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Submission: The proposed increase of \$220 per year for water is not viable for families in the current climate. Families are already struggling with the increased price of living: housing is increasingly less affordable, electricity and gas prices have gone up in the last year as have insurance premiums. Quality fresh food is expensive and one has to shop around to get the best deal. Even with union representation and enterprise bargaining, workers are not being offered annual wage increases that keep up with inflation.

We have recently not registered our second car and cancelled our house insurance as we can not afford it at the moment, and will be looking to cancel other insurances as well. We live well but not extravagantly - we have one TV in the house, our computer is around 5 years old and we drive an 8 year old second hand commodore. We don't smoke, eat out very often or have overseas holidays. We don't receive any Government payments or allowances such as Family Tax Benefit. We have one child living at home and another two we pay child support for. And we are the lucky ones - my husband earns a decent wage!

An increase in water prices would only make life harder. The squeezing of the 'middle class' is not sustainable. The average family is already changing its spending habits and being forced to make decisions detrimental to their standing of living. Our quality of life as we know it in Australia is on the brink of decline.