

24 April 2026

GPO Box 2765
Brisbane QLD 4001

Ms Joanne Chong
Commissioner
Productivity Commission
waterreform2026@pc.gov.au

Dear Ms Chong

Re: National Water Reform 2026 – call for submissions

As a statutory authority and South-East Queensland's largest Distributor-Retailer Authority, Urban Utilities provides water and wastewater services for more than 1.6 million residents across the Brisbane, Scenic Rim, Lockyer Valley, Somerset and Ipswich local government areas. In delivering these essential services, we play a valued role in supporting the liveability, resilience and sustainability of the communities we serve.

Urban Utilities welcomes the opportunity to engage with the Productivity Commission (Commission) as part of its current inquiry into national water reform. Currently, Urban Utilities is responding to the Queensland State Government's decision to implement an independent price monitoring review led by the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA). Urban Utilities' submission to the QCA, due on 31 August 2026, will further detail many of the matters that are also of interest to the Commission – affordability, pricing, productivity and key priorities such as housing supply, sustainable development and long-term financial sustainability. Given the QCA process is underway, we are unable to provide a formal submission at this time.

However, we would like to note our support of continued improvement to the management of water by all levels of government, consistent with the objectives of the National Water Initiative. We consider that strong, coordinated and evidence-based national policy remains essential to addressing the increasing pressures facing the urban water sector, including population growth, climate variability, affordability and changing community expectations. We have been an active participant in previous iterations of this inquiry, including formal submissions to the 2020 and 2024 National Water Reform inquiries. We value the Commission's role in providing clear, independent advice to government and welcome the opportunity to contribute constructively to the ongoing reform agenda.

Urban Utilities also broadly supports the recent commonwealth approval of the National Water Agreement led by the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). We participated in the consultation processes undertaken during its development and welcome the renewed clarity and alignment it provides for cross-jurisdictional water management and service delivery. We look forward to working with DCCEEW and the Queensland Government to support its implementation at a state and regional level.

As an active member and participant of the Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA), we also wish to acknowledge and provide our in-principle support for the key considerations that will be raised in WSAA's Submission to the Commission. In particular, the pressures currently being felt in the UK and how these trends are starting to be experienced in Australia, highlights the criticality of the Commission's inquiry for National Water Reform.

Further to this, we strongly urge the Commission to consider what role the Federal Government plays in providing greater funding and financial support to the water sector, similarly to how it provides funding to the energy sector.

Urban Utilities looks forward to remaining informed of the Commission's progress and welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the inquiry's interim report in due course.

Yours sincerely

Dr Robert Fearon
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Urban Utilities