

COASTWIDE/WYONG

Hefty rise in the pipeline

CASH WILL FUND UPGRADES, IMPROVEMENTS

Terry Collins & Errol Smith

CENTRAL Coast residents should brace for higher water and sewer charges.

Gosford residents can expect an 18 per cent rise next year, if the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) gives the nod to an application from Gosford Council.

Charges in Wyong will rise by 46 per cent over next four years, if Wyong Council's submission is approved. An average consumer in Wyong using 160kl of water a year would pay \$1548.84 by 2017 — compared with \$1059.76 this year.

The council has applied for rises in water, sewerage and stormwater drainage prices covering the period July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2017, and if approved will introduce the increases on a sliding scale.

The council's Infrastructure Management director Greg McDonald said the new charges were vital to maintain, operate and improve the water, sewerage and stormwater drainage infrastructure.

"Council is striving to deliver best value for money services and water, sewerage and stormwater infrastructure is a vital part of our community," Mr McDonald said. "As such, we need to ensure that appropriate spending is undertaken to keep our assets in good working order."

In addition to maintaining and upgrading these assets, the council has more than \$80 million of water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure projects to be funded over the next four years to improve the service delivery to the shire's 150,000 residents.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The community can comment on both council proposals until October 12 by lodging a submission to IPART.

A public hearing will be held on November 12, before IPART releases its draft pricing determination in February 2013 for further comment.

The final price determination is expected in May, 2013, and new fees and charges will come into effect on July 1.

Details on how to lodge a submission: ipart.nsw.gov.au.

Projects include delivery of the Mardi to Warnervale Trunk Main (\$25 million) and upgrades to Wyong South and Charmhaven Sewage Plants (\$25 million).

What do you think of the new prices? Tell us at: expressadvocate.com.au



Gosford City Council water and sewer director Rod Williams with a smart meter outside the council building in Gosford in 2008.