

Water Economics at a Crossroads: Bridging the Price-Cost Divide

August 2025



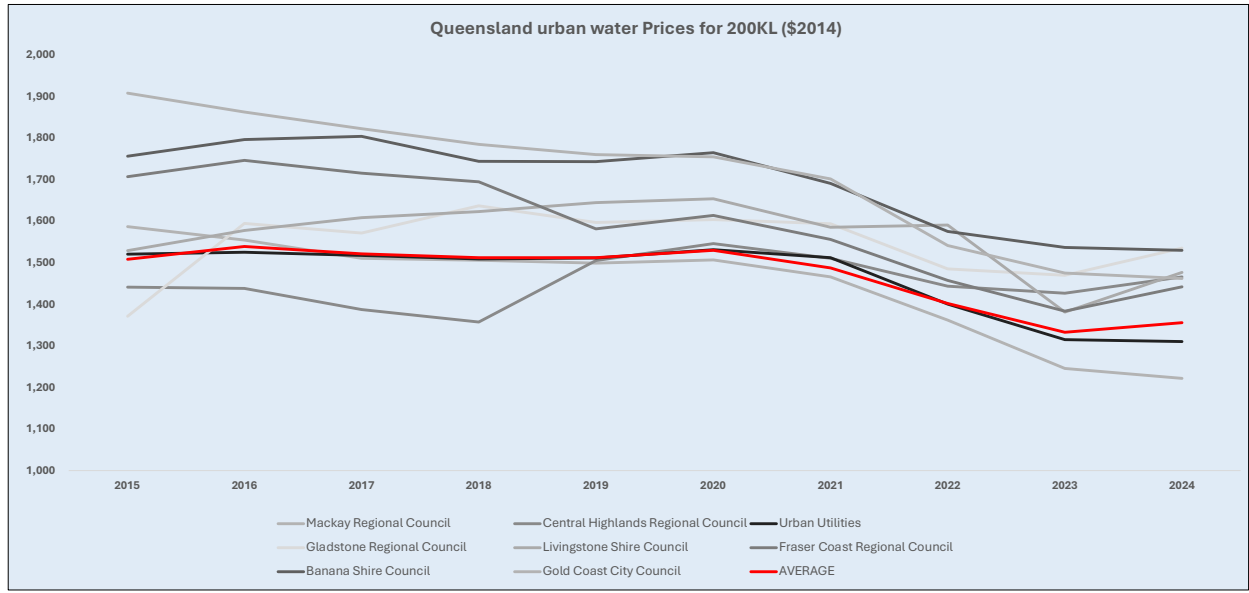
1

Water has never been cheaper



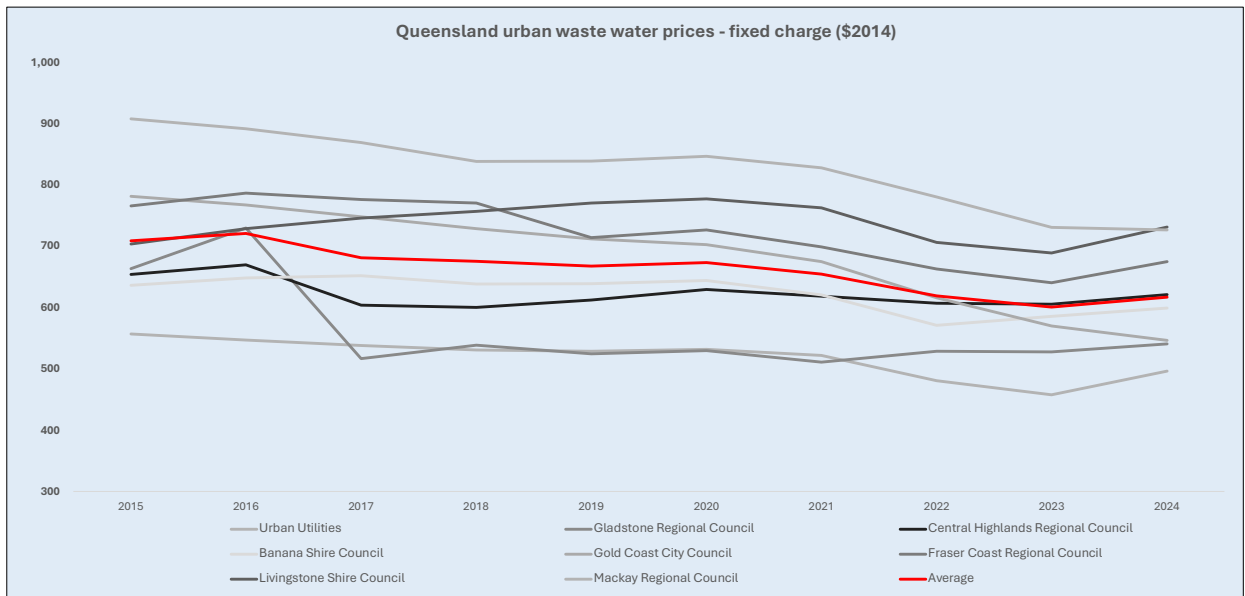
2

The price decline continues



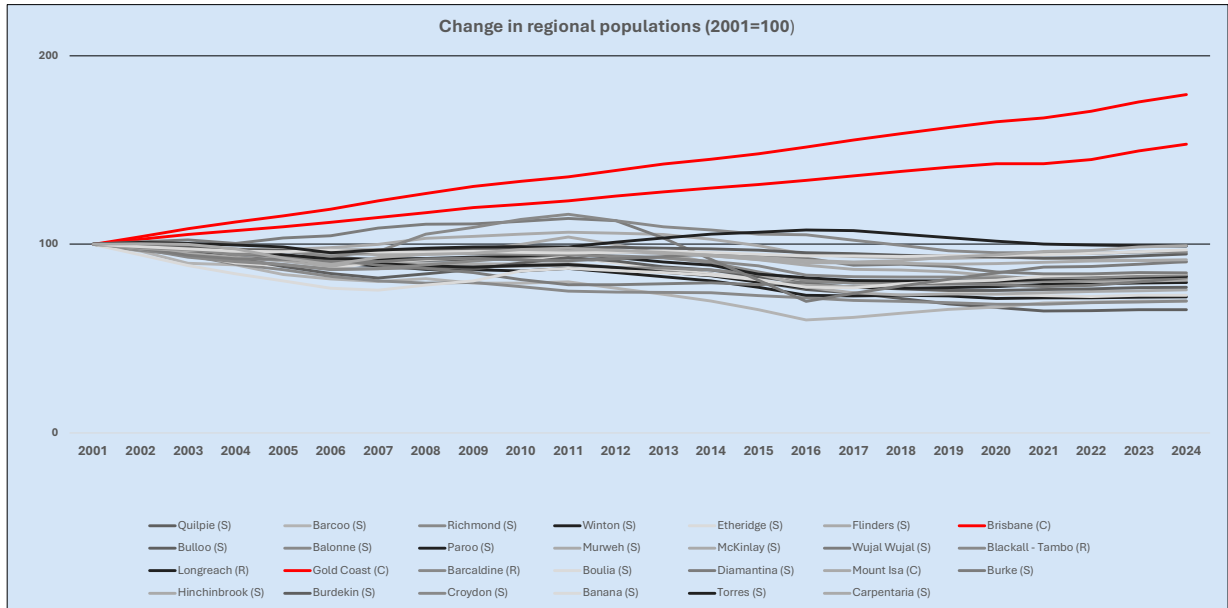
3

The price decline continues



4

Our regions are in decline



