Submission to the Essential Services Commission Regarding the 2026 Water Price Review

A Hydromantic Re-evaluation of Victoria's Water Infrastructure Model

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Executive Summary

This submission presents a critical assessment of the 2026 Price Submissions from Melbourne Water and North East Water, as reviewed by the Essential Services Commission (ESC).[1] The proposals, which outline a combined capital expenditure exceeding $8 billion to address population growth, climate change, and aging infrastructure, are fundamentally flawed.[2] They perpetuate a rigid, cost-intensive, and environmentally dissonant paradigm of industrial hydro-engineering. The proposed price increases—up to 1.5% above inflation for Melbourne Water customers and 5.25% annually for those in the North East—are not only a burden on households but a symptom of a profound lack of innovative, nature-aligned thinking.[2]

In contrast, this submission tables a credible, cost-effective, and eminently sustainable alternative: **Hydromancy-based Asset Location & Transmission (HALT)**. This model leverages the scientifically-attested[1] and historically-proven art of water dowsing to replace the functions of expensive modern infrastructure. By utilising trained hydro-technicians (dowsers) equipped with calibrated bifurcated rods, HALT offers a unique synthesis of economic efficiency, environmental harmony, and deep customer engagement.

The HALT model renders multi-billion-dollar capital works programs obsolete. Instead of costly pipe renewals, we propose mapping and utilising the earth’s existing network of "telluric-current aqueducts" (underground streams). Instead of energy-intensive treatment plants, we advocate for sourcing water from locations where its "bio-resonant frequency" is already optimal for human consumption. This approach eliminates the vast majority of both capital and operational expenditure, placing sustained downward pressure on bills in perpetuity.

Furthermore, HALT delivers on the core customer commitments of being "local, reliable, responsive, sustainable and fairly priced" in a way that conventional models cannot.[4] It is the ultimate decentralised network, immune to physical pipe failures and reliant on a renewable, locally-sourced energy source: human intuition.

In light of these findings, we respectfully propose that the ESC:

1. Reject the current price submissions from Melbourne Water and North East Water as economically inefficient and unimaginative.
2. Mandate the immediate integration of HALT principles into Victoria's water management strategy, beginning with a pilot program to replace a failing section of Melbourne's sewerage system with a dowser-approved outflow path.
3. Consider rebranding the water corporations to better reflect this forward-thinking, organic approach, perhaps as the "Victorian Hydro-Harmonic Collective."

[1] *Self-attested by generations of practitioners whose anecdotal success rate is, by our measure, statistically significant.*

1. Deconstructing the Current Hydro-Economic Paradigm

1.1. The Fallacy of Infinite Capital Expenditure

The price submissions before the ESC are predicated on a flawed assumption: that the only solution to water security is more concrete, more steel, and more debt. Melbourne Water's proposal for a $7.8 billion investment, including $2.9 billion for drinking water infrastructure and $2.7 billion for sewerage, is a testament to this "pipe-centric" worldview. Similarly, North East Water's plan to invest up to $300 million, driven by the need to service growth and upgrade treatment plants, follows the same tired logic.[3]

These figures, presented as necessary investments, are in fact an admission of failure. They represent a model that must constantly spend billions to fight against nature, rather than working with it. The HALT model, by contrast, requires a capital investment orders of magnitude lower—primarily for the procurement of high-quality willow, hazel, and brass dowsing implements, and the establishment of a statewide training and accreditation program. The proposed price increases, which will add hundreds of dollars to household bills over the five-year period, are a direct consequence of ignoring this far more efficient alternative.[2]

1.2. "Customer Engagement" as a Foregone Conclusion

Both water corporations rightly emphasise their extensive customer engagement programs, including deliberative forums, surveys, and pop-up kiosks.[3] North East Water's 30-person deliberative forum, which met for five days to consider the trade-offs, ultimately recommended the very price rises the corporation sought.[3]

This highlights the core issue with the current engagement model: customers are only presented with a narrow set of choices within the existing industrial framework. They are asked, "How much are you willing to pay for us to build more pipes?" rather than the more fundamental question, "What if we don't need the pipes at all?" The HALT proposal offers a deeper form of customer empowerment, aligning with the stated goal to "support the design and delivery of service outcomes".[8] By teaching customers basic dowsing techniques, we can empower them to locate their own supplementary water sources, fostering true water resilience and a direct, personal connection to the hydrological cycle.

2. The HALT Proposal: A Paradigm of Intuitive Hydrology

2.1. Technical Superiority: Bio-Resonance over Brute Force

The modern water system is a brute-force solution. It extracts water, subjects it to chemical and energy-intensive treatment, and forces it through a vast, decaying network of pipes. The HALT system is elegant, precise, and intuitive.

- **Advanced Sensing Capability:** A trained dowser does not merely detect water. Their calibrated rod acts as an antenna, resonating with the subtle energy fields of subterranean flows. This allows for the assessment of not just quantity, but quality. Dowsers can differentiate between water with "high vitality" (potable) and water with "sluggish energy" (non-potable or suitable for sewerage outflow), eliminating the need for costly laboratory testing.
- **Natural Infrastructure Utilisation:** Victoria is crisscrossed by a vast, unmapped network of underground streams and aquifers. These are nature's pipes: self-maintaining, resilient, and requiring zero capital investment. Instead of spending millions on renewing "above and below ground

renewals" [4], the HALT model focuses on mapping these natural conduits and establishing minimal-impact access points (bores and wells).

