Pricing Submission 2028-33

What we've heard

Macalister Irrigation District

Every five years, we ask customers and communities what matters most to them. Your feedback is shaping our Price Submission for services and prices from 2028 to 2033, which the Essential Services Commission will independently assess. We balance options within our regulatory, legislative and operational requirements.

We heard reliability is key. Nine in 10 customers rate reliable water now and in future as very or extremely important. Customers rate customer service as our strongest area and want better data access, more responsive delivery at peak times, and systems that integrate with on-farm technology. While some were willing to pay higher prices for a higher level of service, many said to maintain level of service and price. Eight in 10 customers rate long-term sustainability of water resources as very or extremely important; supply reliability and climate change were the most common concerns. System capacity and resource stewardship were also raised.

Reliable

What we heard from you

- Timely delivery not always met, an area to improve; summer wait times can cost productivity.
- Ageing infrastructure and peak-demand capacity are concerns; end-of-line properties don't always get full allocation.
- Explore a longer irrigation season (even 365 days), remove chokepoints and add automated outlets.
- Stronger support for and integration with on-farm technology.
- Weekly SMS/email allocation updates from February.

Responsive

What we heard from you

- More transparent decisions (e.g. Glenmaggie high and low water releases, environmental flows, Avon expansion).
- Changing Waterline orders is difficult and often needs a planner.
- Slow responses from subject matter experts.
- Customer service is rated our best-performing area, yet more support and simpler order changes needed.
- Allow credit or carryover on high and low reliability water entitlements (already paid for).

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Responsible

What we heard from you

- Long-term sustainability of water resources rated highly important (4.4 out of 5).
- Recreation facilities are valued, e.g. Lake Glenmaggie, Cowwarr Weir, Lake Narracan and Blue Rock Lake.
- Water must be shared fairly between big and small irrigators, licensed users and the environment.
- Concern about supply reliability and infrastructure in a hotter, drier climate.

Value for money

What we heard from you

- Some will pay more if the value is clear; others feel prices are already too high.
- Pricing is confusing – trading, price drivers, flat-rate vs megalitre costs and delivery shares.
- Customers not on the modernised system feel they pay for benefits they don't receive, and want clear, justified fees.

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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