

Victorian customers give water businesses a 'solid pass with room to improve'

Victoria's 16 state-owned water businesses have been given a 'solid pass with room to improve' in a survey of nearly 6,000 customers.

The quarterly surveys, conducted on behalf of the Essential Services Commission over the past year, tested customer views on whether water business are delivering value for money, their reputation, levels of community trust and overall satisfaction with their performance.

On average, the businesses scored between 5.8 and 6.4 out of 10 across the four areas.

Commission chair Ron Ben-David said it's a new way to measure the performance of the water businesses.

"Our new water pricing framework introduced in 2016 was all about putting the customer at the centre of water businesses decision making.

"By regularly surveying customers directly, we are seeking to ensure their views are always front and centre, not just when a price submission is being prepared," he said.

The survey suggests customer perceptions of performance do not relate to the size of the water businesses with two of the state's smallest businesses outscoring their city counterparts.

East Gippsland and South Gippsland had higher scores across all four measures, while South East Water was the top scorer of the metropolitan water businesses.

Lowest scorers were regionals Coliban, Gippsland and Central Highlands, and metropolitan City West.

Dr Ben-David says water businesses still have to comply with quality and reliability standards.

"Safe, reliable drinking water and sewerage network reliability and efficiency will still be monitored but we're adding the customer dimension in keeping with our water pricing framework," he said.

An independent review of the new framework also released today shows the framework has led water businesses to rein in prices and focus on service improvements.

See over for summary of overall survey results or go to our website for [individual water business results](#).

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Survey results for March 2018 to February 2019

Value for money	Reputation in the community
Average rating: 5.8	Average rating: 6.3
Scores ranged from 5.2 to 6.3	Scores ranged from 5.8 to 6.9
Level of trust	Overall satisfaction
Average rating: 6.2	Average rating: 6.4
Scores ranged from 5.7 to 6.6	Scores ranged from 5.8 to 7.1

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