

Greater Western Water (previously Western Water area) – 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.

On 1 July 2021, Western Water and City West Water integrated to form Greater Western Water. This report relates to the outcomes committed to customers in Greater Western Water that was previously serviced by Western Water during 2021-22. We have a separate report for customers in Greater Western Water that were previously serviced by City West Water during 2021-22.

Summary table

Outcome	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
1. Fair and affordable charges for all customers	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey
2. Reliable, safe services to existing and new customers	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey
3. Innovative approaches to addressing customer needs	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey
4. Care of the environment	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Grey
5. Sustainable contribution to the community and regional liveability	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Grey
Overall	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey

Business comments

2021-22 marked the first year as Greater Western Water, bringing together City West Water and Western Water.

We are proud to serve the 1.29 million customers who live in our service area. In 2021-22, we welcomed 15,370 new customers to the Greater Western Water area bringing our total customer base to 597,551.

We delivered 112,724 ML of water, received over 311,000 calls, invested over \$250 million in infrastructure and IT assets, we laid out 347km of mains and our crews attended and repaired over 4,300 faults across our network.

Our operating environment

Our operating environment and the actions we take influence the 21 individual indicators that make up the Greater Western Water (previously Western Water) five outcome commitments made in the Western Water 2020 price submission.

In late October 2020, the Minister for Water announced the integration of City West Water and Western Water to form Greater Western Water on the 1 July 2021. Our integration with City West Water to form Greater Western Water has been a great opportunity to align and update most of our processes so that we can deliver our services more efficiently to our existing and new customers. This includes through the development of our first corporate strategy.

In 2021-22 our combined service area of 3,800 square kilometre, stretching from Melbourne's CBD and inner and north-west suburbs to Bacchus Marsh and the Macedon Ranges continued to be impacted by COVID-19. This presented challenges for us when coupled with existing high growth in the west. Our focus over the short-term period will be on integrating our two organisations while maintaining our outcome commitments, service offerings and services standards.

We have proposed some changes to our outcome measures where processes have aligned or where they are no longer fit-for-purpose for Greater Western Water. Where they have changed, we have maintained our existing commitments established in our previous price submissions. We expect that as we better align internal processes and improve our customer offerings, more measures may need to be adjusted in consultation with customers.

We are developing Greater Western Water's first price submission and are working with our community to understand what is important to them and how we can incorporate this into our future outcome commitments. We have a lasting commitment to continue to provide additional hardship and vulnerability support to our customers during the pandemic.

Customer outcomes

We have five outcome commitments for customers in our area previously serviced by Western Water which reflect the many roles that water and sanitation services play in the lives of our customers and our growing regional communities and economy. In the region previously serviced by City West Water we have six outcome commitments for customers covering similar themes (these are covered in a separate report).

We have assessed four of our outcome areas as green and one as amber by the RAG status (red, amber, green). Of our 21 individual indicators, 14 were green, 2 were amber and 4 were red.


We have assigned 'green' status for overall performance on balance.

Outcome 1: Fair and affordable charges for all customers

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Tariff structure review with customers completed by late 2019	Met/not met	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	Met	N/A	N/A	N/A
		Actual	N/A	N/A	On track	Complete			
b Customer satisfaction that the price of water services represents value for money (via survey)	Average rating out of 10	Target	N/A	N/A	≥6	≥6	≥6.5	≥6.5	≥6.5
		Actual	6.2	6.2	6.4	7.6	6.9	6.9	
c Customer hardship program participants who have cleared outstanding debt	Percentage of participants	Target	N/A	N/A	≥20%	≥20%	≥20%	≥20%	≥20%
		Actual	N/A	N/A	17.6%	34%	41.7%	52.8%	

Note: Our Greater Western Water annual customer satisfaction survey on water quality no longer differentiates customers previously serviced by City West Water or Western Water customers. As a result, the findings represent a whole of Greater Western Water level of satisfaction. Greater Western Water is still committed in honouring its commitments to its customers from both its City West Water and Western Water price submissions.

