

To: Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

Re: Inquiry into Rental for Domestic Waterfront Tenancies

Submission:

We are owners of domestic waterfront property on the (address deleted).

(a) The property is bounded by National Park, with no access whatever except by water, and no access whatever to public ferry services;

(b) Pittwater Council provides only garbage services, but no green waste collection services, and only very limited other waste collection services;

(c) The property has no access to sewerage service or town fresh water supply; and

(d) All supplies, furniture, waste etc have to be moved to and from the property by boat.

Our access by water is available only through:

(a) Paying for the capital cost and maintenance of an access boat which we would not otherwise need to own (we have a small sailing boat for recreation);

(b) Paying for the capital cost and maintenance of waterfront facilities at the front of our property that are required in order to gain access by boat; and

(c) Paying Dept Lands rental for the below HWM space used by these waterfront facilities; and

(d) Paying for boat parking and car parking facilities on the opposite shore to ensure that the access to our property is available at all times (the public facilities provided for this purpose having inadequate capacity and poor security).

As owners of "water access only" property, we do not have free and unfettered access to our property over Crown Land land, nor do we have free parking (for cars and boats) outside our property on Crown Land, as do those owners with waterfront property accessible by land, and other property owners with access by land.

In using our "water access only" property, we are exposed to risks which involve the use of these waterfront facilities and the access boat for emergencies:

(a) The property is classed as "Bush Fire Prone", so there is a high risk of bushfires, and in such emergencies, the electric power supply is not reliable and there is no town fresh water supply at all;

(b) In addition to having to own emergency self-powered pumping equipment to make salt water available for fighting any fire, we need to be able to land firefighting support equipment and people, and to evacuate them and ourselves quickly if needed;

(c) On two occasions during the last two years, we have had a medical emergency (injury) on the property requiring use of the waterfront facilities and access boat to reach land transportation to hospital for emergency hospital treatment; we cannot even have access to normal ambulance service without using our waterfront facilities.

As far as we can determine, despite the above additional financial outlays we make because our property is “water access only”, we get no special consideration as a “water access only” property in the rates already paid:

(a) Pittwater Council rates do not make any allowance whatsoever for the special circumstances that apply to properties such as ours, there being no allowance made for the normal services made available to other property owners in Pittwater that are not available to us as ‘waterfront access only’ property owners; and

(b) Dept Land and Water Conservation rents we pay for the waterfront facilities are the same as paid by others for the same waterfront facilities on a property that has land access.

On the grounds of equity, the waterfront facilities rentals we already incur compared to owners of waterfront properties with land access, and to owners of other properties with land access, are already unreasonable, because unlike such property owners:

(a) We do not have free and unfettered access to our property across Crown Land; and

(b) We do not have free parking for cars and boats on Crown Land outside our property.

Yours faithfully,