

Media Release

16 March 2021

Improving the sustainability of rural water supply and management

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal has released draft reports on rural bulk water supplies and water resource management in NSW.

“Our draft decisions are aimed at supporting the long term security and reliability of water supply in regional and rural NSW,” said Acting Chair Deborah Cope.

The reports set out IPART’s draft decisions on the maximum prices that Water NSW and the Water Administration Ministerial Corporation (WAMC) can charge for rural bulk water services and water resource management functions over the next 4 years.

Regulated charges for bulk water supplied by Water NSW vary widely by valley, but would increase on 1 July 2021 by 25% on average, before inflation. These charges would then be held constant over the next 4 years.

WAMC charges also vary across each of the 27 water sources in NSW. Over the next 4 years, WAMC charges would decline by up to 16% in 5 water sources, increase by up to 10% in 14 water sources and increase by more than 10% in 8 water sources, before inflation.

“Increases in expenditure are needed to provide a sustainable water supply in regional areas, which are particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change,” said Ms Cope.

The draft reports support increases in prices, but not to the extent of those proposed by both organisations.

“These price increases will enable Water NSW and WAMC to lift their performance so that dams and other infrastructure are adequately maintained and water sources are effectively managed for the long term benefit of water users. We are mindful of how these increases may impact customers and the broader community. Our WAMC draft report recommends a transition to higher prices to limit bill impacts.” said Ms Cope.

The prices set by IPART would apply from 1 July 2021.

IPART is seeking comments from stakeholders on its draft reports, with submissions due by 16 April 2021.

IPART will hold an online public hearing on 30 March 2021 and will consider all feedback from stakeholders before final prices are released in June 2021.

Further details about the reviews and the public hearing are available on [IPART’s website](https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au).

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