

NSW DRAFT RURAL WATER PRICES RELEASED

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is seeking feedback on its draft determination of prices that WaterNSW can charge for its monopoly bulk water management services in rural NSW.

IPART Chair Dr Peter Boxall said the draft determination means significant reductions in the overall revenue that WaterNSW can collect from its customers, with bill impacts depending on location and the type of licence held.

WaterNSW's operating costs have substantially decreased since the last determination, which would flow through to customers in the forthcoming determination.

"Most WaterNSW rural customers would see their bills either fall, or increase at or below the rate of inflation under the draft decisions," Dr Boxall said.

"The only exceptions would be general security customers in the Gwydir, Namoi and South Coast valleys where changes to the high security premium and increased general entitlement charges would increase bills by between 2.9% and 3.5% per year over the next four years, and high security customers in the Murray valley where bills would increase by 7.9% per year (with inflation)."

Dr Boxall said that while WaterNSW entitlement charges and usage charges are falling in most valleys, the costs of the Murray Darling Basin Authority and the Border Rivers Commission are rising, which would have a large impact on customers in the Murray valley in particular.

WaterNSW delivers bulk water to irrigators and other licence holders on regulated rivers across NSW. It operates 42 large dams and weirs, and delivery infrastructure, to deliver water to around 6,300 customers.

IPART is seeking comments from stakeholders on its Draft Report and Draft Determination. Submissions are due by 17 April 2017 and will be considered before final prices are released in June, to apply from 1 July 2017.

A public hearing will also be held in Sydney on 4 April 2017.