

State Water Corporation Price Review 2010,  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal,  
P.O Box Q290,  
QVB Post Office. NSW. 1230.

Submission to IPART - Bulk Water Prices from 2010.

I/We, the undersigned, wish to object most strongly to the proposed increases in regulated surface water for the Peel River.

These increases are astronomical and unreasonable in the extreme, and will make irrigation in the Peel River unviable for most, if not all, irrigators.

Many irrigators have invested huge amounts of money in infrastructure and equipment, based on current water prices. These proposed increases will make it impossible for many to stay on their farms, and will force many farmers to sell out, or face bankruptcy. This will destroy the irrigation industry in the Peel Valley.

Many farming families will end up on welfare payments just to survive. There will be drastically increased depression and stress, and we fear the result will be increased episodes of suicide amongst our farmers.

There will be definite detrimental flow-on effects in our cities and towns of Tamworth, Gunnedah and Manilla, with dramatic downturn in business for all rural machinery and associated other rural suppliers. As well, with such hugely increased water prices, it will no longer be attractive for new businesses to come to this area, and existing businesses will also be under threat of closing or moving to other areas. This will stifle progress, increase unemployment and again, depression, in this area.

We have already had hard times with the ongoing drought, and in recent years, little or no supply of water. In these cases, we should not have to pay for a commodity that can't be supplied. In private enterprise, this would be called theft and create an enormous outcry. How is it that a State Government body can do this to their taxpayers and it is allowed?

We feel that water prices should be the same nation - wide, the same as a postage stamp. If the price per megalitre in the really big river systems, eg the Murray and Murrumbidgee, were put up by \$1, our prices could be made comparable. Chaffey Dam on the Peel was never meant to be on a cost recovery basis when it was first built, why suddenly now, when it is such a small catchment and storage. It is very unrealistic. The irrigators in the Peel Valley are being hugely disadvantaged, and it is discriminatory. We will simply be unable to compete with hay and commodity suppliers in other areas, even with the added costs of transport. This is unfair, undemocratic, and un-Australian. Please, give us a fair go and keep water prices in the Peel Valley affordable.

Yours Sincerely,

Signed:.....

Name: SCOTT HIGGINBOTHAM

Address:.....