

## Access charge

### Queensland Competition Authority irrigation price review 2020/24

#### Why is Sunwater proposing an access charge?

For the 2021-24 price path, Sunwater has proposed an access charge. The access charge was developed in conjunction with the Queensland Farmers Federation and aims to:

- ensure that individual customers pay the administration costs associated with their accounts, even if they hold a relatively small allocation;
- incentivise customers to help reduce administration costs by passing on any cost savings customers generate via a discount on the access charge
- be revenue neutral to Sunwater

#### What is the proposed access charge?

Sunwater is proposing an annual access charge of \$998 (\$2020/21), which would recover customer account administration costs such as billing, the customer call centre, Resource Operations Licence compliance, account management and water account management including announced allocations and processing of temporary trades.

The revenue Sunwater generates from the access charge would be offset by a reduction in the fixed Part A charges. As a result, Sunwater would not earn any additional revenue from implementing the charge.

#### How can I make sure I receive a discount?

If a sufficient number of schemes elect to adopt the access charge, customers will automatically receive a 7 per cent discount on the access charge in the final quarterly bill each year if, during that year, they have:

- received their bill and water account statement via email;
- paid their bill on time;
- kept their water account balance at or above zero throughout the year;
- actively used the Sunwater Online portal or new Customer App for basic account enquiries (such as water orders and account balances).

By doing these things, you are helping Sunwater lower its costs, and these cost savings can be returned to you via the discount.

#### How will the access charge affect customers?

The impact on individual customers will depend on the volume of allocations they hold and the scheme they are in. The table below shows an estimate of the reduction in the fixed Part A charges and the minimum number of allocations that a customer would need to hold to pay less overall, if the proposed access charge was introduced.

To update your billing preferences and get your log-in to Sunwater's online customer portal, please phone 13 25 89.

Water Supply Scheme	Reduction in Part A charges (\$2020/21)	Breakeven allocations (ML)
Barker Barambah	\$4.85	192
Boyne River & Tarong	\$3.79	245
Bundaberg	\$5.49	169
Burdekin Haughton	\$0.46	2020
Callide Valley	\$7.05	132
Chinchilla Weir	\$9.91	94
Cunnamulla	\$9.00	103
Dawson Valley	\$2.84	327
Eton	\$5.98	155
Lower Fitzroy	\$0.92	1006
Lower Mary River	\$5.47	170
Macintyre Brook	\$3.88	240
Nogoa Mackenzie	\$1.68	554
Pioneer River	\$0.19	4942
Proserpine River	\$1.42	656
St George	\$2.72	342
Three Moon	\$5.93	157
Upper Burnett	\$5.25	177
Upper Condamine	\$2.65	350

Note: the Mareeba-Dimbulah Water Supply Scheme already has an access charge and therefore is not listed here.

### When would the access charge commence?

At this stage, the access charge is only a proposal from Sunwater to the QCA's irrigation price review. It will only commence if it receives the support of the QCA and is accepted by the Queensland Government. If this occurs, the access charge and the offsetting reductions to fixed Part A charges would be introduced from 1 July 2020.

### How can I have my say?

Sunwater has provided a detailed submission on the access charge to the QCA's irrigation price review. It is intended to complement consultation with customers, including Sunwater's Irrigator Advisory Committees and peak industry bodies. In addition, Sunwater has provided a submission to the QCA's irrigation price review. The QCA is currently seeking submissions from stakeholders on its draft report and Sunwater's proposed access charge. Submissions are due on 4 November 2019 and can be made via the QCA's website: [www.qca.org.au](http://www.qca.org.au)