

# The Council of The Shire of Bourke

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Please address all  
communications to  
the General Manager

Our Ref: RE-PJ-15-L8.33-R6.9.3-R2.22-R6.8

8<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Review of Prices for the Water Administration Ministerial Corporation  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal  
PO Box K35  
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

To Whom it May Concern,

*Re: Review of Prices for the Water Administration Ministerial Corporation*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the pricing review being undertaken by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal.

I understand that the review being undertaken is complex and will cover a range of issues in regards to pricing, the efficiencies of the NSW Office of Water and appropriate levels of return on investment that should be available.

For those of us in the Murray Darling Basin area the issue is complicated by the uncertainty around the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan and the changes that may occur within the local water industry as a result of the water sharing plans.

Bourke Shire Council already pays a significant amount of money for water access on behalf of the community, an amount that has increased substantially in recent times.

Bourke Shire Council adopts a user pays approach to its water charging of local residents and recent decreases in population have meant that this burden is spread across fewer residents. The Community Strategic Planning process also highlighted the need once again to replace Bourke's water treatment plant and begin to replace some of the ageing reticulation system. The cost of these capital items will be borne by the local community and again spread amongst fewer residents.

With the uncertainties of the effect of the Basin Plan on local river communities and given the need to upgrade local water infrastructure as a priority, it is Council's view that any increase in water charging as a result of this IPART review would have an extremely

detrimental effect on our community. Any increases should be kept in line with CPI increases and any increases in return on assets that are sought should be gained through efficiencies.

I wish you well in the review process and should further information be required please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of Ross Earl.

Ross Earl  
General Manager