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Water Prices set to soar with over cumulative changes of 33% to 42% over next four years

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) has approved water bill increases of almost 50 per cent, excluding inflation, across many NSW valleys over the next four years, despite acknowledging that many customers have limited capacity to absorb them.

Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association Executive Officer Louise Gall said IPART had ignored repeated warnings from customers and chosen to prioritise WaterNSW's financial position over the ability of farming businesses and regional communities to pay.

"We supported a 5 per cent annual price cap (plus inflation) to balance affordability pressures irrigators are currently facing with the ever-increasing input costs of agricultural production. Instead, IPART capped price increases to a maximum 10 per cent per year plus inflation," Ms Gall said.

Water bills in the Gwydir will increase between 7 and 10 per cent plus CPI each year for the next four years. This is a cumulative change of 33 to 42 per cent over the next four years.

- Typical General Security bills will increase from \$18,863 to \$26,724 a 9.1 per cent annualised increase.
- Entitlement prices will incur an annualised increase of 9.9 per cent for General Security and 6.1 per cent for High Security.
- While usage prices will see an annualised 8.8 per cent increase.
- Local Water Utilities in the Gwydir will also see increases.

These increases cannot continue. WaterNSW is a monopoly provider, and customers have no choice where they access their water entitlements.

IPART's consultant found that price increases materially reduce farm profitability, with significant flow-on impacts for regional communities.

"Farmers are already facing increasing climate variability, and irrigation is essential to the viability of our towns and regional economies.

"Regional communities cannot continue to absorb these escalating costs. The NSW Government must undertake a full review of WaterNSW's operating model, regulatory framework and funding arrangements.

"Farming drives regional jobs, businesses and economic growth. We are simply asking the NSW Government to back farming now and into the future so our towns can continue to thrive," Ms Gall said.

Information Links:

[IPART Final determination](#)

[IPART Final Report](#)

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