Note: Grey shaded cells represent indicators and targets that no longer apply beyond 2019-20. They were part of Western Water's customer outcomes from 2018 to 2020 and are not part of the current set of customer outcomes for 2020 to 2023

Overall outcome 1 performance for the regulatory period: 

Business comment

Our customers tell us that we need to ensure our prices and charges are fair and affordable for all customers. We also recognise the essential nature of our services and the importance of providing assistance to customers who are in financial hardship.

Customer satisfaction that the price of water services represents value for money

As Greater Western Water we are committed to delivering better value for money and understand affordability is front of mind for the majority of customers. In 2021-22, we were pleased that customers continued to assess our value for money higher than our long-term trend, with a survey score of 6.9 out of 10. These findings are consistent with the results in the ESC's perception survey with a survey score of 6.4 out of 10 across our region between July 2021 and June 2022 against a state average of 6.4.

As Greater Western Water we have passed through considerable savings to customers in our tariff basket application in 2021-22 as well as charging below our maximum allowed prices in 2022-23 for our customers in our area previously serviced by Western Water. We expect to have some of the lowest bills across Victoria delivering value for money for our customers.

Supporting customers in hardship

The pandemic has disrupted lives, causing financial hardship, and negatively impacting on people's wellbeing across our service area. We are proud of our ability to support customers experiencing hardship and offer a range of support for customers who may be finding themselves for the first time in financial hardship.

Although our customer outcome measures on supporting customers in hardship varied between the two legacy businesses, as Greater Western Water, we are committed to providing the same level of support across all customers. The Greater Western Water community and care program has been expanded and extended in the area previously serviced by Western Water to match that offered to customers in the area previously serviced by City West Water. This program includes a dedicated team and hotline in providing tailored options to customers in hardship and an additional range of support for customers who may be finding themselves for the first time in financial hardship. Some minor differences exist relating to how hardship grants are paid.

Our measure of success for the hardship program in the area previously serviced by Western Water is the percentage of participants who clear outstanding debt. During the pandemic we saw a significant increase in the number of customers reaching out to us for support.

We are pleased to report that even with this large increase, over 50 per cent of customers in the hardship program cleared outstanding debts. As pandemic restrictions unwind and the labour market across Australia tightens, we expect the number of customers to clear outstanding debt will improve.

We will continue to provide support for our customers who are finding themselves continuously in financial hardship in 2022-23. As we prepare for our upcoming price submission, we will be asking customers on how we can better support them as Greater Western Water.

Overall self-rating


For the above reasons, we consider our overall performance for Outcome 1 was '*green*'.

Outcome 2: Reliable, safe services to existing and new customers

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Planned water supply interruptions during peak hours or longer than notified	Number of interruptions	Target	0	0	0	0			
		Actual	0	0	14	58	12		
b Water quality complaints	Number per 1000 customers	Target	N/A	N/A	≤4	≤4	≤4	≤4	≤4
		Actual	2.35	2.62	2.01	2.3	2.71	2.98	
c Average response time to priority 1 water incidents	Minutes	Target	25	25	≤30	≤30	≤30	≤30	≤30
		Actual	20	21.8	23.2	30	21.75	41	
d Average response time to priority 1 sewer spills	Minutes	Target	24.21	24.21	≤30	≤30	≤30	≤30	≤30
		Actual	22.5	23.1	27	30	no spills	14	
e Average planned water supply interruptions per customer	Number per customer	Target	0.09	0.09	<0.10	<0.10			
		Actual	0.17	0.08	0.04	0.05	0.01		
f Average duration of planned water supply interruptions	Minutes	Target	180	180	≤240	≤240			
		Actual	166	123	155	190	169		
g Customers experiencing more than 3 sewer service interruptions	Number	Target	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
		Actual	0	0	0	0	0	0	

h	Number of Safe Drinking Water Act non-compliances (water sampling and audit)	Number	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
			Actual	5	0	1	0	0	0	0
i	Customers experiencing more than 5 water supply interruptions	Number	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
			Actual		0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: Grey shaded cells represent indicators and targets that no longer apply beyond 2019-20. They were part of Western Water's customer outcomes from 2018 to 2020 and are not part of the current set of customer outcomes for 2020 to 2023.

