

RE: Hunter Water Corporation (HWC) Operating Licence

We regret our inability to provide a detailed and referenced submission to this review of the terms of the HWC Operating Licence, due to time constraints. The provision of good water is such a basic important public facility.

We consider that the primary function of HWC should be to provide clean water for its customers at a fair price that includes balancing the accounts with the ecosystem function services that the environment provides.

"CLEAN" WATER

We are concerned that the use of chlorine to keep water quality within the ANZECC guidelines for bacteriological levels is resulting in lower water quality for human health. We understand that chlorinated water is not recommended for pregnant women as it predisposes miscarriages and we know that when the kidney dialysis machines in a Sydney hospital were inadvertently attached directly to tap water without a filter it was critical for life for the recipients.

We also know that the level of chlorine in the water in Newcastle is overwhelming at times. If you run a bath of hot water and have to stand back from the fumes because your breath is taken away, then it is obvious that the level of chlorine is too high.

We request in the strongest possible terms that the new Operating Licence for HWC requires the level of chlorine to be monitored and research undertaken if necessary to determine the MINIMUM levels of chlorine are used to achieve compliance with bacteriological levels.

The primary task for HWC to provide clean water however should be to engage in the co-operative management of the water catchment to enable the reduction of bacteriological contaminants at source.

This should also be prescribed in the terms of the HWC Operating Licence.

ACCOUNTING

The price that the HWC customers pay for water should include return to the environment for the service it has provided. The management of the Tomago Sandbeds, including the cessation of current destructive practices such as sand mining which releases arsenic and removal of native vegetation which upsets the hydrological balance should be funded from water customers.

We also recommend that the HWC is obliged under their OL to recognize that the water that they sell is provided by the Williams River catchment and it is only proper that there is a monetary return for catchment management including reforestation and protection of existing forest ecosystems, particularly including the remnant oldgrowth trees and forest in the upper catchment on private lands.

The water yield of the catchment should be of critical importance to HWC. We request that HWC is required to obtain and use the best available information on the relationship between forested lands and water yield. We make reference to "Logging and Water: a study of the effects of logging regimes on water catchment hydrology and soil stability on the eastern seaboard of Australia, Dargavel, J Hamilton, C & O'Shaughnessy The Australia Institute, 1995" and highlight that considerable work has been done in the Thompson River

catchment for Melbourne's water supply evidencing the cost-benefit analysis of water yield from forested catchment.

HWC should also be required to be advocating water use reduction by its consumers through price incentives.

Yours sincerely,

Marg McLean for Green Alliance Network.