Queensland
Competition
Authority

Review of RAB-based irrigation prices 2027–29
Online workshop – summary of issues raised

July 2026

This note records issues identified and views expressed by stakeholders present at the QCA's workshop on the draft reports for this review. The QCA is yet to form any opinion on these issues and views. As appropriate, issues will be addressed in the QCA's final reports.

Schemes: Multiple schemes

Date of workshop: 17 July 2026

Topic	Issues raised
Scope of the review	• A stakeholder asked whether the QCA would make a recommendation on the preferred approach to cost recovery. • A stakeholder asked about Sunwater's rationale for proposing a RAB approach.
Rate of return	• A stakeholder said that a key concern for irrigators is that the RAB approach includes an explicit return on capital component.
Price stability	• A stakeholder asked about the drivers of revisions to renewals expenditure forecasts between price reviews under the annuity approach.
Intergenerational equity	• A stakeholder noted that, during the transition phase, there may be less direct alignment between cost recovery and the timing and service lives of assets under the RAB approach because the RAB may include pre-transition annuity balances.
Expenditure classification	• A stakeholder asked whether definitions of capital expenditure (capex) and operating expenditure (opex) differ between the RAB and renewals annuity approaches.
Managing transitional impacts	• A stakeholder noted that some schemes have relatively low RAB-based prices in the near term followed by higher prices in future years and asked whether this divergence would persist over the longer term. • A stakeholder asked why draft fixed price targets and draft fixed prices are the same for the Dawson Valley scheme. • A stakeholder asked why the QCA proposed rebating positive annuity balances over 4 years rather than immediately.