

Submission Water Pricing

My wife and I appreciated the opportunity to attend the consultations in Tamworth and Sydney, and the opportunity to take part in discussion.

The meetings were conducted professionally but in an informal, welcoming manner, encouraging those who wished to speak.

We were very disappointed that our investment of time and expense was for absolutely nothing.

DPI Water maintains the mindset of New South Wales Office of Water previously, that irrigators should meet the “full cost recovery” of DPI Water’s funding.

Water availability is essential for the whole community, but DPI loads the majority of their costs onto irrigators.

Speakers at both Tamworth and Sydney pointed out how unjust DPI Water’s charges for Water Access Licences (WAL) are.

Notably :

1. The difficulty of obtaining a two part licence, because DPI Water wants the total amount paid for a one part licence. That’s confirmed by the absurd minimum charge of a two part licence: 70% of a one part licence plus meter reading charges.

The minimum charge for a two part licence should be just that: \$150.00 and then apply the per megalitre costs.

Is DPI Water afraid that WAL holders won’t use their entitlement?

So far as WAL holders are concerned the cost of a one part licence could be well exceeded in a high usage season.

2. Charging full entitlement for a dry river bed. In Sydney we asked Mick Milham about that situation and he responded that DPI Water has to go and check!!

Does that cost a WAL holder \$1,700.00 per annum. And there would be many WAL holders on the stream.

When the WAL holder from Nyngan who was so affected put their case to Gavin Hanlon in he smiled condescendingly and said: “I’d like to help you but I can’t”.

Why not?

WAL charges are clearly not a charge for services because when there is no water to access, licence holders still pay.

If DPI Water were a private company it would be prosecuted for fraud.

Unless of course these charges are a tax – on food production.

Is that why it is so difficult to find out what DPI Water's costs are in a specific catchment?

Personally, we have an amount of \$6,000 of these exorbitant charges outstanding, dating from the time when IPART became involved in the programme of full cost recovery.

What costs?

When these charges blew out to huge annual charges from a five yearly licence fee of \$546.00 I asked over time NOW, State Water, the Minister in various State Parliaments through the local MLA for justification for these charges.

The most recent reply I received was a retort from the Hon. Katrina Hodgkinson that the charges are set by IPART and I have to pay my bills, and rudely ignored my questions.

Is that the kind of insults that citizens are served by Politicians and Beurocrats today?

We pay all our professionally presented accounts on time.

At Tamworth Gavin Hanlon said he would look into the matter but we've heard nothing.

When we asked Mick Milham at morning tea during the Sydney consultation what DPI Water's costs are in the Manning Valley he said that they are not itemised from the total Hunter Costs.

That's not the way to run a business, unless of course we are paying a tax to fund a Government Department, and I put it to IPART that DPI Water has no significant costs in the Manning Catchment.

The water is FREE, it costs neither the State Government nor the community a cent.

The water is supplied by rainfall and snow.

MidCoast Water pays \$40,000 **in addition** to their Access Charge.

That, of course, is an addition to the \$186,000 paid by other WAL holders.

Now would you please advise what DPI Water's costs in the Manning Valley really are?

Again, I ask why are irrigators singled out to pay the majority of the costs of DPI Water.

One of the panel at the Sydney meeting commented that a new paradigm is required for DPI Water's charging.

These charges need to be applied fairly across the whole community who are using the water.

Because supply of water to the whole community is what these charges are for.

When the Barrington River flow drops to a determined level, irrigation is rationed and as conditions worsen, irrigation ceases to ensure there is sufficient flow for Gloucester, Wingham, Taree and Great Lakes communities.

In 2014 when Barrington River Water Users Association, in consultation with MidCoast Water, severely rationed irrigation water, the Gloucester community did not even go onto water restrictions.

When we really need the water it is not available and we, like the people at Nyngan, pay \$1,900.00 per annum for the privilege.

If DPI Water charged fairly across the whole community, in the Manning Valley situation, a \$150.00 minimum charge for WAL holders and a \$4.43 per annum levy on all water users would net DPI Water the same funds as they receive now.

That would be an increase for urban users of \$2.43 per annum on what they pay now.

I mentioned the above at the Sydney consultation, but like everything else we all said, it has been ignored.

Later in the Sydney consultation I suggested that DPI Water broaden its tax base.

Dr. Boxall made a lengthy statement that DPI Water's charges are not a tax.

Really?

Please be honest. DPI Water's charges are neither itemised nor justified as a charge for services rendered.

This whole process needs to be properly reviewed and another consultation conducted.

We are prepared to travel to Sydney again.

Newman Patmore,

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