

A photograph of an elderly man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a white shirt and a red apron. He is holding a blue watering can and pouring water onto a small green plant in a hanging basket. The background is a lush green garden with trees and foliage.

Customer outcomes performance report

2023-24

Acknowledgment of Country

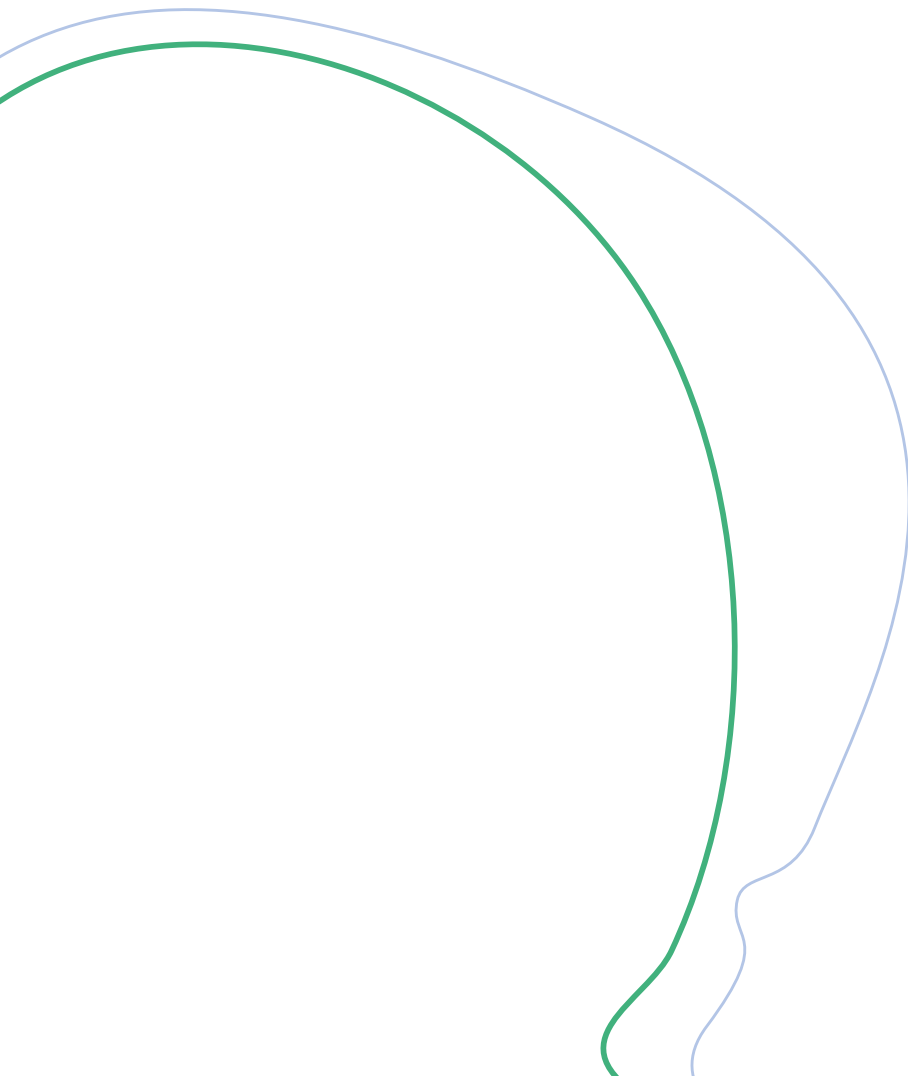
The Greater Western Water region covers Bunurong, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Wadawurrung, Djaara and Taungurung Country.

We respectfully acknowledge the Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters upon which we work, operate and rely. We acknowledge the continued cultural, social and spiritual connections that First Nations people have with Country.

We recognise and value that First Nations people have cared for and protected Country for thousands of generations. Country describes land, water, air, sky,

people, animals and spirits to which First Nations people are connected.

We are committed to working in partnership with local Traditional Owners and First Nations peoples, to harness collective wisdom to inform the future of the water management landscape while maintaining their cultural and spiritual connections to Country.



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About Greater Western Water

2023-24 marks our third full year as Greater Western Water, bringing together the previously serviced areas of City West Water and Western Water.

This will be the final year reporting on outcome measures set in our 2018 and 2020 price submissions as from next year we will report on our aligned Greater Western Water 2024 price submission customer outcomes.

We are proud to serve the 1.47 million community members who live in our service area. We welcomed 15,918 new customers to our area in 2023-24 – bringing our total customer base to 631,537.

Over the last year, we have delivered 123,569 ML of water, received over 255,300 calls, laid out 389 km of mains and our crews attended and repaired over 4,576 faults across our network.

Our 3,700 square kilometre service area stretches from Melbourne's CBD, inner and north-west suburbs through the Melton and Sunbury growth corridors to Bacchus Marsh and the Macedon Ranges.

