

22nd December 2007.

To; Essential Services Commission.
Melbourne.

Dear Essential Services Commission,

I was told by a member of your department that an email would be sent to me on 12th December advising when and where to send this submission, however as none has been received I will send this both by email and in letter form.

We wish to submit the following re future water charging by Central Highlands Water.

The figures stated in the “2008 – 2013 Water Plan”, give no indication how this is broken up, i.e. actual Water Volume Charge, Water Access Fee, and Wastewater Access Fee!

It is therefore difficult to judge how individuals will be affected by this proposed implementation.

In speaking with many people, and by the feelings expressed in “Letters to The Editor”, it is painfully obvious that many are decidedly unhappy about the way we have been charged in the past.

This is the only opportunity to address this issue, and it is extremely important to get it right!

We are personally very mindful of the water situation, and the necessity to treat what we have with the greatest respect. Our own meagre use, (not just in times of drought, but at all times) means that people like us are being penalised by paying too much, and subsidising the high water users.

We have had no recognition for our efforts in the past, water itself has been far too cheap and the standing far charges too high.

To give an example of this, our last water account showed we had used just **\$8.74 by volume**, yet the **total bill was \$203.40** (before pension concession is applied). Had we used **seven times as much water**, our account would have been **\$255.85, a mere \$52.45 extra** (or only 45 cents a day so not enough to give anyone concern). This means that **increasing our usage by 700%, equates to a mere 26% increase in the total amount** to pay.

A ludicrous situation and no incentive at all to conserve our precious resource, and for those like us, we get no credit for our thoughtfulness and care!

In a letter to us dated 9 February 2006 and signed by Neil Brennan, Chief Executive Officer of Central Highlands Water, it states in part; “Without water restriction an average customer uses

approximately 230 kilolitres per year. I note that you use approximately 55 kilolitres per year. Even under a high level of restriction the average customer uses 180 kilolitres per year.”

This means we use less than 25% of the average in normal times, and our normal use is still only 30% of the average during times of high restrictions.

This clearly illustrates our paltry use of water, yet we continue to get no credit for our efforts!

It is vital that the more water used, a very much higher rate applies. A set figure for Water Access is fine, but the Wastewater Access Fee should be reduced considerably. High water users must not only pay an increased amount over a set number of litres, but the Wastewater Fee should also be increased proportionately, as it is obvious that more treatment is needed due to their wasteful behaviour.

There have been suggestions that financial incentive be given to those who reduce their usage. But as we already use a trifling amount, we cannot reduce what we use so once more we would go unrewarded.

We thank you for the opportunity to express our opinion on this important matter, but feel compelled to do so due to the iniquitous manner of current charges imposed on us!

Yours Sincerely,

Pauline and Bill Sansome.