

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

Business comments

When we developed our Price Submission we proposed a national first for the utility sector to set aspirational outcomes that represented the key things customers expected and valued, with a commitment to publicly report on these and reduce revenue the following year by \$1.5M, through an annual Community Rebate, where any of our self-imposed targets are not achieved.

2018-19 was the first year of these outcomes and we achieved five out of our seven targets against the backdrop of a hotter and drier year which increased customer demand and placed additional strain on water and sewerage services. As a result, \$3 million has been passed back to the community through customer prices, reducing the 'typical' customers' annual bill by \$3.

We continue to aim to achieve all targets that are important to customers and will not recoup the \$3 million through decreasing any service levels. 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				

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 three chlorinators to ensure we continue to maintain a multi-barrier approach to water quality.
- conducted routine inspections and maintenance of 18 water tanks
- completed over 14,000 water audits in recycled water areas
- cleaned water mains, removing sediment that causes complaints
- We also installed real-time monitoring equipment across our network to further understand chlorine penetration.

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%				

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 year on year, so customers have reliable water and sewerage services. To help us achieve this goal, we targeted high failure areas which were impacting customers. We:

- developed a failure prediction model, using machine learning techniques, to increase the likelihood of identifying assets to replace before they failed. This approach has been implemented in our asset renewal programs where we renewed:
 - 68km of aging and poor performing water mains
 - 59km of aging and poor performing sewerage pipes
 - 1,843 house connection sewer branches which were impacting customers
- installed 560 water valves to reduce the number of customers impacted by a supply interruption
- inspected 217km of sewerage pipes to assess their condition and identify potential blockages
- inspected 539 house connection sewer branches to check the integrity of the pipes

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%				

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 your 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. To get on top of this, we changed contract conditions and key performance indicators, improved processes and procedures, rolled out training and awareness to contractors and staff, and set up a dedicated division to work only with customers experiencing water and sewerage faults.

We also:

- worked closely with our emergency maintenance contractors to improve their performance which meant customers' water or sewerage services were restored sooner.
- added more crews over summer to fix the higher number of emergency bursts and leaks – warm, dry conditions consistently lead to more bursts and leaks and this year fault volumes were 13% higher than expected
- reviewed how we prioritise faults and dispatch faults for repair to reduce errors resulting in more jobs repaired faster
- set up a management function to support incident response and particularly intervene and re-prioritise work approaching the four-hour limit
- started sending proactive SMS communication in response to our customers' feedback that they wish to be kept informed and up to date if their water or sewerage services are impacted.

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%				

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 2018-19 we:

- partnered with Eastern Health, Sports & Life Training, Whittlesea Community Connections, Victorian Multicultural Commission and local councils to reach over 35,000 customers who may not be aware of our support services due to language, isolation and physical and mental impairment
- piloted the 'Yarra Valley Water Hub' at shopping centres in Broadmeadows, Preston and Greensborough to provide support to customers facing financial difficulty
- worked with 7,280 new customers experiencing financial difficulty
- helped transition 4,681 customers back to mainstream payments after a period of hardship
- proactively identified and contacted customers who may be eligible to receive concession rebates on their bill
- introduced a volumetric step charge adjustment based on the number of people in the property, to help large households having difficulty paying their bill.

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				

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

We set an ambitious target of achieving 221 litres per person per day in 2018-19 – a holistic measure comprising the water we purchase 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 leaks.

The higher than forecast water use is due to the hotter, drier weather this year, with 2018 was the third driest year on record. This indicator was established as customers told us that saving water now for the future is important to them. We are proposing with the Melbourne water industry to implement a Melbourne wide water conservation and efficiency behaviour change program before next summer.

To meet this outcome, we:

- led extensive research into community attitudes towards water on behalf of the metropolitan water industry to help design an effective customer centric approach to water conservation
- worked towards providing recycled water to over 24,000 properties, including extending the recycled water main network by more than 70 kilometres
- conducted over 14,000 recycled water audits at customer properties, enabling greater access to recycled water for use in gardens, laundries and toilets
- undertook 1,890 kilometres of proactive leak detection which saved 672 megalitres of water
- installed 29 network flow and pressure monitoring devices in our water supply network to identify leaks which aren't visible from the surface.

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%				

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.

To help us improve, we:

- centralised the management of emergency and fault calls so our staff can provide specialist support and assistance to customers
- realigned to respond better to our business customer needs – instead of a transaction or product-based approach, we work with commercial customers in a holistic way and have expanded our customer service channels to increase face to face contact
- introduced a post call survey for customers to give immediate feedback about their experience with our Customer Care team
- started giving customers the opportunity to request a call back if they felt their issue wasn't satisfactorily resolved
- are working closely with our new meter reading contractor to improve the accuracy of meter readings for customers
- commenced journey mapping customer satisfaction and pain points to identify priority areas for improvement.

While we note the inherent $\pm 5\%$ margin of error associated with a customer survey methodology, we have returned \$1.5 million to customers via 2019-20 prices for not meeting the target. Consistent with the guidance associated with grading performance, we consider having mostly achieved the outcome as the overall result has fallen within this tolerance level noting that some individual customer touchpoints measured exceeded the target level.

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%				

Overall outcome 7 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

Our core services are energy intensive which has significant environmental implications. To lessen these impacts, we pledged to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 64% by 1 July 2025 – our Emissions Reduction Pledge.

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

- installed 100kW solar panel systems at each of our Healesville, Upper Yarra and Whittlesea sewage treatment plants – each plant consumes in excess of 95% of the solar energy produced by the panels with the excess returned to the grid
- installed 1,080 solar panels at our Mitcham head office staff car park which will generate close to 30% of our onsite energy needs
- formed 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
- produced 5,885MWh renewable energy from our ReWaste Food Waste to Energy plant, processing 33,000 tonnes of food waste
- commenced plans to build a second, larger waste to energy facility to process food waste to create electricity, transforming up to 150 tonnes of waste per day into 33,000 kWh of renewable energy – around 30% of our energy needs.