Overall outcome 2 performance for the regulatory period: 

Business comment

Our customers expect high quality services from our networks and we hold ourselves accountable when it comes to providing core water and sewerage services. We met five out of our six reliability targets for Outcome 2 in 2021-22.

Water network reliability

Our existing customer commitments on water network reliability vary between the area previously serviced by City West Water and area previously serviced by Western Water. We remain committed to honouring our outcomes as set in our respective price submissions and expect to propose a consolidated outcomes set in our upcoming price submission.

As Greater Western Water we are committed to preventing the number of customers experiencing extreme numbers of interruptions. Although in our area previously serviced by City West Water we fell short of our targets on customers experiencing three unplanned water supply interruptions, no customers across the area previously serviced by City West Water and area previously serviced by Western Water experienced 5 or more unplanned water service interruptions over the past 12 months.

However our average time to respond to priority 1 water incidents in the area previously serviced by Western Water was higher than planned. That said we are seeing a gradual decrease in the number of priority 1 water incidents to attend to, decreasing from five in 2019-20, four in 2020-21 and

three in 2021-22. One of the three priority 1 water incidents raised the average to above our target due to the timing being overnight, where the afterhours responder was located in excess of 30 minutes from the incident location.

Our guaranteed service level scheme provides customers who may have had interruptions during peak hours or who may have had an interruption longer than our notification given - a payment in recognition of the lower level of service they received during the year.

Drinking Water Quality

At all times throughout 2021-22, our water quality across all of Greater Western Water was compliant with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

We continue to have relatively lower water quality complaints compared to other water businesses in Victoria, ranking 6th as Greater Western Water out of 15 businesses in the ESC's Water Performance Report for 2020-21. This is an improvement since 2019-20.

For customer in the area previously serviced by Western Water, we saw a slight increase in water quality complaints however still within our targets agreed to by our customers. However, we continue to receive a higher-than-expected number of aesthetic complaints about water quality in our area previously serviced by City West Water with the majority of complaints relating to colour rather than taste and odour, reflecting the nature of our water supply. See our commentary in Outcome 1 for our area previously serviced by City West Water for more details.

We extended the existing customer perception existing surveys held in the area previously serviced by City West Water to all of our Greater Western Water customers. This included asking customers for their satisfaction level with drinking water quality. Customers across our area are generally satisfied with the level of quality received in their homes. We can attribute this to the range of activities we have undertaken in 2021-22 to proactively address water quality issues including:

- improved internal processes and with our service partners and field crews to reduce likelihood of complaints as a result of renewal or maintenance (proactive and reactive) activities on the water supply network
- improved external website information in collaboration with other agencies to provide guidance to residents on maintaining water quality when returning to vacant buildings and managing internal plumbing to reduce colour related complaints beyond the customer meter
- piloted a targeted customer flushing program in our service area where a consistent high number of complaints were experienced

- reinstated and continued our mains cleaning program and valve operation program to reduce the risk of the supply of discoloured water to customers whilst improving the aesthetic quality of the water developed and improved lead indicator reporting to monitor the disinfection performance of our water supply network.

We expect to continue to deliver high quality and reliable services to all of our community in 2022-23. We are working with our customers as Greater Western Water on our next price submission to understand customer's service level expectations and their values on drinking water quality.

Overall self-rating

Weighing the above, we have rated our performance for Outcome 2 as *green*.


We expect to continue to deliver high quality and reliable services to our community in 2022-23. We are working with our customers as Greater Western Water on our next price submission to understand customer's service level expectations and their values.