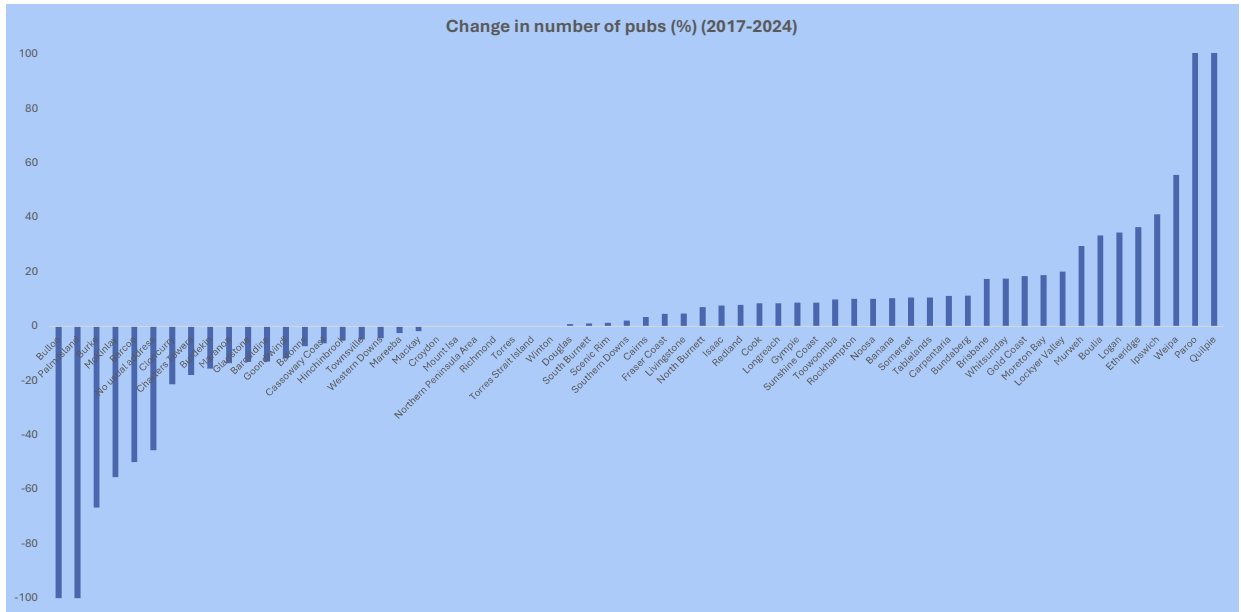
5

Our regions are in decline



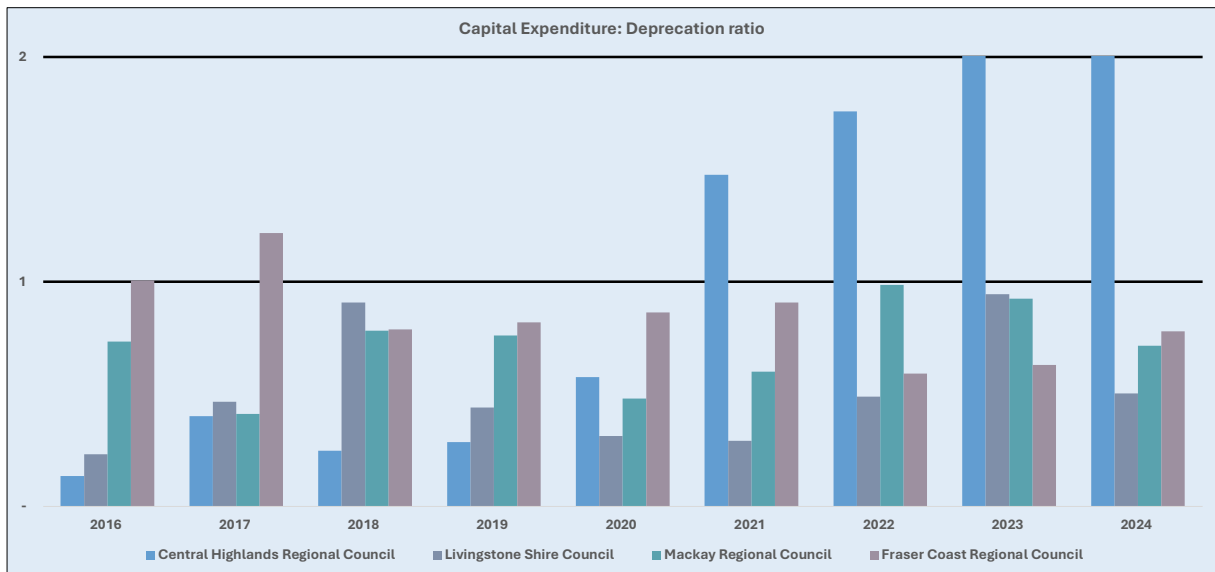
6

Our regions are in decline



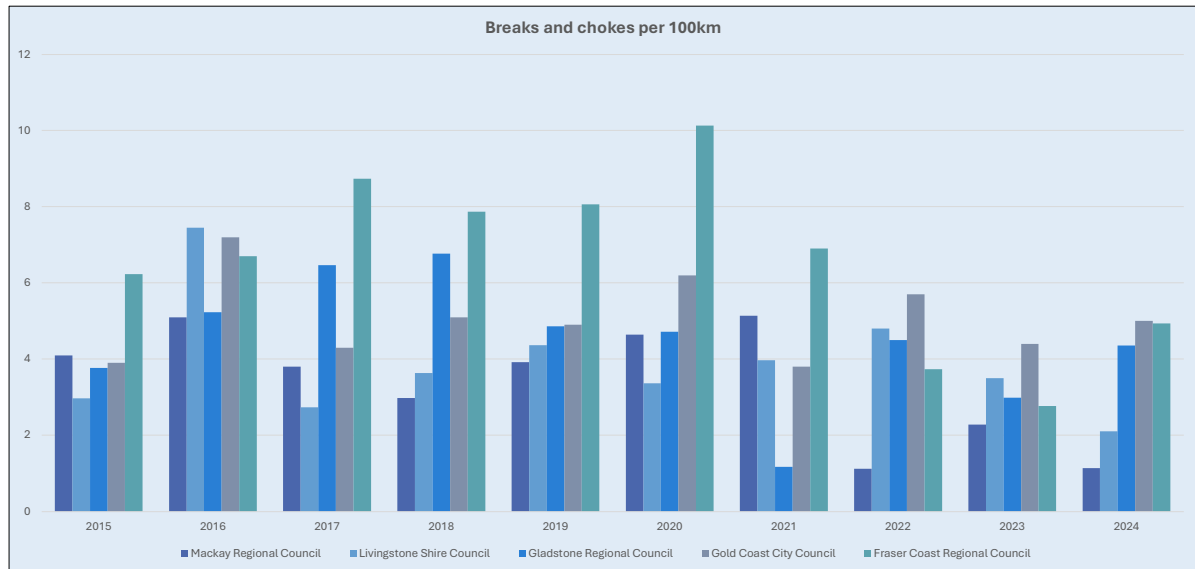
7

Assets are depreciating faster than replacement



8

Asset performance is not yet deteriorating



9

Canary in the coalmine?