Background

This year, we have focused on transitioning our processes and systems while maintaining our outcome commitments, service offerings and service standards.

We operated under the Essential Services Commission (ESC)'s 2018 and 2020 determinations for City West Water and Western Water, respectively. These determinations, and their subsequent customer commitments (known as outcomes), applied to each of our service areas.

We are concluding the 2018-24 regulatory period with a final report on our performance against the outcome measures set in our 2018 and 2020 price submissions. In these submissions, we committed to delivering 11 outcomes (six for City West Water and five for Western Water). Of these, we met, or largely met, ten of our targets.

This document reports on our performance against our customer outcomes for:

- Greater Western Water (previously City West Water) area - Part A
- Greater Western Water (previously Western Water) area - Part B

Our first price submission as GWW went to the ESC in September 2023. As part of our engagement process, we collaborated with our community to understand and incorporate their views and values into our future commitments. Moving forward, we will report on our aligned Greater Western Water 2024 price submission customer outcomes.

How we measure success

Each year, Victoria's water corporations provide a summary of performance against the commitments made in their price submission to the ESC.

Progress is represented using a 'traffic light' system, with outcomes being marked as 'met' (green), 'largely met' (amber), and 'not met' (red). We have provided comments about each outcome that was 'not met'.

Figure 1. Greater Western Water's service area (consisting of previous City West Water and Western Water service areas)



Part A

Greater Western

Water customer

outcome

performance

(previously City West Water area)

Summary

City West Water submitted a price submission to the Essential Services Commission in 2018. This section of the report relates to the regulatory period of 2018-24, focusing on the six outcomes City West Water committed to in its 2018 price submission.

Overall, we met (green rating) our targets in one of our six outcome areas, four targets we largely met (amber rating), and one we have not met. Our overall rating is 'largely met' (amber).

Our outcomes

Our commitments to customers relate to the following five outcomes:

1. Services to my home and business are safe, reliable and efficiently managed.
2. Customer service is accessible and my enquiries are resolved promptly.
3. Billing and payment options are efficient and convenient.
4. Customers in hardship are supported.
5. The whole of the water cycle is managed in an environmentally sustainable way.
6. We are a valued partner in servicing a growing Melbourne.

We have proposed some changes to our outcome measures where processes have aligned or where they are no longer fit-for-purpose. Where they have changed, we have maintained our existing commitments established in our previous price submissions.

Our performance

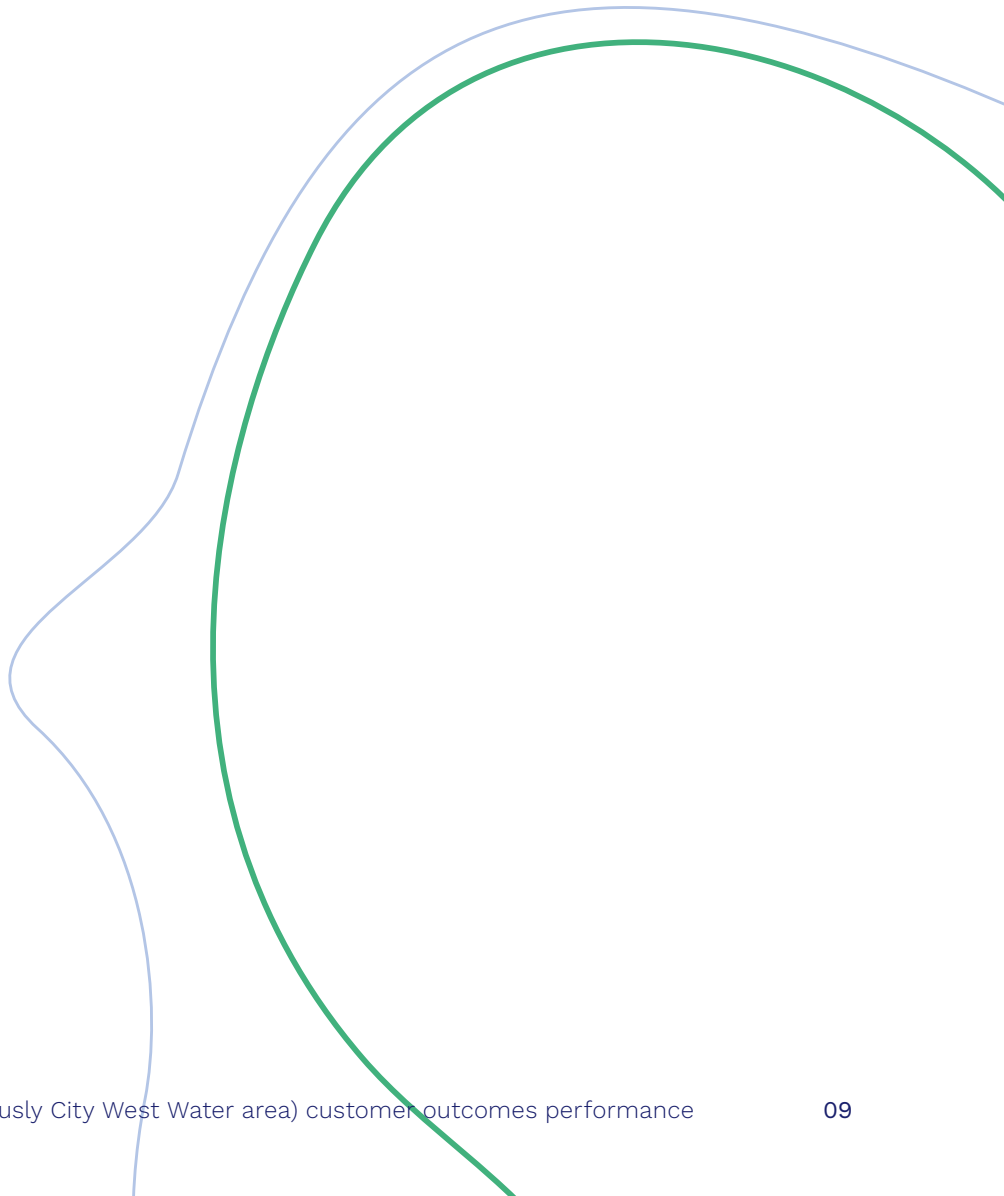
Overall, in 2023-24 we largely met our customer commitments while continuing our work to integrate City West Water and Western Water and managing the ongoing challenges of supply issues and the changing cost of living impacting our customers.

