



15/05/2009 03:03 PM

To <water@esc.vic.gov.au>  
cc  
bcc  
Subject Water Prices 2009-13 SUBMISSION

15 May 2009

Dr Ron Ben-David  
Chairperson  
Essential Services Commission

Dear Dr Ben-David,

Our submission on the Draft Decision for Water Prices 2009-13 deals with the structure of water pricing and the need for individual water meters in residential buildings.

#### 1. The Structure of Water Pricing

Most of the increase in pricing should be attributed to water usage. The Water Service Charge and Sewerage Service Charge should be reduced. Water conservation and the more efficient use of a finite natural resource are encouraged by higher water usage charges and lower service charges.

#### 2. INDIVIDUAL WATER METERS

We live in a residential building that has 222 apartments. None of the apartments have their own meters. There are only two water meters in the building on property owned by the Owners Corporation. The water bill is divided equally between the 222 apartments that do not have water meters are billed and, the Owners Corporation which has the two water meters is not billed.

So no matter how little or how long an apartment is occupied the bill is the same. Under our billing system you are rewarded by using more water and penalised for using less.

We are unable to get a water meter installed for our apartment unless the Owners Corporation Committee of Management and City West Water agree to have this done for all 222 apartments. I note in the United Kingdom from 1 April 2000 household consumers have been able to choose to have a water meter installed free of installation charge under the Water Industry Act 1999. There are other residential buildings in Melbourne and other parts of Victoria that do not have individual water meters. This would affect thousands of apartments in these complexes. No such mandatory requirement existed in building these complexes.

The State Government should look at measures to assist to upgrade existing residential buildings so individual meters can be installed. There should also be a mandatory requirement for new residential buildings that the developer(s) install individual water meters for each apartment.

The Commonwealth and Victorian Governments have a Greener Building Fund for commercial buildings that addresses sustainability and efficient resource usage.. No such fund exists for residential buildings.. The Greener Building Fund should be extended to residential buildings to deal with issues such as the installation of individual water meters.

Water charges for us are expected to increase by 70% over the next five years. We have no idea what our actual usage is nor are we in a position to control our usage because do not have an individual water meter.

Regards

Vincent & Judy Mahon