

To: <water@esc.vic.gov.au>  
cc:  
From:  
Date: 22/11/2012 06:29:31 AM  
Subject: feedback on water prices

November 2012

As per the notice in the newspaper, I would like to voice my opinion re the water prices proposed for 2013 to 2018, particularly the rumoured increase of \$300 per year which is beyond belief and reason.

### Current prices

· When we in drought some years ago, we were asked to reduce water usage and we did . . . but prices went up because we weren't using enough water for the water companies to make a big enough profit! Now that dams are full and the drought is over, prices have not only not gone down again, but keep rising.

· Whilst appreciating that water is a valuable resource and that we will always have to be careful with it, Australia is a first world developed country imposing a substandard level of living and financial hardship to many by making water so expensive. It is a basic human necessity that should be affordable for everyone - but it isn't.

· I scrimp, save, re-use grey water etc etc and manage at times to use only \$20 worth of water BUT I STILL GET A \$200 BILL because of all the other charges on my water bill!!! Absolutely unfair and a dis-incentive to be water-wise.

### Annual parks charge

This amount is paid per year per household/per business to go towards the upkeep of city parks and places like the Shrine of Remembrance. BUT:

· There has been a huge increase in the number of houses, units etc being built across Melbourne in the last few years, which surely means *more people paying this charge* and also a huge revenue increase for the water companies. Individual householders are not seeing any benefits from this, as not only has our annual charge per household **not** been reduced proportionate to the amount of new and additional buildings, but it has actually increased ! Logically, if a charge is eg \$100 and 10 people are paying it, then they pay \$10 each; but if there are 15 people to pay the same \$100, then each person contribution is less. But it doesn't work that way with the parks charge: more people seems to equal more money to Melbourne Water without validation.

· When I put this above point to Yarra Valley Water, they told me that they "couldn't explain" it. So I wrote to my local MP who contacted some higher authority. The reply when

it came back was ludicrous and insulting to anyone with half a cell of intelligence . . . I was told that although the population of Melbourne has increased, *the actual number of buildings/houses/units etc has not increased at all over the last few years* . I don't know what part of Melbourne the water hierarchy live in, but where I live every house that is knocked down is replaced by multiple units and every spare patch of land has been built on. In Croydon the golf course has become a housing estate and in Knox the old brick works is a massive estate of hundreds and hundreds of houses. It is the same across the whole of Melbourne and all these extra buildings **will be paying the annual parks charge.**

· Surely the lack of drought, abundance of rain plus advancements in grey watering systems should mean that places like the city parks have not needed much water over the last few years and should be reasonably self sufficient? My own garden (like many others) lost hundreds of dollars worth of plants and trees during the drought – especially the Black Saturday week – and yet we are supposed to not mind paying for city gardens to be nurtured while we cant afford the water to maintain our own. We do mind.

· The annual parks charge (of just under \$70) is equivalent to nearly my whole year's use of household water and I do think that I, and my family, are more important than any park. I should not have to go without and do things the hard way just so that grass is green in a park I probably never even go to and dont care about. Things need to be put into perspective.

Putting water prices up even more is going to cripple many people financially. An extra \$300 a year when I only use an average of \$80 to \$90 worth of water for my family is beyond ridiculous.

I would appreciate a reply to this.

Yours