

*Susan Mayfair*

29<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dr Ron Ben-David  
Commissioner and Chairperson  
Essential Services Commissioner  
Level 37 /2 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000

Dear Mr Ben-David

*Coliban Water, Bendigo Region and Bill Fatigue*

I am writing in regards to Coliban Waters submission for price increases 2018-19. I am against these increases.

I have written to the commission in the past, and nothing has changed regarding the contents of my earlier letter.

Mr Ben-David, I do understand the concept that we all have to contribute to Coliban Water so the organisation can provide water and sewerage to those areas of the state which do not have them. Let alone contribute to the cost of repairing infrastructure well over one hundred years old.

On paper and in principle it seems a fair and equitable solution to the above mentioned problem. Especially to Victorians who's only potable water is held in tanks collected when it rains, and have either cesspits or septic tanks for waste.

Given that, my water bills (copies attached) are \$41.96 for water usage (I can't remember what a shower feels like!) and \$233.23 for service charges, which are just over 400% of the water charges, billed over the quarter. The latest September 2017 bill ratio is even more horrific with water costs of \$30.97 and service and sewerage fees of \$231.34 - that's 800 times the water costs! I am not alone, but one of hundreds in this region having to deal with these circumstances.

The Coliban organisation is still technically bankrupt, with half the state to provide water and sewerage to. This situation is not sustainable. Any business Mr Ben-David running on overheads of 800%, would be before the ACCC, and regarded as a basket case.

I should note, that in the late 1980's I was a member of the Castlemaine Water Board so I'm not totally ignorant of the facts regarding this. However it was mainly voluntary, not with the \$150,000.00 plus, remuneration that the current board members each enjoy.

My proposal , once again, is that the state government have a state levy on ALL Victorians to cover the costs of developing the infrastructure to provide to residents not connected to mains water. If all Victorians share equally, have one Department of Water then surely the duplication of costs, CEO's salaries and bonus let alone board honorariums and expenses would be saved. Indeed even with the Governments concessions (which I'm grateful for) the Victorian Government are paying anyway.

The Ministers office bats the ball to the ESC, saying the Coliban's pricing policy is your fault. (I'm paraphrasing), but close to the point.

I've come to the end of my rational wits about this matter. I'm handing the dilemma to you, hopefully with a new paradigm that isn't so financially crushing on those of us who find ourselves at the bottom of the heap and bewildered.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Yours sincerely



Susan Mayfair (Mrs)