



## MEDIA STATEMENT

# Release of Context Paper: Water in the ACT and Issues Paper: Secondary Water Use in the ACT

Today the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (the Commission) released two papers preparing the ground for its work on the recently received references on secondary water use and regulated water and sewerage services, including pricing over 2013 to 2018.

Senior Commissioner, Mr Malcolm Gray, noted that these two references covered closely related issues. “Although the Commission will be producing separate reports on these two references, we intend to conduct all our analysis in one integrated framework to ensure the full set of interactions between the matters under reference are properly considered”, he said.

“To facilitate this, the Commission has taken the unusual step of issuing a context paper, *Context paper: Water in the ACT*, to explain the overall framework we propose to adopt in tackling these references”, Mr Gray said.

The Commission is also releasing *Issues Paper: Secondary Water Use in the ACT* for the inquiry into secondary water use, on which the Commission must provide a final report by the end of June 2012.

“This issues paper and the forthcoming one covering regulated water and sewerage services have been written on the assumption that the reader will have read the Context Paper first and the Commission encourages readers to do that”, said Mr Gray

Mr Gray noted that “As the Commission was finalising its last report into water and sewerage services in 2008, the ACT community was enduring the most serious drought in the modern history of the region, but with the breaking of that drought in 2010 the ACT has gone from famine to feast in the water available to meet its needs”.

“Receipt of these references gives the Commission an opportunity to stand back from the high emotion of the those recent traumatic years, consider carefully the consequences of all that was done and decided then, and ask

what would best serve the needs of the ACT community for water and sewerage services in the coming years”, Mr Gray said.

“It’s clear from even a casual perusal of our local news media that the ACT community has concerns about aspects of the provision of water and sewerage services in the Territory and we hope the community takes the opportunity to raise those issues with us through the course of these reviews”, Mr Gray said.

Mr Gray noted that “While references of this kind raise many technical issues, it is vitally important that consideration of these not be allowed to crowd out the more fundamental questions such as equity, environmental responsibility and, most basically, what kinds of services does the ACT community want”.

“The Commission cannot give proper consideration to these matters unless we hear the views of the ACT community. Please assist us by providing those views, now and in response to the other documents the Commission will be releasing over the course of these inquiries”, Mr Gray said.

Submissions in response to the secondary water use issues paper should be lodged by 20 December 2011. The Commission expects to release a draft report on the inquiry into secondary water use in March 2012.

An issues paper on the inquiry into regulated water and sewerage services will be released in mid-December 2011.

Both the context paper and the issues papers for the inquiry into secondary water use are available on the Commission’s website [www.icrc.act.gov.au](http://www.icrc.act.gov.au) or by request from the Commission’s offices on level 2, 12 Moore Street, Civic (telephone 6205 0779).

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