

19 August 2013

The CEO
Queensland Competition Authority (QCA)
Attn. Ms. Catherine Barker

Dear Ms Barker,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a public submission regarding the effectiveness of government regulations intended to protect consumers against excessive water service charges in Coolum Beach.

I believe that all households in the former service area of Maroochy Council will continue to suffer predatory pricing abuse in excess of the maximum allowable revenue permitted under National Water Initiative (NWI) Pricing Principles in 2013-15 annual budgets of Unitywater. Correspondence suggesting maladministration by the former State Government is posted on the QCA's 2011/12 SEQ Prices Monitoring investigation web-site as A-R West Submissions #1 through #6 that can be accessed via the link: <http://www.qca.org.au/water/SEQRetailPriceMon/1112review.php>.

Terms of reference (TOR) provided by current Ministers QCA should enable provision of transparent information to consumers about costs and other factors underlying water and wastewater charges for 2013/14 and 2014/15. However the Authority continues to be forbidden to perform independent investigation of 2012/13 and prior year regulatory asset determinations including investigation of the July 2008 Initial Regulatory Assets that established the foundation upon which Unitywater's current service pricing is based. Despite public submissions to the National Water Commission, the Productivity Commission's Urban Water Sector Inquiry and the Federal Ombudsman, no effective investigation of past maladministration preventing effective consumer protection to Coolum Beach pensioner households has taken place.

Please investigate assertions made in attached correspondence from the Office of the Treasurer relating to the past performance of the Board of Unitywater and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council for possible official misconduct in light of COAG water reform agreements with the Federal Government.

Yours sincerely,


Amy-Rose West (Ms.)

Attachments: Correspondence from Office of the Treasurer dated 27 April and 18 June 2012



Office of the Treasurer
and Minister for Trade

TRY-00787

18 JUN 2012

Ms Amy-Rose West
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms West

I refer to your emails of 28 May 2012 and 10 June 2012 regarding water pricing in South East Queensland (SEQ) and Unitywater's advertisement for a replacement Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

As stated in my previous letter of 27 April 2012, the Government is very concerned about the rising cost of living for families and has committed to reducing the cost of water supply in SEQ.

In regard to your concern about Unitywater's recent advertisement for a replacement CEO, it is important to note that this is a matter for the independent board of Unitywater, which in turn is accountable to the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay Regional Councils. The board of Unitywater has a responsibility to ensure the ongoing provision of drinking water and sewerage services in its region.

Consistent with the Government's commitment under its Four Point Water Plan, I understand that local governments are being given the opportunity to decide on the most efficient and cost-effective arrangements for the delivery of water and wastewater services in their region, as well as options to ensure they can exercise appropriate control over service delivery.

In your e-mail of 28 May 2012, you also indicated concerns about deliberate overcharging by Unitywater (and previously, the Sunshine Coast Regional Council), as well as the future role of the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA). As part of its overall water reform program, the Government will undertake a full review of the regulatory arrangements applying to the SEQ bulk and retail water activities over the coming months, including the future role of the QCA.

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Please note that consultation with councils and the broader implementation of Government's commitment to reduce the cost of water supply in SEQ fall within the portfolio responsibility of the Honourable Mark McArdle MP, Minister for Energy and Water Supply. I encourage you to direct future correspondence on these matters to Minister McArdle.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerard Benedet". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Gerard Benedet
Chief of Staff



Office of the Treasurer
and Minister for Trade

TRY-00141

27 APR 2012

Ms Amy Rose West
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms West

I refer to your email of 9 April 2012 to the Honourable Tim Nicholls MP, Treasurer and Minister for Trade, regarding the Queensland Competition Authority's 2011-12 Final Price Monitoring Report, and have been asked to respond on his behalf.

The Government is very concerned about the rising cost of living for families and has committed to reducing the cost of water in South East Queensland (SEQ) through a Four Point Water Plan involving:

- amalgamation of the four bulk water entities into one entity;
- handing back control of water distribution and retailing to councils;
- writing-off non-performing water grid assets to reduce price rises; and
- adopting a 40-year price path to repay the water grid debt over the economic life of the assets.

On 13 April 2012, the Honourable Mark McArdle MP, Minister for Energy and Water Supply, announced that the Government would immediately commence a review of SEQ's bulk water prices. The Government will be progressively considering the other elements of its Four Point Water Plan over the coming months.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Gerard Benedet'.

Gerard Benedet
Chief of Staff

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