

Monday, 31 January 2005

- 3 FEB 2005

DATE RECEIVED

Queensland Competition Authority
GPO Box 2257
Brisbane 4001

Cc: Mrs Liz Cunningham, Paul Neville MP, Jeff Seeney MP, Stephen Robertson MP, and Premier Peter Beattie.

Re: Submission to Qld Competition Authority about pricing practices for The Gladstone Area Water Board.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my concern over recent proposed changes to the costing of reticulated water supply to Mount Larcom.

It is my belief that from June 1st the cost of water to Mount Larcom will rise by 1300% from the current cost of 0.65c k/litre to \$8.69 k/litre. This means a projected yearly rise to me personally from \$92.50 p/y (rates 2003/2004 period) to \$1237 p/y. Mount Larcom already pays the highest water connection fee within the Gladstone/Calliope district of \$428 p/y, making a total of \$1665 per year in water rates for my personal use.

As I have been fairly frugal already in the past year and have now started new plantings, this could easily rise to over \$2000 per year just for water!

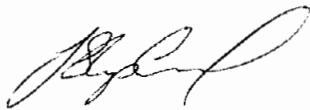
As a disability pensioner this proposed water cost is well beyond my means, and I have concerns as to how I am to cope financially on my pension payment. It is possible that such water cost increases could lead to a more severe decrease in personal water usage such as having no garden at all, very frugal showers, limited clothing washing and limited drinking water, all of which means a detriment to health, sanitation and having a nice home to live in. Other possible means of paying for the water could be a decrease in food and medical expenses, again affecting health.

It is not my wish to be cut off from the treated water supply, but Mount Larcom is considering this a necessary step in reducing the abhorrent costs that all residents may soon have to pay. This means a severe step backwards for the town and will be a certain death knell for proposed future development, social events and will affect the value of all property. I personally am very upset at the possibility that the home I've recently bought in a promising town that has enough services for my needs, will dive in value. As I do not have the monetary means to move on I may end up living in a ghost town with no services, unable to sell my home.

It concerns me that Mount Larcom seems to be singled out for this unjustified increase and I do not even understand how it is even allowable. I believe this would make us the most expensive town within Queensland to live in, and not enough services to justify it. I would request that the State Government look into this and stop the Gladstone Area Water Board passing on the believed increases, and crippling a tiny town that already bears the brunt of a higher connection fee as it at the end of a pipeline. It is also my belief that if the Gladstone Area Water Board were allowed to increase water costs so significantly then other Water Boards may follow, and we could see this happening across the entire state, disabling the whole regional economy. This surely cannot be allowed.

I ask you to kindly consider this issue and not allow such a large cost increase to occur to our water supply.

With Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracey Shephard', written in a cursive style.

Tracey Shephard.

NB: 2 Printed copies and 1 email version to each party