

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 2020-21 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 provided to customers in Greater Western Water’s Western Water area during 2020-21. During the year, these services were provided by Western Water. We have a separate report for Greater Western Water’s outcomes in its City West Water area during 2020-21.

Summary table

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

Business comments

In 2020-21, we welcomed 4,879 new customers to the Greater Western Water (previously Western Water) area bringing the total customer base to 77,165 connected customers. We treated and delivered 20,839 ML of water, received over 50,000 calls, constructed 154km of mains and our crews attended and repaired over 4,467 faults across our network during the last year.

Our operating environment

Our operating environment and the actions we take influence the 21 individual indicators that make up the five outcome commitments for Greater Western Water (Western Water area). In 2020-21, our operating environment continued to be dramatically impacted by COVID-19 which presented challenges for us when coupled with existing high growth in the west and the announcement of the integration between City West Water and Western Water to form Greater Western Water.

Despite the challenge of a pandemic, our performance for 2020-21 was stronger in most indicators than prior years. The honouring of the commitment in the 2020 Price Submission to deliver a strong focus on fair and affordable charges and quality services was reflected in our outcomes. Overall, our customers became more connected digitally during the past twelve months with online interactions becoming the norm. Our teams had to engage with customers, community and stakeholders in different ways. Planned activities in community such as education presentations in schools and some planned Reconciliation Action Plan activities were delayed due to restrictions on face-to-face interactions. The wetter conditions over summer resulted in lower per household consumption but also lower demand for recycled water.

In late October 2020, the Minister for Water announced the integration of City West Water and Western Water to form Greater Western Water. The two businesses worked closely together over the year to set up Greater Western Water for success. This including the alignment of key customer processes, policies and engagement channels as well as foundational regulatory documents such as charters and tariff approvals.

For 2021-22, our integration with City West Water to form Greater Western Water presents 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. Our focus over the next short-term period will be on integrating our two organisations while maintaining our outcome commitments, service offerings and services standards.

As we develop the next Price Submission as Greater Western Water, we will work with the community understanding what is important to them and how we can incorporate this into our future outcomes.

Customer outcomes

We have five outcome commitments for the Western Water area which reflect the many roles that water and sanitation services play in the lives of our customers and our growing regional communities and economy.


We have assessed three of our outcome areas as green and two as amber by the RAG status (red, amber, green). Of our 21 individual indicators, 18 were green and 3 were red.

We have assigned 'green' status for overall performance on balance. Our self-assessment reflects consideration of performance by the most senior levels of our business, including board Committees.

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		
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%		

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 that 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.

In 2020-21, we were pleased that customers assessed our value for money higher than our long-term trend, with a survey score of 6.9 out of 10. We note that the prior year's value for money survey was unusually high as it was conducted early in the pandemic when water and sanitation services were front of mind for customers as they entered periods of lock down for the first time. We are hoping to maintain and/or improve on our customer satisfaction survey in 2021-22 with lower prices than originally set in our 2020 Western Water Price Determination.

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. Our measure of success for the hardship program 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 40 per cent of customers in the hardship program cleared outstanding debts.

With the Greater Western Water integration, we now have a broader team to case manage our customers. We will continue to provide support for our customers who are finding themselves continuously in financial hardship in 2021-22.

Overall self-rating


We have rated our performance for Outcome 1 as '*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		
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		
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		
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		

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		
i	Customers experiencing more than 5 water supply interruptions	Number	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
			Actual		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 or exceeded all six reliability targets for Outcome 2 in 2020-21. There were no 'Priority 1' (major) sewer spills in the region which reflects a combination of our investment in the network through renewals, preventative maintenance and more stable weather conditions. We've also seen significant improvements on our 2018 Customer Outcomes reliability targets, with shorter time off water supply, albeit no longer part of the current set.

At all times in 2020-21, our water quality was consistently compliant with Australian Drinking Water quality requirements. However, we did observe an uptick in water quality complaints per 1000 customers. For 2021-22, we have undertaken a range of activities to uplift our capabilities and capacity to have a more comprehensive understanding of the root cause of complaints will ensure our actions are not creating unintended consequences. For example, flushing in one area of the system can result in changed flows patterns in other parts of the system, resulting in a shift of complaints from one area to another or an increase rather than a decrease in complaints.


