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Date of submission: Monday, 14 October 2019

Submission: The former Hunter District Water Board, co-founded by one of my relatives, for over a century re-invested its profits in Hunter Region water infrastructure, thus benefiting the people it invoiced. Since the Board was corporatised as Hunter Water Corporation (HWC), it has not ceased to direct its profits to consolidated revenue for the buying of votes in a Sydney already over-populated by massive foreign immigration and an accelerating population drift from regional centres crippled by the withdrawal of government services.

Neglect of regional areas is such that the NSW Government is increasingly, and sometimes subconsciously, referred to as the Sydney Government. This is not good for state unity, and must eventually revive the New State Movement, not only in the North but in the Riverina. Novocastrians, suffering from the deliberate obstruction of their proposed seaport container terminal, the destruction of their railway, the privatisation of their 'bus services and the failure to fund necessary infrastructure, can only see Sydney as an albatross around their necks.

The \$44 million 'dividend' annually extracted from HWC, in addition to the interest on its NSW Treasury Corporation debt of well-over \$1 billion, is a 'Sydney Tax' funded by Hunter Water's customers, many of whom are suffering from unemployment, underemployment and other social disadvantage. The \$100 million one-off 'special dividend' now sought by the NSW Government, in addition to the usual \$44 million, is good for Sydney, but bad for the long-suffering Hunter Region.

HWC's Operating Licence for 2017-2022 aims to:

- (a) provide transparent terms and conditions for Hunter Water to undertake its activities at industry good practice; and
- (b) recognise the interests of stakeholders within its Area of Operations.

It is silent as to the use of HWC as a government cash cow, as is now occurring.

It is my submission that IPART should reject any further increase in Hunter Water prices from 1 July 2020.