Outcome 3: Innovative approaches to addressing customer needs

Output		Unit	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	
a	Emergency calls answered within 30 seconds (after customer has selected emergency fault option)	Percentage	Target	N/A	100%	100%	100%			
			Actual	99%	100%	95%	94%	94%		
b	Customers on e-billing	Percentage	Target	N/A	11%	15%	≥20%	≥20%	≥20%	≥20%
			Actual	7%	11%	17.8%	26%	32%	35%	
c	SMS communication solution report prepared prior to 2020 price submission	Met/not met	Target	N/A	N/A	On track	Met			
			Actual	N/A	N/A	On track	Complete			
d	Digital metering cost-benefit report prepared prior to 2020 price submission	Met/not met	Target	N/A	N/A	On track	Met			
			Actual	N/A	N/A	On track	Complete			
e	Online services and information solution report prepared prior to 2020 price submission	Met/not met	Target	N/A	N/A	On track	Met			
			Actual	N/A	N/A	On track	Complete			
f	Customers mobile numbers registered for SMS communications	Percentage	Target	≥75%	≥75%	≥75%	≥75%	≥75%	≥75%	≥75%
			Actual					77.5%	72.4%	
g	Customers email accounts registered for communications and engagement	Percentage	Target	≥50%	≥50%	≥50%	≥50%	≥50%	≥50%	≥50%
			Actual					55%	50%	

Output		Unit	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	
h	Customer portal usage (% unique new customers registered)	Percentage	Target	0	0	0	0	≥10%	≥10%	≥10%
			Actual					25.9%	26.2%	≥50%

Note: Grey shaded cells represent indicators and targets that no longer apply beyond 2019-20. They were part of Western Water's customer outcomes from 2018 to 2020 and are not part of the current set of customer outcomes for 2020 to 2023.

Overall outcome 3 performance for the regulatory period: 

Business comment

We pride ourselves on providing accessible and timely advice to customers and continue to strive to communicate and engage with customers in ways that suits their needs. We almost met all of our ongoing Outcome 3 targets and commitments.

The pandemic has led to a greater number of customers being more open to online interactions and we saw this with an increase in subscriptions to our customer portal and customers using e-billing in 2020-21. That said, we have paused any promotion of our e-billing and customer portal as we embark on replacing and integrating our separate billings and collection systems across our areas previously serviced by City West Water and Western Water. The business case was approved by our Board in February and over the next year, we will be finalising our design, following which development of the solution and testing will commence. We expect the system to be implemented by September 2023.

Our integration also allowed us to share business practices, understand better ways of communicating using technology and exploring approaches to allow for more access to our customers. However, given the range of activities to align business practices, we did not actively pursue adding customers registered to receive communications and engagement in the area previously serviced by Western Water. We are exploring new practices to centralise customers registered to received communications and engagement from Greater Western Water as a whole.

We will work closely with our customers in the development of the upcoming price submission to understand how technology can be used to communicate and engage with customers to suit their needs.


Overall self-rating

We have rated our performance for Outcome 3 as '*green*'.

Outcome 4: Care of the environment

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Net greenhouse gas emissions (as Western Water – No longer applicable beyond 30 June 2021)	Tonnes CO ₂ e	Target	31,449	34,113	35,638	36,223	≤ 35,638	≤ 35,638	≤ 35,638
		Actual	32,226	33,282	37,798	38,257	33,146	N/A	
b Net greenhouse gas emissions (as Greater Western Water from 1 July 2021)	Tonnes CO ₂ e	Target					47,419	40,598	39,358
		Actual					44,927	39,435	
c Customer satisfaction with the way that Western Water cares for the environment (via survey)	Average rating out of 10	Target	N/A	N/A	≥8	≥8	≥8	≥8	≥8
		Actual	7.9	7.8	7.6	8.4	8.3	7.9	
d Number of sewer spills	Number	Target					0	0	0
		Actual	56	63	87	72	49	52	

Note: As Greater Western Water, our annual customer satisfaction survey no longer differentiates customers previously serviced by City West Water or Western Water customers. As a result, the findings represent a whole of Greater Western Water level of satisfaction. Greater Western Water is still committed in honouring its commitments to its customers from both its City West Water and Western Water price submissions.

