

Western Water household bill increases limited to inflation for a year to recognise impact of coronavirus

Residents of Bacchus Marsh, Gisborne, Sunbury, Melton, Macedon and Lancefield will have typical water bill increases held to inflation for a year to recognise the impact on household budgets due to coronavirus.

Under a [decision released by the state's independent pricing regulator](#), a typical owner occupier household will see their bill rise by inflation only over the next year.

The Essential Services Commission has approved Western Water's three-year pricing plan that focuses on keeping prices down over the next 12 months to help customers cope with the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Prices will however rise in the next two years (2021–22 and 2022–23) with typical bill increases of four per cent each year (before inflation).

The commission's director of pricing Marcus Crudden said Western Water's price proposal was carefully scrutinised to ensure prices were kept as low as possible.

"Western Water's price increases are being driven by a need to invest almost \$300 million in new infrastructure to accommodate significant population growth, and to maintain water and sewerage services for all customers."

"However, we approved Western Water's proposal to keep prices as low as possible over the next year, given the likely ongoing impact of coronavirus on the community," he said.

Mr Crudden says the commission expects Western Water to actively identify customers who may experience problems paying their bills.

"Water businesses are required to provide support to customers experiencing payment difficulty and explore options with them, including bill payment extensions and instalment plans.

"This support will be even more critical as the impact of the pandemic continues to be felt," he said.

Western Water resubmitted its proposals in April to address issues relating to its initial submission.

Pricing decisions for [South Gippsland Water](#) and [Goulburn-Murray Water](#) have also been released.

For further information call: Michelle Bryne, Head of Strategic Communication, 9032 1324 or 0437 677 385