

HUNTER WATER CORPORATION OPERATING LICENCE UNDER REVIEW

13 December 2016

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is seeking feedback on the draft new terms and conditions of the Hunter Water operating licence.

The licence establishes the obligations Hunter Water must meet in relation to public health, environmental protection, customer service and business operations in providing water and sewerage services.

The draft new licence and report released today for comment proposes significant changes to the licence conditions, which would be effective from 1 July 2017.

IPART Chair Dr Peter Boxall said the proposed changes include improvements to Hunter Water's customer contract, adopting the concept of economic level of water conservation to replace the prescriptive water conservation target, and requiring Hunter Water to supply wholesale customers.

Wholesale customers are typically new, smaller water utilities that provide water and/or sewerage services licensed to service a specific development area.

"These changes are among 22 proposed amendments to the licence conditions that reflect the main issues identified by stakeholders since the review began in May," Dr Boxall said.

"We have considered the costs and benefits of a number of options and are now seeking final submissions about the right level of regulation to ensure that health, environmental, customer and business objectives are met without inappropriately increasing the burden and cost of regulation."

The proposed changes to Hunter Water's customer contract include amendments to improve clarity and readability, increases to rebates, and removal of duplicate and obsolete clauses.

IPART is inviting written submissions from Hunter Water, its customers, advocacy groups, NSW Government agencies and other water utilities on the draft operating licence package released today. All stakeholder submissions are due by 3 March 2017.

The draft operating licence package is available at IPART's website <<http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au>>.

IPART will hold a public workshop to discuss the proposed licence conditions in Newcastle on 21 February 2017. Please register your interest in attending, and contact us if you would like to make a presentation at the workshop

IPART's final recommendations regarding the licence will be submitted to the Minister for Lands and Water in May 2017.

Media Contact: Julie Sheather 02 9290 8403 or 0409 514 643