

COMMUNITY VIEWS SOUGHT ON WATER PRICING PROPOSAL

9 November 2015

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) will be in Tamworth on Monday, 16 November 2015 to seek feedback on new prices for monopoly water management services proposed by DPI Water.

Department of Primary Industries – Water (DPI Water), formerly the NSW Office of Water (NOW), is responsible for the planning and management of all surface water and groundwater resources across NSW. This includes the development of water sharing plans and the licensing and protection of water users' rights to access water.

DPI Water's charges are paid by those licensed to take groundwater or water from rivers. Licence holders include irrigators, mines and other industries, environmental water holders and water utilities supplying water to towns and cities. Users of water from regulated water sources face additional charges from Water NSW (formerly State Water) for the delivery of water from dams.

The proposed water management charges differ for users of regulated rivers, unregulated rivers and groundwater, and also between NSW's river valleys. Changes are also planned to allow for charges for water used from floodplain harvesting and for some metering and water trading activities carried out by DPI Water.

IPART Chairman Dr Peter Boxall said the forum is an opportunity for DPI Water to explain its pricing proposals to stakeholders, and for IPART to hear first-hand the views and concerns of the local community.

"Our role is to ensure that water management is undertaken in the most efficient way to reduce costs, and that the allocation of costs amongst different users is reasonable" Dr Boxall said.

"With DPI Water proposing changes to the ways its costs are recovered from different users, stakeholder feedback on DPI Water's proposed approach and its proposed charges is critical to ensuring that our final determination in June provides the most efficient and fair outcome possible."

The forum will run from 9.30am to 1.30pm at the Quality Hotel Powerhouse, 248 Armidale Road, Tamworth and include presentations and discussions on DPI Water's proposed expenditures, prices, pricing structures and service levels. Registrations will be open from 9am, with those wishing to attend encouraged to register online in advance of the forum at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au.

Further public forums will be held in Sydney and Griffith during November, prior to the preparation of a draft report to be released in March 2016. IPART's draft report on its review of water management charges will be released in March, with the final report to be published in June 2016 for new prices to apply from 1 July 2016. Further information is available at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au.

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

MEDIA NOTE: Media are welcome to attend the forum but priority will be given to stakeholders during the Q&A session. Dr Boxall will be available for interviews by telephone in advance of the forum on Monday 16 November. There is a limited window for interviews while in Tamworth prior to the start of the forum. Media wishing to speak to Dr Boxall and/or attend the forum are asked to advise Julie Sheather on 0409 514 643 of their interest.