IPART has published its Final Determination into Sydney Water’s prices.

What is the final determination?
The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) reviews and sets prices for water, wastewater and stormwater services generally every four years. The final determination sets out IPART’s decisions on the prices we can charge from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2020.

What did Sydney Water propose?
Our pricing proposal, lodged with IPART in 2015, proposed to:

• reduce customer bills, while still delivering high quality services
• enhance customer engagement, so we can better align our services to meet customer expectations
• modernise regulation, so we can deliver better outcomes for customers.

How much will customers save on their bills?
From 1 July 2016, customers will save about $100 a year for the next four years. After this, bills will increase at the rate of inflation.

This is good news. We know families across Sydney are struggling with the rising cost of living. We’re pleased to be able to pass on savings to our customers.

How have we been able to offer savings?
We believe our customers should benefit from the savings we’ve been able to make. We’re able to propose a price reduction because we:

• are passing on savings from lower interest rates
• have saved over $450 million since 2012 by being more efficient
• expect to pay less to buy water.
How will lower bills affect the environment?
We take our responsibility for environmental obligations very seriously. We also care about how our business affects communities and the environment.

We already spend about $650–$700 million each year on programs that directly benefit the environment. This includes our work on wet weather overflows and upgrades to treatment plants.

How will price reductions affect wet weather overflows?
We’re investing in water infrastructure. This will ensure the system is reliable, and protects the health of our community and the environment.

We’re working to fix wastewater drainage problems that affect some customers in very heavy rain. If we don’t build relief pipes, the water will flow into people’s homes and backyards.

Our rivers, beaches and harbour have never been in better shape. We’re committed to keeping them that way.

How will we respond to IPART’s reductions?
Providing our customers with world class services, ensuring a safe working environment for staff and meeting our environmental obligations remain our top priorities.

We’ll continue to look for ways to create a more flexible workforce that is better able to deliver customer value and is responsive to future risks. We have a track record of embracing technology and looking for innovative ways to be more efficient.

What happens if I pay my bill late? Will I be charged a fee?
IPART has accepted our proposal to introduce a late fee for customers who have unpaid bills and are not on one of our hardship programs.

This allows us to recover the costs associated with unpaid bills, without having to pass this cost back onto the whole customer base by increasing prices.

How can we help if you’re having trouble paying your bills?
We provide a range of assistance programs to ensure you have the help you need if you’re in financial difficulty.

By providing flexible payment arrangements and tailored assistance, we can help remove some of the pressures associated with paying bills.

Under the BillAssist® program, our team of qualified, professional case coordinators work with home owners in financial hardship. We provide personalised support, advice and payment assistance. We also refer customers to other specialist services. Find out more about how we can Help with your bill or call us on 13 20 92.
Will the final determination impact pensioners?

We give rebates on water, wastewater and stormwater drainage service charges to people with a Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card or a Department of Veterans’ Affairs gold Health Card.

We’ll ensure pensioners receive the benefit of any price reduction in line with average bill decreases.

What does the final determination say about recycled water prices?

The final determination sets recycled water prices for Rouse Hill only.

The Rouse Hill recycled water usage charge is 90% of the drinking water usage charge.

We’ll set the recycled water usage charge for all our other residential recycled water schemes at the same price. This includes schemes at Hoxton Park, Colebee, Oran Park and Turner Road, and Ropes Crossing.

How are Rouse Hill stormwater customer affected?

We provide stormwater services to customers in the Rouse Hill area. The stormwater drainage charge will stay at $141.47\(^a\) a year.

What is the impact on new properties in Rouse Hill?

IPART did not accept our proposal to maintain the Rouse Hill land charge at $248.85.

The Rouse Hill land charge will increase by 10% each year over the next four years. The charge will be $277.29 per year from 1 July 2016. It will be $369.08\(^a\) a year in 2019-20.

The increased charge will apply to existing properties connected after 1 July 2012 and new properties that connect to our network.

What happens when the desalination plant is switched on?

The desalination plant is part of the NSW Government’s strategy to secure Sydney’s water future. The Metropolitan Water Directorate sets the rules for when the plant is switched on. The plant is owned by Sydney Desalination Plant Pty Ltd. IPART sets prices for desalinated water supply services under a separate determination. IPART will make a decision on the prices we’ll pay for these services from 1 July 2017.

IPART has accepted our proposal to recover the additional variable costs if the plant is turned on. The water usage charge would increase by $0.12\(^a\) a kL over the 2016-17 price.

For a typical household, this would add about $26.40\(^a\) a year to water usage charges. Lower water users, such as people living in apartments, would pay proportionally less. Larger water users, such as large non-residential customers, would pay proportionally more.

\(^a\) Prices are increased at the rate of inflation each financial year.