

Yarra Valley Water – Outcomes – 2018–2023

In this document, the water business provides a summary report of its actual performance against each of its outcome commitments for the 2020-21 reporting year. The business has given itself a “traffic light” rating (green = met target, red = not met, yellow = close or largely met) for its performance on each measure, outcome and an overall rating. The business has provided its own comments about its performance on each outcome and overall.

Summary table

Outcome	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
1. Safe drinking water	Green	Green	Green	Grey	Grey
2. Reliable water and sewerage services	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Grey
3. Timely response and restoration	Green	Green	Green	Grey	Grey
4. Fair access and assistance for all	Green	Green	Green	Grey	Grey
5. Water availability and conservation	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Grey
6. Modern flexible service	Yellow	Green	Green	Grey	Grey
7. Care for and protect the environment	Green	Green	Green	Grey	Grey
Overall	Green	Green	Green	Grey	Grey

Business comments

2020-21 was the third year we worked towards seven service outcomes customers told us they valued most and expected from us.

We set ambitious targets with our customers' expectations in mind, and we're very pleased to report that we met five out of seven outcomes, and achieved our best performance overall so far for this price period.

Climate change continues to put pressure on our network and the availability of water, but we'll continue to strive for all targets and take action where we need to do more. Even where we didn't meet our target, we've made considerable progress towards doing so.

We are committed to achieving all targets but if we don't meet any, we established a world-leading commitment to voluntarily return funds to customers via an annual community rebate. For any unmet target, we will voluntarily return a \$1.5 million community rebate to customers through prices in the following year. Therefore, we have offset prices in 2021-22 by a \$3 million reduction.

2020-21 was also marked by the challenges of coronavirus (COVID-19). We organised ourselves rapidly to work remotely and our priorities were to:

- Continue providing essential water and sanitation services to customers
- Ensure we had appropriate support and flexibility options to offer residential and business customers financially impacted by coronavirus.

We know that dealing with water and sewerage issues at home and work makes life harder for customers, and is inconvenient and unpleasant, so we work towards achieving our guaranteed service levels every day as well as the seven Price Submission outcomes. A summary of how we went including the targets and result for each is provided on the Yarra Valley Water website [here](#).

Outcome 1: Safe drinking water

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Number of Safe Drinking Water Act non-compliances (water sampling and audit)	Number	Target	–	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Actual	0	1	0	0	0		

Note: 16-17 & 17-18 results are reported as at 30 June. Results from 18-19 will be reported as at 31 March.

Overall outcome 1 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

Providing safe, high quality drinking water is the most important deliverable and we achieved 100% compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2015 with zero water sampling and audit non-compliances.

We have a comprehensive water quality monitoring program that ensures the water we supply is high quality, safe and pleasant to drink. This year an independent laboratory collected and tested over 7,000 water samples, and we monitored and tested the water from 1,200 randomly selected customer taps in 34 different water quality zones. In August 2020, a severe storm caused Melbourne Water's Silvan Reservoir to lose power and undischarged water enter the water supply network. Together with South East Water, we issued a precautionary Boil Water Advisory to 98 suburbs, while we worked with Melbourne Water to manage any public health risks. We carried out additional, extensive water quality testing and all samples passed the water quality standards. Severe storms in the Dandenong Ranges in June 2021 resulted in extended power outages and damage to water infrastructure, resulting in a precautionary Do Not Drink Notice for approximately 700 properties. The system was restored quickly and water quality assured through rigorous testing. This year we also:


- installed seven additional chlorinators, conducted routine inspections and maintenance of 12 water tanks, completed over 15,000 water audits in recycled water areas and cleaned over 600 kilometres of water mains
- Passed the regulatory audit of our Drinking Water Quality Risk Management Plan with no non-conformances.
- Reviewed all water quality controls as a precaution to manage any potential risk associated with coronavirus from the water supply source to customers – noting there's no evidence that the coronavirus is transmitted by drinking water, or that drinking water will be affected by coronavirus.

We publicly report on water quality on a regular basis and more information can be found on the Yarra Valley Water website [here](#).

Outcome 2: Reliable water and sewerage services

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Customers who experience 3 or more unplanned water interruptions or 3 or more sewerage service interruptions in 12 months (5 year rolling average)	Percentage	Target	–		<0.96%	<0.96%	<0.96%	<0.96%	<0.96%
		Actual	0.96%	0.91%	0.94%	0.98%	0.98%		

Note: 16-17 & 17-18 5-year average results as at 30 June. Results from 18-19 will be reported as at 31 March.