Overall outcome 4 performance for the regulatory period so far: 

Business comment

During preparation of the 2018 and 2020 Western Water price submissions, customers gave consistent feedback that they wanted demonstrated care for the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and setting and an ambitious target to reduce sewer spills to zero. We set performance targets around each of these and track customer satisfaction with the way we care for the environment.

We almost met two of three targets but saw an increase in the number of sewer spills in our region previously serviced by Western Water for Outcome 4 in 2021-22.

Sewer spills

The number of sewer spills for the year were higher than our ambitious target of zero. Whilst being above the desired number of sewer spills for 2021-22, we continue to show an improving trend in average response time and time to rectify sewer spills, decreasing from 41 minutes to 32 minutes to respond and 84 minutes to 32 minutes to rectify in 2021-22. We continue to progress our Sewer Spill Prevention Strategy initiatives via asset performance data and analytics to develop programs to target locality-based issues including excess of tree roots, high demand and concentrated pipework and aging infrastructure.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Our existing outcome measures on our net greenhouse gas emission vary between our areas previously serviced by City West Water and Western Water. For customers in our area previously serviced by City West Water, we measure our delivery and commitment to net zero emissions by 2030 through the percentage reduction from our baseline tonnes of emissions. For customers in our area previously serviced by Western Water, we measure our delivery and commitment to reducing emissions against a target measuring tonnes of emissions.

As Greater Western Water, we no longer consider these measures appropriate in capturing a whole of business view on our net greenhouse gas emissions. That said, we remain committed to honouring our outcomes and measures as set in our respective price submissions. We have proposed a new consistent measure across our areas previously serviced by City West Water and Western Water that represents our net greenhouse gas emissions as Greater Western Water for the remainder of the reporting period (until 30 June 2024).

Our 2030 Greater Western Water corporate strategy has committed to net zero emissions by 2030. For customers in our area previously serviced by City West Water, this is a continuation of our existing commitments. For customers in our area previously serviced by Western Water, this is a higher commitment previously established of carbon neutrality by 2050. Although our corporate strategy represents a 'step up' on our existing emission reduction targets established in our price submissions, we propose to maintain the existing commitments for the remaining period whilst we engage with customers on their preferences.

Our proposed targets for our new measure represent the existing emission reduction targets established in our 2018 and 2020 price submission for customer serviced by City West Water and Western Water respectively. See below for breakdown.

Measure	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
City West Water emissions target (% reduction of CO ₂ e from 12,401 tonnes)	0%	0%	5%	60%	70%
City West Water equivalent target in tonnes of emissions (tonnes of CO ₂ e)	12,401	12,401	11,781	4,960	3,720
Western Water emissions target (tonnes of CO ₂ e)	35,638	36,223	35,638	35,638	35,638
Combined Greater Western Water emissions target as per price submission commitments (tonnes of CO ₂ e)	48,039	48,624	47,419	40,598	39,358

On performance, we continue to deliver on our emission target of net zero by 2030. Although we did need to rely on the purchase of some carbon offsets in 2021-22 as Greater Western Water, we anticipate over the long-term to reduce emissions. The pandemic also meant we used significantly less carbon emissions in our offices and transport fleet due to staff working remotely from home and reduced travel.

As our net zero strategy for Greater Western Water evolves, we are determined to invest in long-term cost-effective solutions rather than through short-term means, such as purchasing offsets.

Our ambitious commitments and activities positioning us as a leader in environmental care and is reflected in our score of 7.9 out of 10 for satisfaction with the way our business cares for the environment – albeit just shy of our target of 8 out of 10.

Overall self-rating:


On balance, we consider our overall Outcome 4 performance was '*amber*'.