We expect to continue to deliver high quality and reliable services to our community in 2021-22. In the development of the upcoming price submission, Greater Western Water will work with customers on service level expectations and setting the outcomes and targets for these.

Overall self-rating

We have rated our performance for Outcome 2 as '*green*'.

g	Customers email accounts registered for communications and engagement	Actual						55%		
h	Customer portal usage (% unique new customers registered)	Percentage	Target	0	0	0	0	≥10%	≥10%	≥10%
			Actual					25.94%		

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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 met all of our ongoing Outcome 3 targets and commitments.

Over the last year, we utilised the opportunity to reach out to customers and create greater connection during the pandemic. We found that customers were generally more open to online interactions and we saw a significant increase in subscriptions to our customer portal and customers using e-billing.

We expect to continue to meet these targets into 2021-22. The integration to form Greater Western Water provides us the opportunity to share business practices, implement new ways of communicating using technology and providing more access to our customers. 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	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		
b 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		
c Number of sewer spills	Number	Target					0	0	0
		Actual	56	63	87	72	49		

Overall outcome 4 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

During preparation of the 2018 and 2020 Western Water price submission preparations, customers gave us consistent feedback that they wanted us to demonstrate 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 also track customer satisfaction with the way we care for the environment.

We met two of three targets (greenhouse emissions and satisfaction with our care for the environment) and saw an improving trend on the third target (sewer spills) for Outcome 4 in 2020-21.

Gross greenhouse gas emissions for the Western Water area for 2020-21 were 35,469 tonnes and we surrendering 2,371 Large-scale Generation Certificates to achieved net greenhouse gas emissions of 33,146 tonnes. This meant we achieved our targets for 2020-21. As Greater Western Water, we expect to continue to deliver on our commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and look to invest in long-term cost-effective

solutions. Our ambitious commitments and activities positioning us as a leader in environmental care and is reflected in our score of 8.3 out of 10 for satisfaction with the way our business cares for the environment.

Although we experienced a higher than desired number of sewer spills in 2020-21, there has been a significant decrease in sewer spills on previous years with 49 across the region, down from 72 the previous year. This improvement is a result of our Sewer Spill Prevention Strategy which continues to evolve to deal with our ageing infrastructure and growing network. None of the 49 sewer spills in 2020-21 were a Priority 1 spill, meaning that they did not result in a public health concern, did not cause any significant damage to property and did not discharge to a sensitive receiving environment. Whilst this is significant progress, we will continue to work to deliver an outcome that benefits both customers and the environment whilst meeting our requirements of the General Environmental Duty (GED) put in place by the EPA.

Overall self-rating:

Whilst we were pleased to have received a score of 8.3 out of 10 for satisfaction with the way our business cares for the environment, the continued number of sewer spills in our region means, 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%		
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%		
d	Minimise usage	Average litres per person per day	Target					≤185	≤185	≤185
			Actual					174.6		
e	Develop Sunbury IWM Plan	Met/Not Met	Target					On track	On track	Met
			Actual					On track		
f	Reuse of recycled water produced	Percentage	Target					≥75%	≥75%	≥75%
			Actual					47.8%		

g	Deliver Western Water Reconciliation Action Plan to plan	Met/Not Met	Target					On track	On track	Met
			Actual					On track		

*Noting that the survey question was not asked in 2020 as we issued a shortened survey to the community due to the pandemic.

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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 four of our six performance commitments for Outcome 5.

A valued member of our community

We completed major engagements with community on the developmental the 2020 Western Water Price Submission and implemented and number of programs to support customers with their bills through the pandemic. We are pleased to see this translate to higher recognition by customers of us being a valuable member of the community. The delivery of the Reconciliation Action Plan has also been expanded and is on track for delivery in 2022.

Supporting community through events and education

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the subsequent lockdowns and social-distancing restrictions, a number of our face to face events were postponed, including:

- Our Reconciliation Gardens Program with Schools was postponed. However, we plan to re-commence once schools are able to manage this in a Covid-safe way.

- There were a number of times during the year where schools entered remote learning and face-to-face incursions were not possible. We were able to deliver a number of virtual presentations to provide much needed water efficiency education to schools in our region. However, it was below our target of 90 per cent.

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 2020-21, the average water usage per household has decreased to 174.6 L per person per day, which is below our target of 185 L per person per day. This was mainly driven by above average rainfall across our service area, as customers used less potable and recycled water on gardens.

Similarly in 2020-21, 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*'.