Overall outcome 2 performance for the regulatory period so far: 

Business comment


Our intention is to reduce service failures for customers who receive inconsistent levels of service. While we didn't achieve the target, we targeted high fail areas and reduced the number of customers experiencing three or more unexpected interruptions by 35% compared to last year. Our actions included:

- Renewing 60km of aging and poor performing water mains, 55km of aging and poor performing sewerage pipes and more than 1,300 house connection sewer branches which were impacting customers
- Installing over 800 water valves to reduce the potential number of customers having their water interrupted
- Inspecting 210km of sewerage pipes and 1,650 house connection sewer branches to assess their condition and identify potential blockages
- Rectifying over 1,000 valves and 250 hydrants to reduce the potential number of customers having their water interrupted
- Proving the location of over 2,000 valves and 1,200 hydrants that had been buried or moved, to reduce the potential number of customers having their water interrupted
- Identifying areas with a single source of supply that were suitable for introducing additional backup source of supply to reduce customer impacts
- Continuing field trials of a failure prediction model, using machine learning techniques to increase the likelihood of identifying assets to replace before they fail.

Outcome 3: Timely response and restoration

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Customers whose interrupted service (water and sewerage) has been restored within four hours	Percentage	Target	–		91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%
		Actual	90.9%	93.0%	93.9%	95.1%	96.7%		

Note: 16-17 & 17-18 results as at 30 June. Results from 18-19 will be reported as at 31 March.

Overall outcome 3 performance for the regulatory period so far: 

Business comment

Customers expect a fast response and effective restoration of their water and sewerage services if they're interrupted. Our goal is to turn water and sewerage services back on as quickly as possible, and our benchmark is to do this within four hours.

The challenge of getting to, and fixing emergency bursts and leaks quickly is ongoing as Melbourne experiences greater climate variability. To get on top of this, we continued to focus on service improvements, adjusting processes and procedures to a best practice level including further training and awareness for contractors and staff. We also:

- Revamped communications to customers impacted by our water main renewal works. The updated communications feature more visual information and iconography to make it easier for customers to understand This has contributed to an increase in customer satisfaction for water main renewals works.
- Included real-time information about planned water and sewer works on our online Faults Map to give customers up to date information. This led to a reduced number of calls about these works as customers were able to access information easily for themselves.
- Optimised the seasonal escalation strategy introduced in 2019-20 by improving attendance time to faults and emergencies, which resulted in a positive impact to customers.
- Continued to work closely with our emergency maintenance contractors to improve their performance and restore customers' water or sewerage services sooner.
- Strengthened relationships internally between teams, and with our emergency maintenance contractor, to enhance performance in the field and improve customer experience.

Outcome 4: Fair access and assistance for all

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Customers who, having accessed its support programs, believe Yarra Valley Water helps customers experiencing difficulty paying for their water and sewerage services (via survey)	Percentage	Target	–		89%	89%	89%	89%	89%
		Actual	New	New	89%	90%	93%		

Results from 18-19 will be reported as at 31 March.

Overall outcome 4 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

Customers have told us they value extra support for customers who struggle to pay for their water and sewerage services. Customers also expect us to improve awareness of, and access to our services among customers experiencing financial difficulty.

In 2020-21 our work changed significantly due to the impact of coronavirus on our customers. Building on the strong foundations of our well established WaterCare program, we developed and offered a range of new support packages for residential customers. For the first time we were also able to offer significant support options for commercial customers, and new tailored support options for rental providers (landlords). In anticipation of increased requests for support and call volumes, we trained new staff to ensure we were sufficiently resourced.

We also found new ways to communicate and engage with our customers. This included Council and community networks, financial counsellors and other stakeholders - sharing information, staying in touch and keeping abreast of the emerging issues facing the community. Improving our engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse communities was an important focus.

In 2020-21 we worked with 6,828 new customers in our WaterCare Support program, as well as an extra 7,746 customers who accessed our coronavirus-driven support options and helped transition 5,359 customers back to mainstream payments after a period of time experiencing hardship.

Outcome 5: Water availability and conservation

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Total water usage	Litres per person per day	Target	–		221	217	213	211	210
		Actual	220	231	233	221	214		

Note: 16-17 & 17-18 results as at 30 June. Results from 18-19 will be reported as at 31 March.