NAEGLERIA FOWLERI DETECTED IN CHARLEVILLE AND AUGATHELLA TOWN WATER SUPPLIES

August 7, 2025



Residents advised that the water remains safe to drink but to avoid letting it enter their nose under pressure



AUDIT NON-COMPLIANCE BY REGIONAL COUNCILS AUGUST 2025

HEALTH ADVISORY

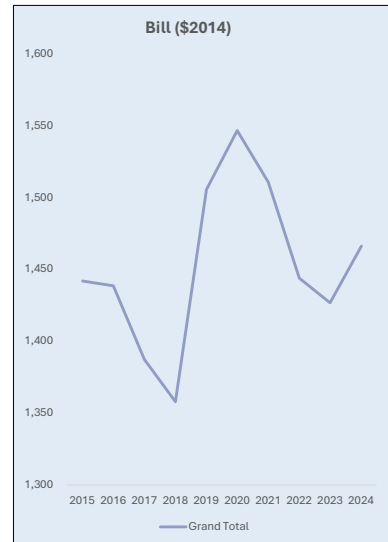
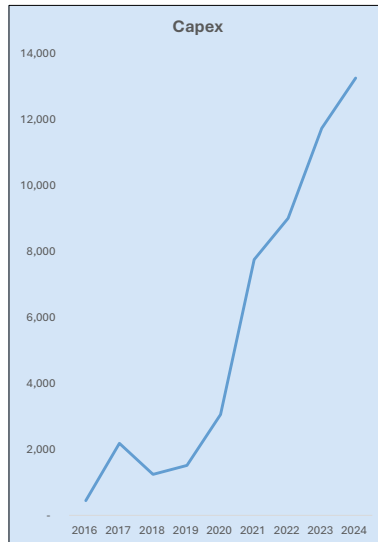
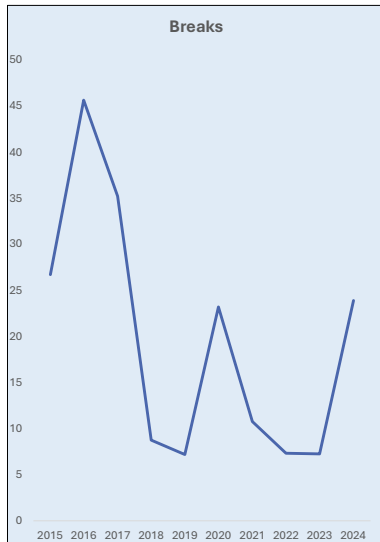
An audit by the Queensland Audit Office found three of four regional councils reviewed were non-compliant with their own drinking water quality management plans. Issues included inadequate monitoring, poor maintenance and record-keeping.

