

ICRC proposed new water tariff structure.

Submission to the ICRC Dec 11 2016

The recent report from the ICRC on a new structure for water charges would have a significant negative impact on the ACT.

The current structure has a low basic supply charge, and then two levels of quantity charge. The lower charges apply to the basic quantity of water an average household consumes, then additional water above this volume costs a higher rate.

The benefits of the current structure are that less well-off families and apartment owners pay less for their water, while large users, whether gardeners, golf courses or commercial users pay proportionally more, thus subsidising smaller users and householders. The ICRC's proposed charge structure progressively increases the fixed charge paid by everyone by 4 to 6 **times**, irrespective of the volume of water used, and progressively reduces the cost to large users. This transfers the main costs to domestic occupiers of units and householders, and saves costs for big consumers, encouraging higher volume water use.

For the last 15 years Canberra has successfully economised in its use of drinking water by dual-flush toilets, low flow taps and showers and installation of rainwater tanks. To now encourage greater use by large users through reducing the price of bulk water is entirely counter-productive. Canberra has a fixed allocation of water through the Basin Plan, which does not increase with rising population. The longer we avoid this problem, the better and cheaper for Canberra, as we will have to buy the extra water.

The current water charges work well and assist the less well-off, while making the cost of large volumes of water a brake on use, they should be retained.

Ian R. Falconer

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]