

North East Water – Outcomes – 2018-2026

In this document, the water business provides a summary report of its actual performance against each of its outcome commitments for the 2024-25 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	23-24	24-25	25-26	Overall
1. Affordable Prices	A+	B+	C+	D+	E+	F+	G+	H	F
2. Reliable Services	A+	B-	C+	D+	E+	F+	G-	H	F
3. Responsive Services	A+	B+	C+	D+	E+	F+	G-	H	G
4. Efficient Systems	B-	C-	D-	E-	F-	G-	H	H	G
5. Local Focus	B-	C-	D-	C+	D+	E+	F+	H	D+
6. Sustainable Region	B-	C-	D-	F-	F-	F-	G-	H	G
Overall	B-	C-	D-	E-	F-	F-	G-	H	F

Business comments

In conjunction with the Customer Forum held for the 2018 price submission, North East Water developed its Customer Outcomes Framework which centered on six clear and consistent customer values (identified above). Twelve key outputs frame our customers' expectations against these outcomes and in 2024-25, the corporation continued to deliver on these drivers.

With the oversight of our board and management, we have adopted a pragmatic and reasonable approach to indicating performance against our committed Outcomes. Our approach acknowledges a number of aspirational targets to be achieved within the term of our unique, eight-year price determination.

We have continued to biannually convey how we are performing to customers through our Customer Report Cards. Again, these are overseen by board and management and are proactively promoted. Each Report Card contains short case studies to demonstrate the activities of our business during the reporting period.

North East Water continues to demonstrate its agility and resilience in ensuring service continuity and the prioritisation of customer needs to support the health and prosperity of our region.

Following on from strong performance results during our seventh year of outcomes reporting, North East Water has rated its overall 2024-25 performance to be Amber.

Outcome 1: Affordable Prices

Output		Unit	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
a	Fair Prices – Residential customers pay their bill within the required 30 days	Percentage of customers	Target	–	>80%	>80%	>80%	>80%	>80%	>80%	>80%	>80%
			Actual	82.4%	81.5%	80.1%	80.4%	79.2%	80.4%	N/A	80.7%	82.0%
b	Customer Support – number of residential customers being restricted	Number of customers	Target	–	NA	224	217	211	205	199	192	186
			Actual	127	231	160	76	0	0	0	0	0

Overall outcome 1 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

Fair prices

To determine the percentage of residential customers who pay their bill within the required 30 days, North East Water measures the number of bills issued against the number of reminder notices issued; this figure provides the requisite percentage. In 2024-25, 82% of customer invoices were paid on time.

In 2024-25 North East Water's average bill was \$1,080 (in line with our commitment to customers in our 2018-2026 price path) compared with an average of \$1,328 for the regional Victorian water bill.

We continue to monitor this measure to see if there is any significant impact on customers' ability to pay on time due to increased cost of living pressures and continue to enact our Customer Care Fair Practice Plan to support customers experiencing financial vulnerabilities.

Customer support

In March 2020, to better support customers during the COVID-19 pandemic, North East Water ceased all restrictions and legal action. Staff diverted their focus and resources to early intervention and proactively engaged with customers whose accounts were in arrears. We also continued to provide a range of options to customers, including payment arrangements, Utility Relief Grant Scheme, leak rebates and the Community Rebate program.

In 2023-24, North East Water engaged customers with lived hardship experience and the leaders of community service organisations on the prevalence and impact of economic and social vulnerability in our communities. Not only did these engagements inform Strategy 2040 and our upcoming price submission, but they also formed the foundation of our Customer Care Fair Practice Plan which lays out a range of actions designed

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to share targeted information about our support programs across our communities with the aim of building customer awareness, increasing water and bill literacy, and improving trust.

Overall, we consider our performance against this Outcome to be Green over the 2024-25 period, and Green for the overall regulatory period.

Outcome 2: Reliable Services

Output			Unit	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
a	Number of Safe Drinking Water Act non-compliances (water sampling and audit)	Number	Target	–	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
			Actual	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	
b	Resilient Systems – Number of unplanned water supply interruptions per 100 km	Number per 100 km	Target	–	< 14	< 14	< 14	< 14	< 14	< 14	< 14	< 14	< 14
			Actual	13.07	10.8	12.7	14.7	11.8	12.3	11.1	13.0	15	

Overall outcome 2 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

Safe drinking water

North East Water is dedicated to supplying high-quality, safe drinking water and in 2024-25 we once again achieved 100% compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Regulations (2015) and *Safe Drinking Water Act* (2003).

