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MAYOR



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Queensland Competition Authority
GPO Box 2257
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Sir/Madam

QCA PRICE MONITORING INVESTIGATION: UNITYWATER AND URBAN UTILITIES (2026-30)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry.

About Us

Lockyer Valley Regional Council is situated less than an hour's drive from Brisbane, covers an area of approximately 2,200 square kilometres, and has a strong agricultural sector. We are one of Urban Utilities' five Participant Councils with Brisbane, Ipswich, Scenic Rim and Somerset. While we benefit from the economies of scale of being part of a distributor-retailer, we are a regional council and the priorities of our community differ from the city councils.

The Lockyer Valley Region is undergoing significant and rapid growth, with our population projected to grow by 37 per cent over the next two decades to a projected population of 67,900 by 2046.

The Lockyer Valley is increasingly connected to broader South East Queensland growth trends and associated infrastructure, growth, planning and population demands, while retaining many unique, local challenges, including water security and disaster resilience.

Growth

Urban Utilities' QCA submission highlights the challenges faced not only across South East Queensland and their service delivery area, but the challenges faced within our region. In particular, the submission highlights the scale of investment required to support population growth, housing delivery and economic development across South East Queensland.

To deliver on the forecast growth to our region, every home will need water and wastewater infrastructure delivered and maintained into the future. We ask that through this process, the QCA does not place constraints on Urban Utilities' ability to service growing areas like ours and create the communities for people to live in within the Lockyer. This is a challenge shared by many councils across Queensland as they balance community expectations, asset renewal and long-term financial sustainability.



Affordability

Affordability is a key issue for Council and the residents of Lockyer Valley, and any solutions should strike a balance between being able to deliver new infrastructure and keep downward pressure on costs. Through our ongoing close consultation with Urban Utilities, we know they work hard on their operating and capital expenditure programs to address the challenges of affordability and ageing infrastructure throughout our region.

Urban Utilities' submission recognises the challenge of maintaining affordable services while delivering the infrastructure needed for future growth and reliability, especially that existing customers should not bear the full weight of growth funding. Adequate funding and cost recovery mechanisms that bring certainty need to be put in place to ensure that future funding is equitable.

Water security

Water security and the impact of increased extreme weather events are incredibly important issues for our community, given our region's strong agricultural sector and reliance on resilient water infrastructure to support economic prosperity. Adequately funded infrastructure projects and service providers are critical to our community's sense of overall security.

Funding and long-term growth

Additionally, Urban Utilities' investment program includes renewal of ageing infrastructure and measures to improve resilience to extreme weather and future climate challenges. These priorities align with the experiences of Lockyer Valley communities, which have faced significant flood and drought events over many years.

Urban Utilities continues to advocate for alternative State Government funding mechanisms, including the Infrastructure Activation Fund (IAF), to help offset the costs of growth-related infrastructure. Broader access to funding programs remains important to supporting growth while minimising impacts on customers and communities.

Growth, housing, water security and resilience are increasingly regional issues that extend beyond individual council boundaries. Strong collaboration between councils, utilities and the State Government will be essential to support the long-term success of South East Queensland.

Conclusion

In summary, Urban Utilities' QCA submission reinforces that sustained investment in water infrastructure is essential to supporting housing supply, economic development, water security and community resilience across South East Queensland. The underlying issues driving the submission, namely growth, affordability, resilience and infrastructure funding, are highly relevant to Lockyer Valley as it continues to plan for its long-term future and contribution to the broader South East Queensland region.

Yours faithfully



Cr Tanya Milligan
MAYOR
LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