Outcome 5: Sustainable contribution to the community and regional liveability

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Preschools and primary schools in its region receiving education presentations by Western Water	Percentage	Target	N/A	N/A	≥80%	≥80%	≥90%	≥90%	≥90%
		Actual	91.9%	92.5%	93%	76%	60%	56%	
b Engage with over 1000 customers via Water Matters website, email, social media, and face to face events	Met/Not Met	Target	N/A	N/A	Met	Met			
		Actual	N/A	N/A	Met	Met			
c Customers agree that Western Water is a valuable member of the community (4 or 5 out of 5, via survey)	Percentage	Target	N/A	N/A	≥70%	≥70%	≥70%	≥70%	≥70%
		Actual	74%	81%	67%	N/A*	82%	80%	
d Minimise usage	Average litres per person per day	Target					≤185	≤185	≤185
		Actual					174.6	168.6	
e Develop Sunbury IWM Plan	Met/Not Met	Target					On track	On track	Met
		Actual					On track	On track	
f Reuse of recycled water produced	Percentage	Target					≥75%	≥75%	≥75%
		Actual					47.8%	46.2%	
g Deliver Western Water Reconciliation Action Plan to plan	Met/Not Met	Target					On track	On track	Met
		Actual					On track	N/A	

Note: As Greater Western Water, our annual customer satisfaction survey no longer differentiates customers previously serviced by City West Water or Western Water customers. As a result, the findings represent a whole of Greater Western Water level of satisfaction. Greater Western Water is still committed in honouring its commitments to its customers from both its City West Water and Western Water price submissions.

Note: Grey shaded cells represent indicators and targets that no longer apply beyond 2019-20. They were part of Western Water's customer outcomes from 2018 to 2020 and are not part of the current set of customer outcomes for 2020 to 2023.

Overall outcome 5 performance for the regulatory period so far: 

Business comments

Outcome 5 (Sustainable contribution to the community and regional liveability) recognises the important role in supporting our diverse communities, regional prosperity and ensuring that water resources are managed efficiently for the long term.

In 2021-22, we achieved three of our six performance commitments for Outcome 5.

Reconciliation Action Plan

As Greater Western Water, our existing outcome measure of actioning Western Water's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is no longer fit-for-purpose. Due to integration, the land we work and the region we service has expanded and require a new Reconciliation Action Plan.

As Greater Western Water we continue to remain committed to recognising the important cultural and spiritual connections that First Nations people have with lands and waters. Our vision for reconciliation is a society that celebrates and protects these connections. We will bring this vision to life through our RAP. Over the last seven years we have built strong relationships with our First Nations communities as a result of direct outcomes from our previous Western Water and City West Water RAPs. We are developing our new Greater Western Water RAP which will see us commit to longer-term strategies to further enhance reconciliation and strengthen relationships, provide new employment projects, and promote the cultural values in water.

Going forward, we will no longer measure the delivery of actions in Western Water's RAP but will provide commentary on our development of our new RAP for Greater Western Water.

Supporting community through events and education

Due to ongoing pandemic restrictions several face-to-face events were postponed or cancelled in 2021-22. This included our educational presentation to preschools and primary schools which moved to virtual presentations if possible, to provide much needed water efficiency education in our region.

These restrictions and inability to meet our customers meant that we did not meet our target for educational presentations at preschool and primary schools in our service area.

Water and recycled water use and planning

We continue to work with customers to raise awareness on how they can manage their water usage and control their bills. In 2021-22, the average water usage per household in the area previously serviced by Western Water has decreased to 168.6 L per person per day, which is below our target of 185 L per person per day. This is slightly higher than our area previously serviced by City West Water, owing to the smaller sizes of lots and higher density in that area.

The lower average water usage per household in the area previously serviced by Western Water was mainly driven by above average rainfall across our service area, as customers used less potable and recycled water on gardens.

Similarly in 2021-22, we reused less recycled water in our Western Irrigation Network than targeted due to the above average rainfall across our area. This meant there was less demand for irrigation water and more recycled water produced.

We are looking at new ways to manage the water cycle in our region and are on track with our project partners and local communities to look at new sources of water for the Sunbury region.

Overall self-rating

Whilst we delivered the majority of target and are on track with commitments, several factors outside our control impacted on delivery against targets. This includes the pandemic impacting on programs that required face-to-face delivery and wetter conditions reducing demand for recycled water. Considering this, on balance, we have rated our performance as '*green*'.