

# Hunter Valley Water Users Association

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## Re review of prices for Water Administration Ministerial Corporation. Comment on Draft Determination.

Hunter Valley Water Users Associations notes IPART's draft determination and generally appreciates the attempt to provide a fair and reasonable determination. We are also appreciative of the opportunity for further comment.

Whilst accepting that some increases are necessary we still have difficulty in understanding why the proposed increase in charges for the Hunter Regulated users fixed charge is amongst the highest (101%) in the state when the Hunter is not part of the MDB and the water sharing plan has been in operation for some years.

As mentioned in our earlier submission we are concerned that the costs to NOW of examining major developments such as coal mines and other urban and industrial developments should not be passed on to irrigators and I note that this issue does not appear to have been addressed in the draft determination.

We appreciate your decision on NOW's regulatory base only starting from July 2011 but do not agree that a department such as NOW should receive a return on assets which should be a cost of government. Are we next to see a charge for schools, hospitals etc being levied on their users?

We note the decision to increase minimum charges by \$35 and accept that but would again point out that we believe there should only be one minimum charge when more than one type of WAL is attached to a works. For example a dairy farmer in the Hunter needs to have a high security licence to access water for dairy wash down, (usually 5ml) a general security licence for irrigation, often a ground water licence and in many cases a supplementary WAL to more efficiently use the available resource. If no water was used in a year, although not often the case, they could be faced with minimum charges of \$95 four times or a total of \$380. Whilst this is acceptable an increase to \$200 (as suggested by some) could be mean a total charge of \$800 which is completely unacceptable.

Again we appreciate the rigour shown by IPART in this difficult determination and hope that our views are considered in finalising the charges.

Yours Sincerely  
Arthur Burns  
President

29/11/2010