



1 November 2024

Hunter Water invests in Lower Hunter's water security and growth with 2025-2030 Pricing Proposal

Hunter Water, following engagement over two years with almost 9,000 customers and the Lower Hunter community, has submitted its pricing proposal to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), for the period of 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2030.

Hunter Water has heard and considered the views, needs and preferences of customers and the community; this input has been integral to our investment decisions and underpins the submission to IPART.

Hunter Water proposes investing prudently and efficiently, so we can continue our long history of providing high-quality services and protecting our environment.

IPART sets Hunter Water's prices based on the efficient costs of providing essential services, with adjustments for inflation between reviews.

Hunter Water Managing Director, Darren Cleary, says the costs of providing essential water and wastewater services are rising so the prices customers are charged during the next price period need to increase.

"We know the rising cost of living weighs on our customers, and we don't take an increase to our customers' bills lightly, though we do need to ensure we can continue to deliver reliable, high-quality services and secure our region's water future," Mr Cleary said.

"Just as we've seen in many other sectors of the economy, persistent cost pressures are contributing to rising prices.

"Importantly, we are investing to improve water security by building the Belmont Desalination Plant.

"In addition to the Desalination Plant and servicing growth throughout our region, we are also investing in improving service reliability, water conservation, and reducing our carbon emissions, because our customers have told us these outcomes are important to them.

"These investments reflect the views and recommendations of our community, obtained through our community engagement program, which has included prioritisation surveys, bill simulations, focus groups, and a representative Community Panel."

Hunter Water proposes that the typical bill for a household receiving water, wastewater and stormwater services (before inflation) will rise, on average, \$86 or 5.7% each year from 2025 until 2030. The bill increase will be phased in gradually over the next five years, giving customers time to adjust to the changes and with consideration to current cost-of-living challenges.

"In developing our proposal, we've balanced addressing current issues with maintaining affordability and ensuring fairness for future generations.

"To keep bills as low as possible, we have deferred some projects and prioritised essential investments to comply with regulations that safeguard public health, safety, customers and the environment, while also focusing on improvements our community told us are important to them.

"Our customers have told us they want control over their bills, so we are proposing to recover most of the cost increases via the variable water usage charge. We propose that the charge for 1000 litres of high-quality drinking water moves from \$2.89 in 2024-25 to \$4.40 in 2029-30.



Media Release

Hunter Water

“We heard through community engagement that increasing the usage charge is preferable to increasing the fixed service charge as it provides greater ability for customers to reduce their bills by managing their water use.

“To help our customers minimise their water bill, and to conserve this precious resource, we will continue our strong focus on water conservation. Since the 2019 drought, we have worked with our customers to help them find efficiencies in their water use, including developing Water Efficiency Management Plans with our business customers. We will continue to actively engage with large non-residential water users to support them leading up to new prices starting from July next year.

“We have also strengthened our overall support for our customers, with a range of assistance programs and support services available to help them pay their bill. This includes payment extensions and flexible payment options such as our bill smoothing program, Easy Pay.

“To keep ourselves accountable, we will publish a customer report card each year to show progress against the outcomes agreed with our customers,” Mr Cleary said.

All Hunter Water customers and the community have an opportunity to submit feedback in response to IPART’s Issues Paper until Monday 9 December 2024. IPART will host a public hearing online, on Monday 18 November. To make a submission during the public consultation period, head to [IPART’s website](#)

Our Pricing Proposal Customer Summary is available on [our website](#) alongside a bill calculator using proposed prices. IPART will publish a Draft Report in March 2025 seeking further feedback before publishing their Final Report in June 2025, with new prices to commence from 1 July 2025.

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