Pricing Submission 2028-33

What we've heard

Groundwater and rivers

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 will help 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 reliability of water access is key. Our customer service is rated highly yet some want more access to data and support, as their farms automate. Many questioned the service they get for their fees, and seeking a clear explanation of value; while rating concern about climate impacts on water access and overall seeking reassurance about long-term water sustainability. Trading barriers, inability to access their own meter data, and slow licence processing are driving frustration.

Reliable

What we heard from you

- Groundwater is a vital resource, and customers want confidence that use stays within sustainable limits.
- Almost three in 10 rated our compliance as performing well, yet customers and community want extraction limits monitored and enforced fairly.
- Continue to invest in remote reading of meters to better support on-farm operations.
- Groundwater Management Area (GMA) caps on water licences can limit customers' ability to secure or grow reliable access, particularly in high-demand areas.

Responsive

What we heard from you

- One in five customers rated our licensing as performing well, yet a third want it faster and simpler, especially for new bores.
- Sleeper licences – entitlements that are held but not used – can lock up water that other farmers need.
- Complex or lengthy application processes are a barrier, particularly for time-sensitive on-farm decisions.
- More education about groundwater recharge rates and aquifer replenishment.
- Customer service is our highest-rated area, yet more front-line staff support would be valued.

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Responsible

What we heard from you

- 84% rate long-term sustainability of water resources as very or extremely important.
- Some want stronger licensing rules to protect groundwater-dependent ecosystems.
- Concerns about how waterways are impacted by on-farm storages.
- Groundwater overuse and environmental impacts in some areas, eg, Dilwyn Aquifer – with some farmers electing not to use or trade allocated water.

Value for money

What we heard from you

- Half prefer services and prices as they are; yet investing in better data access and customer service viewed as important.
- Unused water allocation carryover to next year – for when water is paid for but can't be used, e.g. because of bore or pump break down.
- Paying for water that isn't used, or can't be accessed, is a common frustration.
- Investing more in technology for better access to customer data and information.

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. This shapes aspects of work we do in relation to groundwater and rivers; for example, around legal requirements around licensing process, or available Permissible Consumptive Volumes (PCVs).

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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