficient and viable if restrictions and modifications to fire pumps testing are enforced. We are of the opinion that a lot of potable water and recycled water is wasted during the fire pumps testing due to unnecessary long pumping periods during systems testing. Considering the current drought and water scarcity is a crime to waste so much water unnecessarily.</p> <p>Sydney Water have a very slow response time towards customers. Their response time shall be improved. Their prices are not unreasonable.</p>	<p>Sydney Water competing and carrying out functions that previously were carried by Water servicing Coordinators for the developers is unfair competition. Their direct and unrestricted knowledge and access to the Sydney Water systems and internal stakeholders is an unfair advantage over the WSC. The process and requirements that need to be met by the Sydney Water internal SWDD is not transparent to everyone and we are of the opinion that the required documentation and work prepared and provided by SWDD is less than the required documentation from the WSC.</p> <p>However we are of the opinion that this may be a more efficient system for smaller customers. These customers will more readily accept Sydney Water directly issued requirements than hearing about these from a WSC. We are not informed of the SWDD response times to applications and completion times in order to compare the Sydney Water response time to cases handled by WSC</p>
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5	<p>Customer preferences are likely to be selfishly and dollar driven, rather than altruistically driven by the the need to consider the greater health, environmental and social benefits of improved waterway health and water security into the future. These are my priorities.</p> <p>Re drought and water scarcity: Given that Australia is a water scarce country facing the possibility of compounding pressures, as a result of population growth and an associated increased demand for the water resource and services, and climatic variability and uncertainty which may exacerbate water scarcity issues, it is better sense to drive the price of water up rather than down.</p> <p>In terms of planning for the future: Sydney Water should insist on Water sensitive Urban Design, and be given a greater role in delivering this for all greenfield and retro-fitted urban projects. Sydney Water must better plan waste water treatment recovery and recycling to avoid the need for any new dams for Sydney.</p>	<p>I have been part of the George's River Environmental Alliance since it's inception in 1994 and have a strong interest in water quality in the river and its tributaries throughout of the whole of the George's River Catchment, which is home to well over a million people.</p> <p>I will in conclusion signal how my concerns about water quality in the George's River relates to the matter of Sydney servicing and pricing policies:</p> <p>I do not think it is necessary to achieve a 4% reduction in customer water bills, if this prevents a high standard of environmental performance being achieved by Sydney Water. There is ample evidence that Sydney Water sewerage overflows are having serious negative and cumulative impacts on waterways in the Georges River catchment and this is not acceptable. I am worried there is no further capacity in the main Glenfield to Malabar waste water system, and therefore all the new growth areas in the Macarthur_Campbelltown region (2040 projection is for 58,000 new dwellings) are not adequately supported by infrastructure upgrades and thus will lead to further sewer overflows and water fouling 'down stream'.</p> <p>I use many reaches of the George's River recreationally, as do many estimated thousands of other river users. I wish to draw attention to just a few current examples of unacceptable sewer overflows that have seriously threatened ecological health and environmental amenity of the Georges River its tributaries and the receiving waters of Botany Bay.</p> <p>https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/2019/epamedia190815-sydney-water-fined-\$30000-for-sewage-overflow-at-bangor https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/sydney-water-fined-apologises-for-leaking-millions-of-litres-of-sewage-20190719-p528ug.html https://www.theleader.com.au/story/6380705/another-sewage-spill-at-lime-kiln-bay-wetlands/</p>
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6	<p>Environment - the EPA and government should be telling Sydney Water what it is required to do. Why is Sydney Water not complying with environment licences? Is it because they have not spent enough money, been negligent or some other reason?</p> <p>Planning - happy to support growth, particularly cooling in Western Sydney. Need to consider drought and long term planning for climate change future.</p> <p>Drought - Doesn't seem to be much about drought in the proposal? Support recycled water including drinking recycled water. Where has our money gone to planning for drought since the last drought? Why isn't Sydney Water or the Government doing more to plan for it. Desalination plant could be on earlier or all the time to keep the dams fuller.</p> <p>Customer preferences - I am not clear what you are asking? I think Sydney Water should be able to provide me with options for the package I choose - like with my electricity bill.</p>	
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