



# 2025-2030 Pricing Proposal Frequently Asked Questions

1 November 2024

## Hunter Water's pricing proposal to IPART

### General information

- We have submitted our pricing proposal to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), for 2025 to 2030
- Our customers' and community views have been integral to this process, with their needs and preferences considered as part of our decision making on future investment programs and services
- This formed part of an extensive and ongoing engagement program for our pricing proposal, which has included prioritisation surveys, bill simulations, focus groups, and a 30-person representative community panel who reached consensus recommendations on a number of different topics
- Our prices are set by IPART based on the efficient costs of providing essential services. When we say "efficient costs" we mean the money we propose to spend is not wasteful or excessive. IPART sets our prices every five years, with adjustments for inflation between reviews
- All Hunter Water customers and the community will have the opportunity to have their say in November and early December when IPART hosts a public hearing, and by providing a written submission in response to IPART's Issues Paper
- IPART will confirm final prices in early 2025, and do not commence until 1 July 2025. Final prices may be lower, higher, or the same as those we proposed.

### **Why are prices going up?**

Hunter Water understands the rising costs of living are impacting some customers and we don't take bill increases lightly. In developing our pricing proposal, we have done everything we can to be efficient and keep customers' bills as low as possible, including by deferring some projects and prioritising essential investments.

The costs of providing our essential water and wastewater services are rising. Prices need to increase during the next price period to ensure we can continue to deliver reliable, high-quality services and secure our region's water future. Like other industries, persistent cost pressures across all sectors are contributing factors to rising prices. A large part of Hunter Water's proposed investment over the next price path is to provide additional water security to the region with the Belmont Desalination Plant.

In addition to the desalination plant and servicing growth, we will also invest in improving service reliability for localised areas, carbon emissions reduction and water conservation, because our customers have told us these are important to them.

### **How much are prices going up?**

It is proposed typical customer bills (excluding inflation and stormwater) will rise 5.2%, or \$71, each year between 2025 and 2030.

The typical water and wastewater bill for the owner of a house is currently around \$1,241 per year (excluding stormwater services). The typical water and wastewater bill for the owner of a house will be around \$1,313 next financial year (excluding stormwater services).

Our customers have told us they would like this increase phased slowly over the next five years, giving them time to adjust to the changes.

You can see the impacts on different types of customers by reading our “At a Glance” and “Customer Summary” documents, or by using our bill impact calculator available on our website <https://www.hunterwater.com.au/haveyoursay/2025-2030-price-proposal>

### **What have you done to keep prices down?**

We have done everything we can to be efficient and keep our customers' bills as low as possible. This has included deferring some projects and prioritising essential investments to comply with regulations that safeguard public health, safety, customers and the environment, while also focusing on improvements our community has said are important to them.

### **How will the new prices be charged?**

While the fixed water service charge will increase, we are proposing to recover most of the cost increases through our variable water charge. This provides the best opportunity for our customers to control their bill by managing the water use around their homes, with our fixed water service charge remaining low compared to other utilities.

This means the water usage price will rise from \$2.89 per kilolitre to \$4.40 per kilolitre by 2029-2030.

### **What is the impact on business customers?**

We understand this will impact some of our customers, particularly those who use a large amount of water. Over the past four years we have been working with those customers to find efficiencies in their water use and ensure they have Water Efficiency Management Plans in place. We will continue to engage with them over the coming months to support them leading up to new prices starting next year.

Reducing water usage in your business saves you money on usage charges [Visit our website](#) to find out more.

### **What is the impact on stormwater charges?**

In addition to water and wastewater charges, there are about 72,000 customers across our area of operations who are also charged for stormwater drainage. Hunter Water has proposed an increase to stormwater charges in the next price period due to higher costs to clean stormwater channels and renew these assets to keep the community safe.

In recognition of the variability of stormwater impact across individual properties, our customers can apply to have their property designated as ‘low impact’ and may receive a lower stormwater drainage charge. This designation is for eligible customers who go above and beyond in managing the stormwater on their property to ensure runoff has a low impact on Hunter Water’s stormwater infrastructure.

For more information on the application process visit: <https://www.hunterwater.com.au/home-and-business/managing-your-account/low-impact-stormwater-charge>

### **What support is available to customers experiencing financial vulnerability?**

We’ve strengthened our customer support programs, providing a range of assistance and services to help customers manage their bill including flexible payment options with Easy Pay or providing extra time to make a payment.

For more information about our support programs visit <https://www.hunterwater.com.au/home-and-business/managing-your-account/get-help-paying>.

## How can I find more information and/or have my say?

- Find out more about the project at <https://www.hunterwater.com.au/haveyoursay/2025-2030-price-proposal>
- If you would like to ask questions about the proposal that are not covered by the information in this document or on our website, please send them to [pricing.engagement@hunterwater.com.au](mailto:pricing.engagement@hunterwater.com.au)
- If you would like to make a submission to IPART and/or attend the public hearing, there is information on IPART's website <https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/review/water-metro-pricing/prices-hunter-water-corporation-1-july-2025>

### *Key IPART Dates*

- IPART will publish their initial response to our proposal (called their Issues Paper) on their website on Friday 1 November
  - The public exhibition period will run from Friday 1 November – Monday 9 December 2024
  - The online public hearing will be held on Monday 18 November 1:30pm-4:30pm.
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