



HUNTER WATER CORPORATION
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17 January 2024

Our Ref: HW2022-749/15/3.003

Arek Gulbenkoglu
General Manager
Australian Energy Regulator
GPO Box 1313
Canberra ACT 2601

By email to: AERresets2024-29@aer.gov.au

Dear Arek,

RE: Ausgrid's 2024-29 Revised Proposal – Climate Resilience

The purpose of this letter is to express Hunter Water's support for Ausgrid to maintain current customer and community service outcomes by cost-effectively enhancing the resilience of electricity distribution services in line with the projected growth in risk of disruptive climate events.

Hunter Water is a State Owned Corporation providing drinking water, wastewater, recycled water and some stormwater services to a population of around 600,000 people in the Lower Hunter region. As an urban water utility we provide an essential service. The reliability of our service in typical conditions and resilience during exceptional conditions such as disruptive climate events play a critical role in ensuring the ongoing health and economic prosperity of the community we serve.

Climate change is a critical issue for urban water utilities, arguably impacting our sector more than most. The challenges associated with climate change in protecting assets and providing consistency and quality of water services is projected to increase in both frequency and magnitude as warming progresses over time.

The increasing complexity and interdependencies of water infrastructure with third party critical infrastructure such as the electricity network creates additional risk associated with climate change. Understanding and addressing interdependency risks, such as water and electricity supply outages, is an important part of building our own operational resilience, as well as our broader community resilience, to climate change risks and we have been working with our service providers, such as Ausgrid, to this end.

Hunter Water supports Ausgrid maintaining current customer and community service outcomes by cost-effectively enhancing the resilience of electricity distribution services in line with the projected growth in risk of disruptive climate events, including responding to electricity supply resilience risks from higher winds and temperatures, increased bushfire risks, and response effectiveness.

For further information regarding this submission please contact James Willing, Team Leader Sustainability and Climate Resilience at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

David Derkenne
Group Manager Sustainability & Waterways