Pricing Submission 2028-33

What we've heard

Werribee Irrigation District

Every five years, as part of our Price Submission process, we talk to our customers and communities about what matters to you about how we best support you in future. We've received feedback that's helping us understand your priorities. This helps us prepare a Price Submission for our services and prices from 2028 to 2033 – with the Essential Services Commission independently assessing any proposed changes. We balance potential options within the regulatory, legislative and operational requirements in which we work.

We heard from our market garden customers that their priorities, in order, are reliable supply, cost and communication – without reliable water, nothing else matters. Growers told us rising input costs and lower market prices are putting farm viability at risk, so price change needs a clear value explanation. Building on modernisation, better access to data and technology is needed to support on-farm operations. Eight in 10 customers rate long-term sustainability of water resources as very or extremely important; with supply reliability and climate change the most common concerns.

Reliable

What we heard from you

- Reliable supply is customers' top priority – without it, nothing else matters.
- Recycled water supply was significantly impacted due to blue-green algae, forcing reliance on a stressed, saline river.
- In addition, the Thomson Reservoir backup pipeline wasn't operational when needed.
- Mismatched valves from modernisation are causing overflows and pressure failures.

Responsive

What we heard from you

- Planners are valued, however, customers seek reliable phone access – especially since orders can't be edited in Waterline once placed.
- Water trading is limited to Bacchus Marsh and Werribee South; dormant allocations held by non-farmers are inaccessible.

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Responsible

What we heard from you

- Long-term sustainability of water resources rated as highly important.
- Value of recreation facilities, such as at Melton, Pykes Creek and Merrimu reservoirs.
- Equitable share needed across competing users including big and small irrigators, licensed users and the environment.
- Concerns about reliable water supply and infrastructure in an increasingly hot and dry climate; secure supply for the future through alternatives, like recycled water and stormwater.

Value for money

What we heard from you

- Market gardens rely heavily on water, at a high cost; with increasing cost pressures from interstate competition.
- Reliability of delivery and service is top priority, yet most prefer no change in cost or service, while one in five would pay more.
- Customers compare Werribee's flat price (water and charges combined) with Macalister Irrigation District's separate water, delivery share and usage charges, and want price drivers explained.

Balancing regulations and operations

Our role, defined under the *Water Act 1989*, requires us to manage and upgrade systems and infrastructure safely and responsibly, within the available funding, statutory framework and resources.

We focus on what's within our scope and work with government and other agencies to support what matters to you for our region today, and for tomorrow.

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