

17 May 2012

The Commissioner
Essential Services Commission
Level 2, 35 Spring Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

via email. escwatersubmissions@getstarted.com.au

Dear Sir

Melbourne Water Special Drainage Areas Price Review 2012/13

I wish to lodge an objection to the pricing review submitted by Melbourne Water regarding Patterson Lakes price increases.

At no stage has Melbourne Water provided me, or any other party to my knowledge, an accurate costing on the maintenance of the waterways, and as such its costings and proposed increases are without proof and unreasonable. Further, Melbourne Water levies on all rateable Melbourne properties a waterways and drainage charge. This charge is designed to maintain public waterways and rivers, which include the waterways at Patterson Lakes. There has been no description on how funds collected via this levy are distributed and apportioned.

Works undertaken by Melbourne Water are subcontracted in the main, and residents have not been able to have input into the selection criteria of the contractors or the terms and conditions of the contracts. This places all ratepayers at risk. For example, presently all jetties within the waterways are being replaced. Ratepayers can opt to install a floating jetty in lieu of a fixed timber jetty, at extra ratepayer expense. With only one contractor there is no competition and owners are forced to accept the Melbourne Water contractor, and price. Ratepayers are spending \$8,000 for their portion of a floating dock. The Melbourne Water proposal is that it continues to monitor and maintain the waterways but the immediate residents must pay the charges. This is an unacceptable position.

Melbourne Water cannot unburden itself of the cost of maintaining these waterways without major changes to its charter and legal obligations of the corporation. It would seem to seek to raise the rates and levies without the legal position in place to be able to do so.

As such I respectfully request that you put aside any request to increase rates until

- 1) Full and accurate costings on maintenance are made available to all parties
- 2) Full disclosure on the collection of drainage and waterways charges is made, and how much of the funds are used in the general flood mitigation area surrounding the Tidal Waterways and apportioned to all properties in the flood prevention area
- 3) Refuse all increases until the legal framework is in place that allows the Corporation to modify chargeable rates
- 4) The benefit to the wider community and Kingston Council are accounted for.

Yours sincerely,

Vincent Alfonso