DISCOLOURED WATER IN DOOMADGEE AND PALM ISLAND

-  **Nature of the issue**
Residents report persistent brown, discoloured tap water
-  **Community impact**
Long-standing problem in Doomadgee and Palm Island
-  **Underlying causes**
High iron and manganese levels in groundwater
-  **Response & challenges**
Water meets health guidelines but falls aesthetic expectations

10

Central Highlands Case Study



11

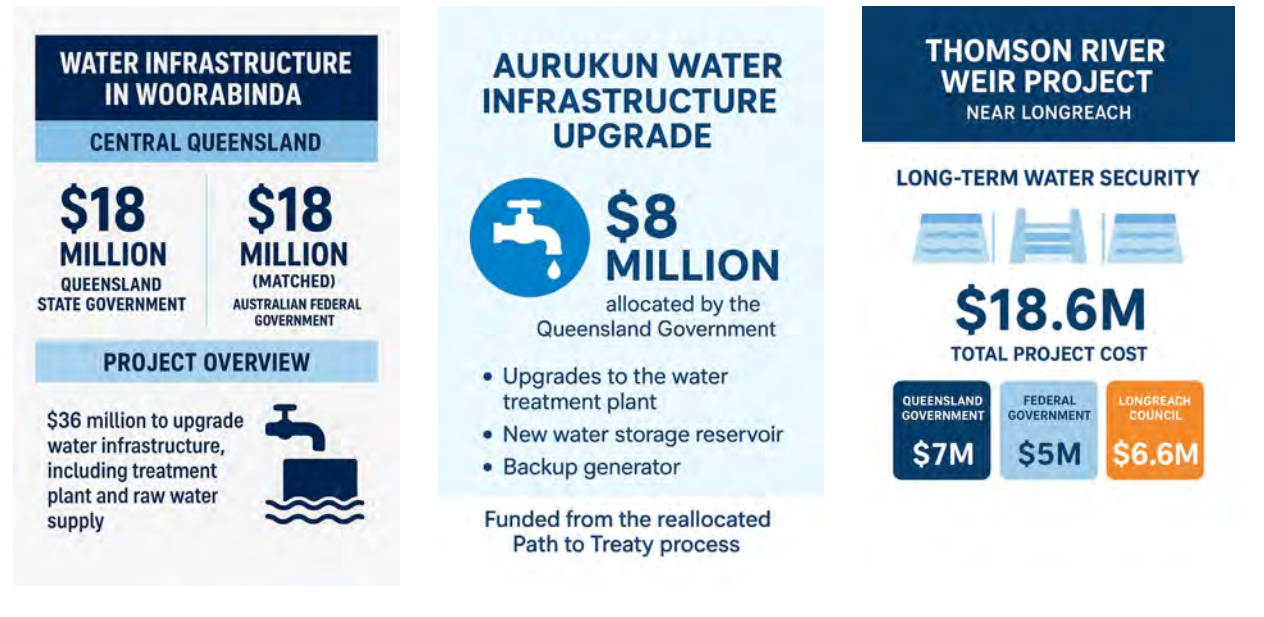
Have we started going off the cliff?

Entity	Proposed price increase over four years
Sydney Water	52%
Central Coast Council	35%
Hunter Water	26%
TasWater	40%



12

What is already been done



13

Comparison of funding approaches



14

What role can government play to support regional Queensland – the three Cs?

Problem

Size of the problem is uncertain

Prices might not recover costs

Encourage funding partnership not competition

Solution

Clarity
Empower QWD to support entities move from compliance data to intelligent insights

Confidence
Introduce price monitoring

Certainty
Implement stable, predictable grant funding