

## Water use up, bills holding steady

Victorian water bills have remained steady overall and customers continue to receive good service from water businesses, according to the latest report from the state's water regulator.

The Essential Services Commission's latest [annual water report](#) found a small increase in water use across the state with bills falling by 2 per cent in metropolitan Melbourne and rising by 3 per cent in regional areas.

Household water use increased by around 2 per cent across the state, with regional use up 5 per cent. Continued below average rainfall and the warmest summer on record were likely contributing factors.

The commission's Marcus Crudden says a new water pricing framework introduced in July 2018 has helped to keep bills steady despite the increase in use.

"When taking into account higher water use and inflation, the typical bill for most water customers has gone down since the 2018 water price changes," he said.

Mr Crudden says while there is considerable variation in performance, Victoria's water customers are generally getting reliable and good quality service, and value for money.

"Customer perceptions of their water business has generally improved over recent years in relation to price, trust, reputation and overall satisfaction," he said.

### The report also shows:

- An increase in the number of water quality complaints lodged by water customers in 2018–19 but fewer complaints being referred to the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) indicating water businesses have improved complaints handling.
- More customers received hardship grants to help pay their bills
- Legal action against customers with overdue debt fell for the fifth year in a row.

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