

# Regulators Advisory Panel – Minutes

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<b>Date and time</b>	12 November 2024 2:00pm – 3:00pm
<b>Meeting</b>	Regulators Advisory Panel meeting 3
<b>Members present</b>	<p>Carmel Donnelly PSM – Chair, Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)</p> <p>Amanda Jones – Deputy Secretary, NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW Water)</p> <p>Grant Barnes – Chief Regulatory Officer, Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR)</p> <p>Tony Chappel – Chief Executive Officer, NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA)</p> <p>Stephen Conaty – Director, Environmental Health, Health Protection, NSW Health</p>
<b>Staff in attendance</b>	<p>Andrew Nicolls PSM – CEO, IPART</p> <p>Fiona Towers – Executive Director, Pricing and Policy, IPART</p> <p>Kelly Kwan – Executive Director, Regulation and Compliance, IPART</p> <p>Matthew Mansell – Director, Pricing and Policy, IPART</p> <p>Scott Chapman – Director, Pricing and Policy, IPART</p> <p>Ashraf El-Sherbini – Executive Director, DCCEEW Water</p> <p>Leslie Jarvis – Senior Policy Advisor, Environmental Health, Health Protection NSW Health</p>

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## Acknowledgement of Country

The Chair opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country.

## Conflict of interest declarations

No conflicts of interest were declared.

## Price proposals received by IPART

IPART published the pricing proposals on its website on 1 November 2024 along with 3 Issues Papers.

- Sydney Water and WaterNSW (Greater Sydney)
- Hunter Water
- Regional and rural bulk water (WaterNSW & WAMC)

IPART noted that all of the businesses are proposing large price increases.

Public hearings will be held over the coming weeks

IPART has received a Premier's letter for the Hunter Water and Sydney Water price reviews which requires our reviews to consider the following factors when setting prices:

- the cost-of-living impacts of Sydney Water's prices.
- the effectiveness of existing rebates to manage the social impacts of Sydney Water's prices
- opportunities to adjust project timelines to minimise price impacts
- deliverability of the proposed capital plans based on capability and market conditions

## Broken Hill water and wastewater strategy

IPART last reviewed prices for Broken Hill in 2022. In that review IPART identified the need for Essential Water, Broken Hill City Council and key government agencies to work together to develop a water plan for Broken Hill for consideration by the NSW Government, in which the optimal level of water usage be identified to mitigate the health risks posed by lead dust.

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At the last price review, it was identified that a new wastewater treatment plant at Wills Street was required to meet updated environmental standards. Essential Water has recently indicated the forecast cost of delivering that plant has doubled bringing question the feasibility of the project.

*Action item:* NSW EPA agreed to investigate the impact of the relevant environmental standards and to report back to the RAP members.

## PFAS

In April, US EPA introduced maximum contaminant levels for PAS in drinking water which are lower than the current NHMRC *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines* values. Media attention of the issue began soon afterwards, raising questions about water quality, adoption of US EPA guideline values and IARC classification.

In October, the NHMRC released its proposed draft guideline values for PFAS in drinking water. All values were lowered. The NHMRC is expected to provide finalised guidance in early 2025 after the conclusion of its consultation period and review of submissions.

## Non-urban metering update

DCCEEW provided an update on non-urban metering implementation.

## Other discussion items

- The NSW EPA provided an update on a proposed review of very long-term environmental objectives to improve environmental outcomes.
- DCCEEW provided an update on its recycled water roadmap noting they are currently consulting on the draft including holding a webinar to discuss the roadmap.

## Priorities of the next 6-months (All)

Items to investigate and present at future RAP meetings:

- Water pricing – IPART
- PFAS update – NSW Health & NSW EPA
- LWU reform – DCCEEW
- Recycled water roadmap – DCCEEW
- Long-term water quality (May 2025) – EPA

## Next meeting

Monday 10 February 2025

And

Tuesday 13 May 2025

Carmel Donnelly PSM

*Chair*