

24 February 2006

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY ON COUNTRY WATER AND WASTE WATER PRICING

This response comes from a small rural local government perspective and relates to this Shires demographics, whole Shire population only 700.

It must be acknowledged that the cost of operating a home and/or a business in country towns is considerably more expensive than the city. Obviously a business can claim its water bill as a tax deduction.

There are many towns in the Wheatbelt area of the State that have static or declining populations, these towns should not be penalised. The consumers in these towns only pleasure might be enjoying the municipal swimming pool, perhaps their own backyard pool and their garden.

A fair uniform pricing policy should be calculated and continued as should the Community Service Obligation to ensure that country people are not penalised; the country areas of this great State (Wheatbelt) cannot function without people and many of the smaller towns are down to a population number which is just able to meet the needs of the surrounding farmers.

The comments included in the Executive Summary are generally agreed with.

Water and sewerage are essential services that should be provided at a cost by Government to ensure basic needs can be met for the entire community.

1. There should be a uniform annual fixed charge for residential, metro and country properties.
2. There should be a uniform annual fixed charge, based on fixtures for commercial/industrial metro and country properties.
3. There should be a uniform annual for rural (farming) properties.
4. There should be a uniform annual charge /kl used for residential metro and country below 26° parallel.
5. There should be lesser uniform charge /kl used for residential above 26° parallel.
6. There should be a uniform charge /kl used for commercial/industrial metro and country below 26° parallel.
7. There should be a uniform charge /kl used for commercial/industrial metro and country above 26° parallel.
8. There should be a uniform charge /kl used for rural (area encompassed by a line from Geraldton – Esperance).
9. There should be a uniform charge /kl used for rural area above Geraldton – Esperance.
10. Headworks charges should be abolished. (At present new developments pay for the future growth which does not necessarily occur). Headworks charges can prevent new businesses from starting up in small rural towns.

Headworks should be funded by an annual fixed charge and water used charges.

Rebates/subsidies for lower income residential only households may be necessary.