This was confirmed throughout the year through comprehensive and regular testing and verification of water quality, collecting over 71,000 data points in 2024-25 to ensure the consistent delivery of safe drinking water to our customers.

We continued to implement the upgrades required to meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines approach to microbial water safety. This included planning for the installation of ultraviolet technology at two further water treatment plants to ensure drinking water delivered to customers is free of pathogens.

Resilient systems

North East Water recorded 15 unplanned water supply interruptions per 100km of water mains in 2024-25, exceeding the target of <14. North East Water exceeded the target largely due to the number of unplanned maintenance actions on fire hydrants, service connections and valves that required interruption to the water supply.

This will be addressed in 2025-26 as more of these activities become, where possible, planned interruptions, with customer notifications provided.

Overall, we consider our performance against this Outcome to be Amber over the 2024-25 period, and Green for the overall regulatory period.

Outcome 3: Responsive Services

Output		Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
a	Timely Response – Average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions	Minutes	Target	–	≤100	≤100	≤100	≤100	≤100	≤100	≤100	≤100	≤100
			Actual	111.6	99.4	96.1	91.6	80.4	84.4	95.5	95.7	105.9	
b	Inclusive Decisions – Customers are satisfied with NEW in engagement and community inclusion. (Survey response of "very satisfied", "satisfied", "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied")	Percentage of survey responses	Target	–	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%
			Actual	90%	91%	90.8%	91.3%	90.2%	85.7%	87.9%	86.1%	88.0%	

Overall outcome 3 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

Timely responses

The average duration of unplanned water supply interruptions for 2024-25 was 105.9 minutes against a target of less than 100. This was partly due to an increase in the number of incidents (247 for 2024-25, up from 213 in the previous year, 180 in 2022-23 and 198 in 2021-22), as well as significant increase in interruptions attributed to mains failures (an increase from the average of 93 the previous three years to a total of 133 for 2024-25) which are often lengthier repairs affecting a larger number of connections. Just two of these incidents in 2024-25 affected 738 connections leaving them off-supply for a combined 502 minutes.

The more complex repairs, combined with drying ground conditions following three consecutive years of La Nina events causing the earth surrounding reticulation pipes to move, has resulted in an uptick in average interruption times.

Inclusive decisions

North East Water ran a comprehensive engagement program throughout 2024-25, most notably as part of our 2026 price submission. By the end of June 2025, we had engaged with over 6,800 people, or approximately 12% of our customer base. This included town kiosks, stakeholder interviews, online focus groups and surveys, and a bill simulator. We engaged with Traditional Owners, regional leaders, vulnerable customers, support agencies, major customers, developers, and our Customer and Community Advisory Group.

Other activities included engagement on 22 capital works projects, biannual developer forums, and regular stakeholder meetings including local government, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), Regional Development Victoria (RDV), the Essential Services Commission (ESC), Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and the Department of Health (DOH).

We maintained regular communication through targeted updates and media releases on our website and digital channels, delivering clear messaging on key topics such as sewer protection and water use. Our customer newsletter, *Splash*, was distributed with bills to share updates on customer support, programs, and available services.

Overall, we consider our performance against this Outcome to be Amber over the 2024-25 period, and Amber for the overall regulatory period.

Outcome 4: Efficient Systems

Output			Unit	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
a	Asset Stewardship – Sewer mains blockages	Number per 100 km	Target	–	< 12	< 12	< 12	< 12	< 12	< 12	< 12	< 12	< 12
			Actual	11.13	10.6	10.6	10.6	10.9	10.1	9.6	7.8	11.1	
b	Non-revenue water (as a percentage of total water delivered)	Percentage	Target	–	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%
			Actual	13.6%	15.4%	13.5%	13.5%	14.3%	12.7%	13%	14.9%	13.5%	

Overall outcome 4 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

Asset stewardship

North East Water experienced a total of 11.1 sewer main blockages per 100km of sewer mains were recorded for 2024-25, below the target of less than 12.

The 2024-25 sewer relining program consisted of 2,200m of relining in Benalla, Rutherglen, Wangaratta, Wodonga, Yarrawonga, Corryong. The 2024-25 CCTV program consists of 8,200m of sewer mains in the towns of Benalla, Wangaratta, Wodonga and Mount Beauty. The results of the CCTV program are incorporated into the Sewer Main Asset Class Plan which will target and prioritise sewer mains for rehabilitation.

Non-revenue water

Non-revenue water for 2024-25 was 13.46% (2,555 megalitres), down from 14.90% (2,619 megalitres) the previous year.

