

Supply System 6 Unrated Property Owners  
608 Rifle Butts Road  
Lower Norton Vic 3401

To whom it may concern,

As a group of unrated property owners in Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water's (GMMW) proposed Supply System 6 we would like to bring to your attention that we have no representation as unrated property owners on the pipeline community reference group, the Wimmera Domestic and Stock Consultative Committee. We the landowners are not even included on the GMMW mailing list. Having no voice we aren't being informed of decisions made by GMMW. Information that has been received by property owners with both rated and unrated land has been misleading and confusing.

Land that has been unrated in the past has been made to be self sufficient. Landowners have spent a lot of time, effort and money to ensure that run-off water has been harvested and stored. This catchment water from unrated land has been utilised by farmers to water stock and for domestic use. Due to the inability of GMMW to supply water during times of drought these landowners have been forced to cart catchment water to their rated country. A point to note is that during the last 11 year dry period, many catchment dams have received enough run-off to reliably maintain livestock and domestic use. History has proven over the past 130 years of settlement, catchment dams in this unrated area have been very reliable.

We understand that GMMW will only provide 96% security of supply for both urban, stock and domestic customers under the new pipeline system. We feel that we have demonstrated our current infrastructure has proven itself to be more reliable and far superior. If the suggested pipeline was to be supplied to these areas, it would be largely unused as landowners would not be prepared to fill in their dams and catchment infrastructure which have proven their reliability in this current dry period.

For the landowners who do adopt the new pipeline system, the expense of purchasing tanks, troughs, pipes, fittings and the laying of the pipe will be a severe financial burden. Landowners in Supply System 6 are generally more dependant (some fully dependant) on sheep, rather than cropping and therefore have smaller paddocks and will require a lot more infrastructure. An estimate of the costs for a fully rated farm of 1500 hectares (replacing current dams) will be approximately \$70,000 not including installation labour, or the substantial ongoing cost of monitoring and maintaining a reticulated supply.

This expense would be illogical due to the fact the pipeline would be duplicating an existing functional system. Farmers are dreading the thought of having to maintain two systems. As previously stated, they will not fill in dams and water supply channels in this area as they will be required to cover peak loads, maintain water security and reduce monitoring times and costs.

Historically, the reason why some of these properties are unrated is due to the fact when the channel system was first established it was to supply the drier areas to the north. In order to transport the water to these areas it had to first go through high rainfall area that were totally self sufficient. Landowners were then, given the choice of whether they wanted to be in the system or not.

We are concerned that presently unrated land is to be automatically classified and rated without being given the option of not joining the system. Other services such as gas, phone and electricity are optional for all customers, meaning that if it is not required there is no cost. Furthermore, once the pipeline system has been implemented by GMMW, all water users will be subject to all future price and rate increases which may be substantial due to ongoing or unforeseen cost pressures.

Landowners cannot understand why GMMW are pursuing this unpopular and unnecessary course which can only be attributed to an ignorant attempt to gain income through unfair means. We believe that compulsory servicing of areas not requiring piped supply is a gross misuse of public money and an unnecessary burden on these property owners.

**The Supply System 6 Unrated Property Owners together with the full support of the Wimmera District Council VFF demand GMMW give unrated landowners the option of connecting to the pipeline or remaining self sufficient as they have since settlement.**

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Regards

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