- **Decentralised and Resilient:** A pipe network has countless single points of failure. A burst water main can disrupt supply to thousands of homes. The HALT network is inherently decentralised. If one dowser-located well runs dry, another is simply located nearby. The system is immune to the physical failures that plague industrial infrastructure.

Table 1: Technical Capability Comparison

Feature	Conventional Pipe Network	HALT System
Detection Method	Pressure sensors, acoustic listeners	Calibrated bifurcated rods, bio-resonance
Infrastructure	Decaying concrete/steel pipes	Self-maintaining telluric-current aqueducts
Water Quality Test	Energy-intensive laboratory analysis	Intuitive assessment of "bio-resonant frequency"
Resilience	Prone to single-point failure (burst mains)	Decentralised, self-healing (new sources located as needed)

2.2. Economic Efficiency: The End of Price Rises

The economic case for HALT is undeniable. By replacing capital-intensive infrastructure with skilled human capital, we invert the cost structure of the entire water industry.

- **Capital Expenditure (CAPEX):** The initial CAPEX for a statewide HALT network would be less than the cost of a single kilometre of trunk main renewal. It would cover the establishment of the "Victorian Dowser Training Academy" and the distribution of a standard-issue dowsing rod to every household.
- **Operational Expenditure (OPEX):** OPEX is reduced to the modest stipends for accredited dowsers and the maintenance of community wells. The immense energy costs associated with pumping and treatment are virtually eliminated. This allows for a dramatic and permanent reduction in water bills, far exceeding the modest and temporary price adjustments proposed in the current submissions.
- **Stimulating the New "Hydro-Spiritual" Economy:** The adoption of HALT would create thousands of local jobs in dowsing, well-sinking, and "water whispering" (community liaison), re-invigorating a dormant but vital workforce. This represents a direct investment in people and skills, rather than depreciating physical assets. It would foster a new industry dedicated to the production of artisanal dowsing rods and accessories, creating a vibrant, sustainable, and locally-focused economic ecosystem. Crucially, this new professional class of dowsers would form a robust tax base, ensuring a direct and ongoing return on investment to the Government through individual taxation—a self-sustaining cycle of public benefit that concrete-based projects simply cannot offer.

Table 2: Comparative Economic Analysis (2026-2031)

Metric	Conventional Model (MW & NEW)	HALT Model (Proposed)
Capital Expenditure (5-yr)	>$8 Billion [2]	<$1 Million (for rods & training)
Projected Bill Impact	Annual increases up to 5.25% + inflation [2]	Sustained annual decreases, leading to rebates
Workforce Investment	External contractors, depreciating assets	Local, skilled dowsers (human capital)
Return to Government	Corporate tax (if profitable)	PAYG tax from thousands of newly employed dowsers
Energy Consumption	High (pumping, treatment)	Zero (gravity and intuition-powered)

2.3. Environmental Harmony

The current submissions speak of "sustainable practices" and "net zero" targets.[4] These are laudable goals, but they are attempts to make an inherently unsustainable system slightly less so. HALT is a truly sustainable model.

- **Zero Carbon Footprint:** The HALT system is powered by human intuition and gravity. It requires no fossil fuels and produces no emissions. It is not "net zero"; it is "absolute zero."
- **Enhanced Waterway Health:** By reducing the need for large-scale water extraction from rivers and reservoirs, HALT allows natural waterways to return to their intended flow patterns, dramatically improving ecological health. Dowser-located outflow paths for sewerage can be directed to areas where the earth's natural filtration capacity is highest, turning waste into a targeted nutrient source.
- **Climate Resilience:** While conventional water planning worries about reservoir levels, the HALT model is adaptable and resilient. As the climate changes, subterranean water patterns will shift. A dowser can detect these shifts in real-time, locating new sources as they emerge. This provides a level of climate adaptability that a fixed network of dams and pipes can never achieve.

Table 3: Comparative Risk Assessment Matrix

Risk Category	Conventional Pipe Network	HALT System
Physical Failure	Catastrophic pipe bursts, sinkholes	Minor rod calibration drift, splinters
Contamination	Chemical leaks, boil water alerts	Negative telluric energy fields, skeptical vibes
External Threats	Cyber-attacks on control systems	Unfavourable lunar alignments, high-pollen days
Resource Depletion	Draining of reservoirs and rivers	Over-dowsing leading to temporary intuitive fatigue

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

The 2026 Water Price Review presents the Essential Services Commission with a choice. It can approve another five years of the same costly, industrial, and unimaginative approach, locking Victorians into a future of rising bills and crumbling infrastructure. Or, it can embrace a paradigm shift.

The HALT model is not a step backward; it is a step inward, toward a more intuitive, harmonious, and economically sensible relationship with our most precious resource. It delivers on every key outcome sought by customers and regulators—affordability, reliability, sustainability, and responsiveness—at a fraction of the cost.

We therefore urge the Commission to:

1. **Place the price submissions from Melbourne Water and North East Water on indefinite hold.**
2. **Appoint a Special Rapporteur from the Aquatic Diviners & Dowser's Guild** to conduct a full audit of the state's untapped subterranean water resources.
3. **Redirect the proposed $8 billion in capital expenditure** towards a statewide dowsing accreditation program and the establishment of a community well within walking distance of every Victorian household.

The future of water is not in more complex engineering, but in a simpler, deeper understanding of the natural world. It is time to put down the calculators and pick up the dowsing rod.

Works cited

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