

Water consumption and bills up a little; rainfall down

Victoria's 2.7 million households and small businesses used a little more water last financial year due to lower rainfall according to the latest report from the state's water regulator.

The Essential Services Commission's annual water performance report for 2017–18 showed the state's 16 urban water businesses delivered consistently high quality services.

The commission's Marcus Crudden says average household water use was up 1.9 per cent across the state from 2016–17.

"This was driven mainly by a 6 per cent increase in regional Victoria while consumption in metropolitan Melbourne remained steady.

"The rise in consumption along with inflation pushed up typical bills across the state by 2 per cent," he said

Mr Crudden says overall, Victoria's 2.7 million water customers continue to receive good service from their water businesses.

"While there is considerable variation in performance between water businesses, the trend over the past five years has been largely positive in terms of value for money.

"The report shows that over the five years 2013–14 to 2017–18, average bills across the state fell by \$47 including inflation," he said.

"In regional Victoria however average bills increased by around \$24 including inflation," he said.

The report also found that in 2017-18, a typical Victorian residential water customer:

- **Received high quality drinking water.** Water businesses continue to provide safe drinking water and had high compliance with the regulations.
- **Received consistent service levels.** Across Victoria, the average time customers did not have their water supply dropped 2.3 per cent to 28 minutes.
- **Received support if experiencing payment difficulties.** Customers continued to access a range of support programs offered by the water businesses and the government.
- **Used more recycled water.** Recycled water use increased by 24 per cent.

In June this year, the commission [finalised pricing decisions](#) for most of the state's water businesses which will see prices remain flat or fall over the next five years.

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