

NOTICE

INQUIRY COUNTRY WATER AND WASTEWATER PRICING

ISSUES PAPER

The Economic Regulation Authority today published an issues paper on its inquiry into the prices charged by the Water Corporation for its country water and wastewater (sewerage) services.

Mr Lyndon Rowe, the Authority's Chairman, said the inquiry, which was issued to the ERA by the Treasurer the Hon Eric Ripper on 20 October, was the first independent evaluation of Western Australian country water and wastewater prices.

"The issues paper provides background information on current water and wastewater pricing and outlines the issues to be investigated. It will help stakeholders understand the nature of the issues under review and facilitate public comment and debate," he said.

The issues paper invites submissions from industry, government, other stakeholder groups and the general community on matters relating to the current approach to country water and wastewater pricing and the merits of potential alternative approaches in the following areas:

- the appropriate consumption level for applying uniform residential charges;
- the effectiveness and efficiency of the current system of allocating towns to one of five classes and charging residential and business customers accordingly, and the merits of any alternative structures;
- the effectiveness and efficiency of the service charge structure for businesses and the merits of any alternative structures;
- the appropriateness of the current systems for charging of both residential and commercial wastewater services; and
- the impacts that proposed pricing structures will have on the Water Corporation's revenue and expenses, as well as payments to, and from, the government.

Submissions on any matters raised in the issues paper, with particular reference to the questions posed throughout the document, should be submitted no later than **Friday 13 January 2006**.

"I encourage all interested parties to lodge a submission and contribute to the inquiry," Mr Rowe said. "The Authority is very keen to receive views on the current pricing arrangements before we release the draft report."

Following consideration of the responses made to the issues paper, the Authority will publish a draft report on or before 31 January 2006 for further public consultation. The Authority will also hold public forums following publication of the draft report. The final report for the inquiry will be delivered to the State Government by 28 April 2006, after which the Government will have 28 days to table the report in Parliament.

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