

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 2021-22 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	Green	Grey
2. Reliable water and sewerage services	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Grey
3. Timely response and restoration	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey
4. Fair access and assistance for all	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey
5. Water availability and conservation	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Grey
6. Modern flexible service	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Grey
7. Care for and protect the environment	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey
Overall	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey

Business comments

2021-22 was the fourth 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 pleased to report that we met six out of seven outcomes. This is 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. We joined forces as an industry this year to raise awareness across Melbourne to assist in meeting our water conservation target, while we didn't achieve the target, it was our second-best water availability and conservation result in this price period.

We're 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'll voluntarily return a \$1.5 million community rebate to customers through prices in the following year. Based on our performance in 2021-22, we'll reduce prices in 2022-23 by \$1.5 million.

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 guaranteed service levels every day as well as our 2018-23 price submission outcomes. A summary of our performance of each outcome is also provided on our [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	0	0	

Note: 16-17 and 17-18 results are reported as at 30 June. Results from 18-19 onwards are 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 7,100 water samples, and we monitored and tested the water from 1,200 randomly selected customer taps in 34 different water quality zones. A destructive storm in June 2021 led us to issue a Do Not Drink notice to customers in parts of The Patch, Kallista and Sherbrooke. The Do Not Drink notice was issued after depressurisation of the water mains in part of the affected area caused by the emptying of the Sherbrooke Reservoir that supply the affected area. The Do Not Drink notice was issued as a precaution as contaminants may have entered some water mains due to the depressurisation. Staff worked round-the-clock to make repairs, keep customers informed and distribute drinking water to customers in the affected suburbs. Flushing of affected water mains, disinfection of the Sherbrooke reservoir and extensive water sampling was undertaken. The water sample test results ultimately confirmed the water supply was safe. This enabled the notice to be lifted after three days. This year we also:


- Successfully passed our drinking water Hazard and Critical Control Point certification audit with no non-conformances. This is a key component of our Drinking Water Risk Management Plan which is required under the Safe Drinking Water Regulations.
- Installed four extra chlorinators, conducted routine inspections and maintenance of 14 water tanks, completed almost 13,000 water audits in recycled water areas and cleaned 665 kilometres of water mains.
- Launched an interactive, online water quality awareness training for all staff.
- Started a 12-month trial to assess the performance of five different types of online water quality monitoring equipment. If successful we would install sensors at strategic locations across our network to enable us to reduce the number of customers impacted and duration of a water quality event.

We publicly report on water quality regularly and more information can be found on our [website](#).

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%	0.84%	

Note: 16-17 and 17-18 5-year average results as at 30 June. Results from 18-19 onwards 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 achieved the rolling 5 year target by continuing to target high fail areas. Although a similar number of customers experienced three or more unexpected interruptions compared to last year – this was less than the historical number of interruptions, improving the overall result. Our actions to meet the target included:

- Renewing 51km of aging and poor performing water mains, 47km of aging and poor performing sewerage pipes and more than 1244 house connection sewer branches which were impacting customers.
- Installing over 620 water valves to reduce the potential number of customers having their water interrupted.
- Inspecting 214km of sewerage pipes and 655 house connection sewer branches to assess their condition and identify potential blockages.
- Rectifying over 2100 valves and 1900 hydrants to reduce the potential number of customers having their water interrupted.
- Proving the location of over 2100 valves and 4900 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 a backup source of supply to reduce customer impacts.
- Implementing our failure prediction model into our water main renewals program, 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%	96.1%	

Note: 16-17 and 17-18 results as at 30 June. Results from 18-19 onwards 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 seasonal challenge of getting to, and fixing emergency bursts and leaks quickly is ongoing as Melbourne experiences greater climate variability. We continued focussing on service improvements including proactive and accessible communications and adjusting processes and procedures during peak summer periods to get on top of this. We also continued to:

- Optimise our seasonal escalation processes, by improving our resourcing strategies and managing customer expectations during peak periods about attendance and rectification timeframes for smaller faults.
- Work closely with our emergency maintenance contractors and other delivery partners, to review field processes and practices and find innovative ways to restore 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%	93%	93%	

Note: Results from 18-19 onwards 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 these services for customers experiencing financial difficulty.

