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To Whom It May Concern:

Water Metering Submission

The Yanco Colombo System (YCS) represents:

- 4 local water utility (3 owners)
- 14 high security (13 owners)
- 140 General Security (118 owners)
- 155 S&D (117 owners)

with many owners having multiple licenses. The YCS is located in the Murrumbidgee Valley in southern NSW.

The Yanco Colombo System (YCS) has been at the forefront of innovation with metering and telemetry with a project called Water for Rivers. A number of irrigators were engaged in a pilot program where different systems were installed, such as inverted syphons, in-line (suction/discharge), and total reconfiguration. All of these were adapted with telemetry to allow the monitoring of usage. Linking telemetry to metering was seen as a real opportunity to use the technology and data link to also easily monitor system levels and stream flows at any given pumping station. However this system was ignored by WaterNSW, so the opportunity to closely monitor stream conditions was lost.

The YCS was again used (mandatory) in another pilot program to roll out publically owned metering (WaterNSW), which was to be adopted by the rest of NSW, in order to meet compliance benchmarks. WaterNSW and contractors Condaim installed a metering system which at the time was resisted by irrigators as meters were installed underground and it appeared to irrigators that future access to faulty meters would be difficult. However this risk was ignored by WaterNSW. Maintenance and amortization was factored into the last IPART determination and has been charged to water users accordingly. At no point in time did water users have any say in their metering being converted into public ownership.

There now seems to be issues with some of these meters and it appears that this may be one of the factors for WaterNSW to so willingly hand back meters to it's customers.

There was no paperwork given to users when the meters were changed to public ownership however there must have been some contracts developed to allow IPART to make the determination of fees charged, i.e. data on the life expectancy of meters, maintenance and other ongoing running costs, which then formed the validation of introducing new fee structures to WaterNSW customers. In these contracts were there sections which covered the ownership of the meters for a predetermined period? If so, should this not be upheld?

No other utility allows users to be in ownership of the metering that utility: i.e. electricity, town water, gas etc. Why would bulk water be singled out to have private ownership of meters?

Why is the Southern Valley yet again being hit with forced change? Each type of change is going to negatively impact on businesses. How much is this change going to cost? Large corporations can absorb additional costs due to economies of scale. The smaller enterprise does not have that luxury and therefore the cost percentage is significantly higher and more difficult to absorb.

We have been told that the decision is not yet made, however users are being told by employees (that have direct contact with users) of WaterNSW that it is already government policy. This situation was been forced on southern valley users and yet again another determination seems to be made with only lip-service consultation to the user.

If the decision is to revert metering back into private ownership there are many areas that will need to be formalised from a user's perspective. The days of trusting government agencies or organisations has long since passed. The feeling within the community is of distrust given past events. Users are now faced with the government doing a complete backflip from what was recently forced upon users. There have been far too many changes in the recent past and YACATAC members are looking at another round of changes to satisfy the MBDP. Users need security and assurance that current rules will not be changed again.

We would welcome a meeting with Emma Solomon to enlighten her about the unique situation the YCS is in.

Yours sincerely



Bob Crawford
President