

# Sunwater QCA Submission 2024

## **Customer Engagement**

As was raised at the most recent meeting with QCA (12 Feb) we raised the issue that the engagement process was not undertaken to a satisfactory level. We raised the issue that many of the customers in the Barker Barambah scheme never received any notification about the meetings that Sunwater held in the consultation process. This issue has been raised multiple times with Sunwater staff over the last 2 years. Many of the customers that attend these meetings only do so after receiving communication from myself or another member of the previous defunct advisory committee.

## **Advisory Committee**

Sunwater have not facilitated the holding of scheduled meetings for the Advisory Committee. This was also raised at the most recent meeting (12 Feb). This issue was to be followed up to assist the local irrigators to have a voice with regards to this pricing proposal. To date no response has been received and this issue has also been raised since the meeting with no response. This committee is in standby mode due to elections that took place in October 2023. To date no feedback or response has been received from SunWater.

## **Incorrect published figures**

The below showcases major discrepancies within SunWater reporting. With this inaccurate reporting it is impossible for customers within the Barker Barambah scheme to be able to formulate a valid response to counteract year on year water pricing increases that Sunwater propose. I would also indicate that it would be extremely inappropriate for QCA to approve any of Sunwater recommendations to increase water pricing based on the validity of figures presented by Sunwater.

This table is taken from the 2023 Service & performance plan

### Electricity metrics

Table 7 sets out electricity usage and efficiency-related information for the Upper Redgate pump station.

Table 7 Electricity usage and efficiency-related metrics – Upper Redgate pump station<sup>1</sup>

Metric	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Electricity usage (kWh)	56,130	195,620	421	566
Volume pumped (ML)	422	1448	11	6
Actual electricity cost (\$)	21,367	50,427	18,640	4,108
Actual electricity cost per ML (\$/ML pumped)	50.63	34.83	1,695	11.79
Average pump energy indicator <sup>2</sup> (kWh/ML/per metre of head)	5.32	5.15	1.53	4.18

1. Upper Redgate pump station only. Electricity costs do not reconcile to figures presented elsewhere in this S&PP, which are scheme wide.

2. The industry guidelines are 3.4 to 4.5, depending on the size and design of the pump station with the benchmark for larger pump stations being more efficient.

To effectively monitor pump efficiency, a granular level of both energy and water data is required. With the installation of interval meters in early 2020 to capture energy consumption at a granular level, Sunwater is now able to more frequently monitor our performance against this metric.

The below table is taken from the Irrigation pricing proposal 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2029 that was distributed at the Feb 12 meeting with QCA in Murgon.

Table 3 Electricity usage and efficiency-related metrics for Upper Redgate pump station 1

Metric	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Electricity usage pump station (kWh)	210,730	121,678	243,559	21,176	195,620	421	566
Volume pumped (ML)	1,128	882	1,672	422	1,448	11	6
Water usage – Redgate Relift (ML)	874	454	633	197	232.7	49.9	348
Actual electricity cost pump station (\$ GST excl)	64,357	35,367	79,528	6,875	6,039	13,490	614
Actual electricity cost per ML (\$/ML pumped)	73.64	77.90	47.56	16.28	4.17	1,226	102.33
*QCA regulated retail tariff escalations	increase 12.3 – 13.2%	increase 6.1 – 7.4%	*decrease 2.6 – 3.5%	decrease 7 – 9.1%	*decrease 13.6%	decrease 2.5%	*increase 15.7%
Average pump energy indicator <sup>2</sup> kWh/ML/per metre of head	4.96	5.68	6.62	5.32	5.15	1.53	4.18

1. Upper Redgate pump station only

2. The industry guidelines are 3.4 to 4.5, depending on the size and design of the pump station with the benchmark for larger pump stations being more efficient

To effectively monitor pump efficiency, a granular level of both energy and water data is required. With the installation of interval meters in early 2020 to capture energy consumption at a granular level, Sunwater is now able to more frequently monitor our performance against this metric.

\*Indicates a tariff change as per QCA published gazettes

water conducts an annual solar assessment across its pump stations and results have indicated it is not economically viable to progress at the Upper Redgate pump station currently due to the significant variability in water demand.

The high-level economic analysis of solar opportunity at Upper Redgate Pump Station. Each year the analysis has been assessed against various tariff options resulting in a small or negative Net Present Value with minimal savings. The main contributors to this outcome have been:

The site is subject to a demand tariff which is treated as a fixed cost

most of the solar generation is exported (77%)

when this site is on a large tariff (i.e., consuming greater than 100,000 kWh per annum) it is not eligible for a feed-in-tariff.

Most direct costings are not published so it is difficult for irrigators to provide further instances of incorrect figures. The appointment of a new advisory committee is very needed in this scheme to be able to provide feedback and guidance to both Sunwater and the local irrigators.

Whilst pricing reviews are necessary it is also evident that without correct figures how can any pricing increase be put into place/ approved by QCA and the State government.