Overall outcome 5 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

This target reflects our customers' expectations that we achieve ongoing efficiencies to help save water now for the future. Our ambitious annual target is a holistic measure comprising the water we buy from Melbourne Water, the water customers use, non-revenue water used for firefighting and water lost due to system leakage, bursts and leaking pipes. Overall water use has decreased significantly in recent years - from 233 litres in 2018-19 to 221 litres per day in 2019-20, to 214 litres per day in 2020-21. While we didn't meet our target, 214 litres of water per person per day is the second-best annual result since 2007 (when Melbourne was in drought and under Stage 3A water restrictions). The reduction is attributed to mild summer temperatures, coronavirus-related restrictions, a significant reduction in network leaks and activating water conservation campaigns targeted to residential customers. In 2020-21 we:

- piloted a showerhead exchange program, with 1,000 water-efficient showerheads provided to customers and an end-use study identifying opportunities for a larger roll-out in the future.
- Inducted 11 new schools into the School Water Efficiency Program (SWEP), bring the total number of participating schools to over 300
- Launched a fun behaviour change program, Water Watchers, to help primary school aged children understand the importance of water conservation. Our Water Watchers are biodegradable, natural rubber toy characters that attach to taps to remind families to "watch" water use.
- Extended our recycled water main network to over 460 kilometres – providing recycled water to over 36,000 properties and producing 212 million litres of recycled water for use by councils on public gardens and sporting ovals and for non-drinking purposes at homes
- Saved 669 million litres of water through proactive leak detection across 2,619 kilometres of water mains and pipes

- Installed an additional 71 network flow and pressure monitoring devices in our water supply network to identify leaks which aren't visible from the surface. This means 23% of our water supply network is now monitored in real-time so we can investigate and repair leaks faster.

Outcome 6: Modern flexible service

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Customers who are satisfied with their most recent interaction (via survey)	Percentage of customers surveyed	Target	–		86%	86%	86%	86%	86%
		Actual	85%	83.8%	82%	87%	87%		

Note: 16-17 & 17-18 results as at 30 June. Results from 18-19 will be reported as at 31 March.

Overall outcome 6 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

We're committed to providing the best service possible to our customers, creating great experiences, and ensuring customers are satisfied with each interaction they have with us. The primary focus for the year was designing and implementing a suite of new products and services to support customers impacted by coronavirus. Just under 9,500 residential and business customers contacted us for support. We listened to their needs and designed a range of products and services to allow greater flexibility in paying bills, while supporting them to apply for government grants and concession entitlements. We also continued to operate 'business as usual', researching and implementing customer experience-led improvements, including:

- Mapping nearly 100 customer journeys that bring to life the voice of our customers and help us understand their experience when interacting with us. This work enables us to identify the root cause of many pain points, and to develop and implement improvements.
- Establishing a common approach for managing complaints across the organisation to ensure consistent handling and resolution of complaints.
- Removing customer pain points, improving communication with customers, and making it easier for customers to get what they need from us in the following areas:
 - Improving website functionality and simplifying online and phone self-service options
 - Introducing proactive communications to make customers aware of potential water supply issues
 - Using the Snap Send Solve app to enable customers to report issues more easily

- Implementing new systems to speed up turnaround time of repairs out in the field and reduce impacts to customers.

Outcome 7: Care for and protect the environment

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Reduction in carbon emissions (cumulative) Baseline is 34,083 Tonnes CO ₂ e in 2016-17.	Percentage	Target	–		4.0%	14.5%	31.5%	46.1%	52.5%
		Actual	NA	NA	4.1%	14.7%	31.7%		

Overall outcome 7 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

We have pledged to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 64% by 1 July 2025. This Emissions Reduction Pledge is our response to lessening the impact of our energy intensive core services, which have significant environmental implications.

To reach this year's goal and work towards our Emissions Reduction Pledge, we:

- Tendered for a second, larger food waste to energy facility to process food waste and create electricity, which will transform up to 150 tonnes of waste per day into 33,000 kWh of renewable energy – around 33% of our energy needs
- Started taking energy supply from Zero Emissions Water Ltd (ZEW), a large-scale solar farm in north west Victoria where we have supported the development of the farm as a foundational customer and can purchase up to 25% of our energy needs
- Approved a project to construct a 1,296kW floating solar system at our Wallan Sewage Treatment Plant that will also improve the quality of influent for our Recycled Water Treatment Plant
- Conceptualised the installation of non-invasive large market ground-mounted solar systems at five sites
- Started exploring how we can harness more energy from our first food waste to energy facility.