

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 2018-19 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			
2. Reliable water and sewerage services	Green	Yellow			
3. Timely response and restoration	Green	Green			
4. Fair access and assistance for all	Green	Green			
5. Water availability and conservation	Red	Yellow			
6. Modern flexible service	Yellow	Green			
7. Care for and protect the environment	Green	Green			
Overall	Green	Green			

Business comments

2019-20 was the second 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. 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 will offset prices in 2020-21 by a \$3 million reduction.

A summary of how we went including the targets and result for each is provided on the Yarra Valley Water website.

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			

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 randomly selected customer taps in 32 different water quality zones – achieving 100% compliance.

This year we also:


- installed an additional chlorinator to ensure we continue to maintain a multi-barrier approach to water quality.
- conducted routine inspections and maintenance of 14 water tanks
- completed over 17,000 water audits in recycled water areas
- cleaned over 500 kilometres of water mains, removing sediment that causes complaints

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%			

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.


We set the target of 0.96% based on a five-year historical average with performance measured on a rolling five-year average basis, to minimise the impact of annual weather variations. This year, due to the actions we took and favourable weather conditions - 0.91% of customers experienced three or more water and sewerage interruptions which equates to 0.98% on a rolling five-year average basis. 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 21.5%. Our actions included:

- renewing 45km and 43km of aging and poor performing water mains and sewerage pipes
- renewing more than 2,100 house connection sewer branches which were impacting customers
- installing 332 water valves to reduce the number of customers impacted by a supply interruption
- inspecting 234km of sewerage pipes and over 1,700 house connection sewer branches to assess their condition and identify potential blockages and problems
- rectifying 371 valves and 427 hydrants to reduce the potential number of customers having their water interrupted
- proving the location of over 600 valves and 760 hydrants that had been buried or moved to reduce the potential number of customers experiencing interruptions to their water
- implementing a new approach for fixing leaking hydrants that means we don't have to switch off the water to customers

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%			

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:

- Maintained an increased number of skilled works crews over summer, helping to reduce the time taken to attend sites and undertake repairs
- Improved processes for sewer blockages to reduce the risk of customers experiencing repeat blockages, including better scheduling of planned and reactive maintenance works.
- Sought customer feedback to improve our communication to customers with up to date information about faults. This included increasing the timeliness of information on our online faults map, focusing on field signage to ensure consistent, clear information in the community and continuing to proactively SMS customers about faults they have reported or are impacted by.
- Established a seasonal escalation strategy to improve how we manage significant volumes of faults and the impact they have on customers. The strategy focused on the quality of field data to improve forecasting and addressed logistics and workflow coordination.
- Continued to work closely with our emergency maintenance contractors to improve their performance, resulting in restoring customers' water or sewerage services sooner

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%			

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 2019-20 we:

- Participated in a wide range of community events and networks to reach almost 50,000 customers who may not be aware of our support services due to language, isolation and physical and mental barriers
- Partnered with Councils, early learning centres and maternal child health centres to reach new parents with information about support options
- Developed new material using Aboriginal artwork and imagery that our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities identify with
- Worked to raise community awareness of concession rebate eligibility, making it easier for customers to register their concession
- Proactively identified and contacted customers who may be eligible to receive concession rebates on their bill
- Worked with 7,290 additional customers that are experiencing financial difficulty and helped transition 3,916 customers back to mainstream payments after a period of hardship
- Worked with the Department of Health and Human Services to streamline access to the Utility Relief Grant to reduce outstanding bill amounts for eligible customers
- Eliminated outstanding debt balances for homeowners and victims of family violence, reducing financial burden
- Proactively called customers who had engaged with us in response to coronavirus (COVID-19), including fast-tracking the introduction of new support options for residential and business customers financially impacted by coronavirus.

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			

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 of saving 217 litres of water per person a day in 2019-20 is a holistic measure comprising the water we buy from Melbourne Water, the water customers use at home and at work, non-revenue water used for firefighting and water lost due to system leakage, bursts and leaking pipes.

While overall water use decreased significantly this year - from 233 litres in 2018-19 to 221 litres per day in 2019-20 - we didn't meet our target. This is largely attributed to extended and hotter than average periods during the year. We undertook the following programs and initiatives in support of meeting this target:

- Successfully launched the industry-wide Make Every Drop Count campaign to encourage simple water saving measures at home. Results from the campaign reveal awareness has significantly increased with over 50% of customers indicating they have taken or will take action
- Worked towards providing recycled water to over 30,000 properties
- Extended our recycled water main network by more than 84 kilometres
- Conducted almost 5,000 recycled water audits at customer properties to enable recycled water to use in gardens, laundries and toilets
- Undertook 2,948 kilometres of proactive leak detection which saved 875 megalitres of water
- Installed 81 network flow and pressure monitoring devices in our water supply network to identify leaks which aren't visible from the surface
- Piloted the use of the 'water blade' in a residential accommodation setting resulting in an 8% reduction in water use
- Produced 315 megalitres of recycled water for use on gardens, sporting ovals and in-house for non-drinking purposes

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%			

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

Customer satisfaction is a key measure of our performance. We expect to see improvements on this target as we build on the work done this year, and work to resolve customers' issues across all touchpoints by following through on our promises we make to customers as part of their interactions with us. We are pleased that over the year we improved our performance quarter on quarter to finish the final quarter at 94%. The improvement can be attributed to four key initiatives. We:

- Implemented a new operating model and coaching framework for Customer Care consultants to improve the visibility of promises to individual customers when they contact us, and remove barriers to attaining high performance levels.
- Improved communications for customers impacted by water main renewal works, replacing text with iconography and visual aids to improve readability and recall – this contributed to a 13% increase in satisfaction for impacted customers
- Introduced direct debit by credit card as a payment option resolving a major cause of customer dissatisfaction – leading to a 17% increase in satisfaction for customers with online accounts
- Trialled new approaches to debt collection in response to customer feedback to improve customer experiences. Trials are ongoing, but early results are encouraging

In October 2019, our Customer Care team won the Australian Customer Service Organisation award in the Customer Service Institute of America (CSIA) Government / Not for Profit category. In March 2020, we went on to win the same award Internationally.

We note the inherent $\pm 5\%$ margin of error associated with a customer survey methodology and we consider this tolerance level in assessing our annual performance rating.

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 _{2e} in 2016-17.	Percentage	Target	–		4.0%	14.5%	31.5%	46.1%	52.5%
		Actual	NA	NA	4.1%	14.7%			

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:

- Operated our Wollert waste to energy plant at full capacity, diverting 31,000 tonnes of waste from landfill and generating eight times more renewable energy than it consumed
- Produced renewable energy via solar systems at our head office and three sewage treatment plants – over 90 per cent of which was used on site with the balance exported to the grid
- Progressed plans to build a second, larger waste to energy facility to process food waste to create electricity, which will transform up to 150 tonnes of waste per day into 33,000 kWh of renewable energy – around 30% of our energy needs
- Continued our association with Zero Emissions Water Ltd (ZEW) with 13 other water corporations, to source 25% of our future energy needs at a cheaper wholesale rate from a large-scale solar farm under construction in north west Victoria
- Completed an options assessment and feasibility study into a large-scale solar system at our Wallan Treatment Plant
- Conceptualised the installation of non-invasive large market ground mounted solar systems at five sites