In 2021-22 , coronavirus and public health restrictions continued to impact our customers. We focussed on having appropriate resources to ensure we were there for customers when they need us, for both short and long-term support. We worked with 6544 new customers in our WaterCare Support program, helped transition 5989 customers back to mainstream payments after a period of time experiencing hardship, and helped customers access over \$3m worth of Utility Relief Grant payments.

To raise awareness of the support available to customers, we also launched a new WaterCare awareness campaign on social media, tailoring it to different languages, First Nations audiences and the deaf and hard of hearing community; partnered with the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre, connecting with people experiencing stressful life events; worked closely with recovery agencies and existing partners to share information about the support available to customers who were impacted by the storms in June 2021; participated in a Migrant Information Centre East program; and recommenced in-person engagement at a Bring Your Bills Day with Hume City Council.

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	219	

Note: 16-17 and 17-18 results as at 30 June. Results from 18-19 onwards 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. While we didn't meet our target, 219 litres of water per person per day is the second-best result in this price period. In 2021-22, we:

- Delivered the Make Every Drop Count campaign, a metropolitan Melbourne water industry collaboration to encourage Victorians to conserve water.
- Inducted 25 new schools into the School Water Efficiency Program (SWEP), bringing the total number of participating schools to over 300.
- Extended our recycled water main network to over 680 kilometres, provided recycled water to over 41,000 properties and produced 377 million litres of recycled water for use by councils on public gardens and sporting ovals and for non-drinking purposes at homes.
- Saved 1,516 million litres of water through proactive leak detection across 3,176 kilometres of water mains and pipes and saved a further 889 million litres of water by proactively monitoring our network for leaks that aren't visible at ground level.
- Installed an additional 108 network flow and pressure monitoring devices in our water supply network to identify leaks which aren't visible from the surface. This means 26 per cent of our water supply network is now monitored in real-time so we can investigate and repair leaks faster.

In 2022-23 we'll continue delivering existing programs. We'll also take the following learnings on board as we strive to meet our ambitious target:

- There's a high return on investment for mass television advertising but regular messaging is needed to encourage considered behaviour change.
- Customers want to know how to save water, but they also want it made easy, and expect incentives and programs akin to the energy sector.

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%	88%	

Note: 16-17 and 17-18 results as at 30 June. Results from 18-19 onwards 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. Throughout 2021-22, we were able to reduce our costs to serve customers while simultaneously improving the customer experience by investing in digitisation and automation across the customer experience lifecycle.

The customer experience-led improvements we made include:

- Continuing work on re-designing and improving our online self-service portals for customers and land developers.
- Launching a pilot for a Chat Bot to handle several routine customer transactions more efficiently.
- Developing and launching our WaterCare campaign to reach, and offer, tailored financial support services to customers experiencing hardship.
- Researching and planning accessibility improvements to our website to better meet users' needs now and into the future.
- Starting to plan for an accessibility experience audit that will inform our new inclusion policy, practices and standards across all customer experiences.
- Deepening our understanding of customers' accessibility needs around digital water meters. We undertook this research as part of our work assessing the viability of rolling out digital meters to customers' properties in the future.

Developing an approach to automate the ongoing measurement of our customers' experiences. This will set us up to use the latest data analytics and machine learning technology to improve our service 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%	46.3%	

Overall outcome 7 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

We've pledged to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 64 per cent 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:

- Consolidated our transition away from carbon intensive fuels by increasing our renewable electricity use to 66 per cent.
- Further improved energy productivity to reduce energy consumption so we get the most out of every unit of energy we consume.
- Committed to the Growing Carbon project in collaboration with Melbourne Water and Greater Western Water to enable small-scale biodiverse carbon plantings in the Port Phillip and Western Port Region.

To reach our future goals and work towards our Emissions Reduction Pledge, we will:

- Install more electric vehicle charging infrastructure to accelerate our transition towards a zero-emission fleet by 2030.
- Expand renewable electricity generation at our first waste to energy facility - the additional energy is around 15 per cent of our energy requirements.
- Build 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 requirements.
- Continue to source 20 per cent of our energy requirements from a large-scale solar farm in north-west Victoria that is facilitated by Zero Emissions Water Ltd (ZEW).
- Construct a 1,296kW floating solar system at our Wallan sewage treatment plant that will also improve the quality of feedstock water for our recycled water treatment plant.
- Continue with plans to install non-invasive large market ground-mounted solar systems at five sites.