Though short of our stretch target of less than 10%, this reduction from the previous year reflects a more targeted and collaborative approach across the business. Strengthened coordination between field operations, water systems, and other teams are driving a unified focus supported by the ongoing rollout of metered standpipes to better understand what proportion of water losses are due to operational flushing.

Overall, we consider our performance against this Outcome to be Amber over the 2024-25 period, and Amber for the overall regulatory period.

Outcome 5: Local Focus

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
a Local People – Customers are satisfied with NEW staff local knowledge, employment and location. (Survey response of "very satisfied" or "satisfied")	Percentage of survey responses	Target	–	> 80%	> 80%	> 80%	> 80%	> 80%	> 80%	> 80%	> 80%	> 80%
		Actual	73.3%	75%	80.3%	84.4%	85.1%	84.2%	85.0%	85.1%	84.4%	
b Education and Awareness – Customers are satisfied with NEW educating and informing them about water conservation and sustainability. (Survey response of "very satisfied", "satisfied", "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied")	Percentage of survey responses	Target	–	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%
		Actual	96.7%	95%	88.0%	88.2%	88.3%	88.9%	89.4%	88.3%	88.7%	

Overall outcome 5 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

Local people

The near-consistent score reflects our customers' high level of satisfaction with our local knowledge as North East Water's services are supplied solely by staff who are a part of the communities we serve.

Education and awareness

In 2024-25, our 'Water Wise' campaign continued to educate communities about water conservation practices, as well as targeted messaging via our social media channels and the quarterly customer newsletter, Splash. We also continued to provide the majority of schools in the region with access to up-to-date water consumption information through the Schools Water Efficiency Program (SWEP). This program enables the detection and rectification of leaks that have been identified through monitoring of each school's water use.

Overall, we consider our performance against this Outcome to be Green over the 2024-25 period, and Green for the overall regulatory period.

Outcome 6: Sustainable Region

Output			Unit	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
a	A Smaller Footprint – Compliance with EPA Licenses (percentage compliance against key parameters across all licenses)	Percentage	Target	–	94%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
			Actual	84%	94%	95%	92%	94%	87%	84%	87%	91%	
b	A Smaller Footprint – Total carbon emission	Tonnes CO ₂ e	Target	–	35,672	36,314	36,555	32,762	23,289	19,128	19,422	19,817	19,817
			Actual	37,737	35,605	33,905	32,614	32,197	31,607	30,935	23,383	19,817	
c	Enhanced livability – Customers are satisfied in NEW is ensuring water security for future drought responses. (Survey response of "very satisfied", "satisfied", "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied")	Percentage of survey responses	Target	–	New	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%	> 90%
			Actual	New	New	91.7%	90.7%	92.4%	92.0%	94.1%	92.1%	93.4%	

Overall outcome 6 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

Compliance with EPA Licenses

A total of 16 non-compliances with WWTP licence or permit conditions have been reported to the EPA for the 2024-25 reporting year. 11 of the 22 WWTPs were non-compliant with one or more conditions. The business metric that tracks compliance with key licence conditions had a result of 91% against a target of 100%. There has been a reduction in non-compliances from the previous three years reflecting the shift away from La Nina weather conditions and extreme rainfall over the last few years.

Total carbon emissions

North East Water recorded an emissions total of 19,817 tonnes of CO₂-e for 2024-25. A 15% reduction on the previous year and matching our target set out in the Statement of Obligations (Emission Reduction). The target was largely achieved through a reduction of Scope 2 emissions through the

continual operation of various onsite solar arrays, as well as surrendering large-scale generation certificates procured through electricity retailers and our registered exporting of solar electricity while still retaining certificates for future use. The corporation also met our 100% renewable electricity target from 1 July 2025 and remains on track to meet net zero emissions by 2035.

Enhanced livability

North East Water's managed water storages remained above 80% for the winter and spring before starting to rapidly decline over the summer period reaching the lowest point of 51% in May 2025. A slight recovery was seen following late autumn rains which saw the storage level end 2024-25 at 57%. According to the Bureau of Meteorology, north-east Victoria experienced below average rainfall during summer and the driest autumn period since 2008.

Throughout the year, we made progress in securing more resilient water supplies for the Wangaratta systems by investigating and constructing groundwater options to supplement existing surface water sources. In addition, work was undertaken at the Myrtleford raw water storage to increase the amount of water available for treatment.

North East Water continues to collaborate with our bulk water supplier, Goulburn Murray Water, local communities, and water resource regulators to find solutions that improve supply security for systems outside the Murray system, and customers comfort with this is reflected in our consistent high scores for this measure.

Overall, we consider our performance against this Outcome to be Green over the 2024-25 period, and Amber for the overall regulatory period.