



28-9-07

GREG WILSON  
CHAIRMAN  
ESSENTIAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members

I write with serious concerns about CENTRAL HIGHLANDS WATER future proposal to lift water rates by a possible 71%.

Inadequate public consultation was undertaken by CHW with the residents being given 3 full working days to comment on their plan, this in my opinion is rather akin to using the water act as a PRIVATEERS CHARTER, such as granted to Henry Morgan!

The proposed increases of between 55% and 71% will have a serious impact on communities such as Clunes and other small towns. There are many people living in these small towns, in many instances for up to 50 years, who are now on fixed incomes. With council rates on the rise, motor spirit, LPG, and other essential services, CHW proposed rises will force these people to sell their long standing family homes. That situation should not be allowed.

Under CHW plans many communities are expected to contribute to infrastructure costs which will have no benefit to these communities, but we subsidize other towns in the CHW Region. (Maybe CHW still need to pay for the marble bathrooms at their offices)

Furthermore I find it rather amazing that CHW can impost a charge on ratepayers for the construction of infrastructure that belongs to CHW, then charge for its use. At a meeting held at Clunes prior to the town being sewerred CHW were asked why the rush to sewer the town before the town water system was up graded, their reply was "we are in the business of selling water".

However under the relevant section of the Water Act they are able to apply waste water charges to vacant blocks if the main runs past the property. It therefore does not surprise me that the town was sewerred prior to updating the town water system, given their statement at the Clunes meeting .!