Our six outcome commitments for customers in our area previously serviced by City West Water reflect the roles that water and sewerage services play in the lives of our customers and our growing community.

Each of our six outcomes has a series of indicators. Overall, City West Water has 41 individual indicators. In 2023-24, we met 21 of these (green), largely met three (amber), we did not meet 16 (red), and we did not report on one indicator due to data inconsistencies created through the implementation of our new billing system and online portal.

Overall, in 2023-24 we largely met our customer commitments.

Outcome	2022-23	2023-24
Services to my home and business are safe, reliable and efficiently managed	● Largely met	● Largely met
Customer service is accessible and my enquiries are resolved promptly	● Largely met	● Largely met
Billing and payment options are efficient and convenient	● Not met	● Not met
Customers in hardship are supported	● Largely met	● Largely met
The whole of the water cycle is managed in an environmentally sustainable way	● Met	● Met
Greater Western Water (previously City West Water) are a valued partner in servicing a growing Melbourne	● Met	● Largely met
Overall	● Largely met	● Largely met



Outcome 1:

Services to my home and business are safe, reliable and efficiently managed

Overall rating achieved for this outcome: ● **amber (largely met)**

In 2023-24, we largely maintained our water and sewer network reliability. However, we consider we have not yet achieved a 'green' rating as there is still room for improvement particularly from a water service reliability perspective.

We hold ourselves accountable when it comes to providing essential water and sewerage services – this is our core business.

We aim to give customers reliable services so they feel confident that:

- when they turn on a tap in the kitchen or bathroom, their water is safe for drinking and will flow at a reasonable pressure
- when they flush a toilet, let the plug out of a sink or have a shower, their wastewater will disappear seamlessly into the sewer
- if something does go wrong with their water supply or wastewater disposal, the problem will be attended to and resolved in a timely and efficient manner.

We continue to have relatively lower water quality complaints compared to other water corporations in Victoria. The ESC's [Water Performance Report for 2022-23](#), shows that our water quality complaint rate was 23 per cent lower than the average across all Victorian water corporations, and the lowest of the metropolitan retailers.

In 2023-24, we saw mixed results with most indicators rated green (seven out of 15), three indicators rated amber and five rated red. We consider our performance for Outcome 1 as 'amber'. While we largely met our targets for sewerage service reliability, we fell short of some of our targets for water service reliability.

Water services

Indicator	Target	Results	Status
Percentage of unplanned water supply interruptions restored within five hours	97.0%	91.6%	● Not met
Average time taken (from notification) to restore unplanned water supply interruption (minutes)	120.0	144.4	● Not met
Percentage of planned water supply interruptions restored within five hours	99.0%	94.4%	● Largely met
Number of customers experiencing more than five (6+) unplanned water service interruptions in a year	0	0*	● Met
Number of customers experiencing more than three (4+) unplanned water service interruptions in a year	86	223*	● Not met
Number of low supply pressure events	0	0	● Met

* Data for May to June 2024 was estimated based on actual figures from preceding months due to limited access to data reports from our new billing system during the implementation phase.

● Water network reliability

We have not achieved our target for the number of customers experiencing more than three unplanned water service interruptions. Specifically, 223* customers experienced four unplanned water service interruptions over the past 12 months. A few factors contributed to this. We experienced very hot and dry weather conditions this year, particularly in February and March, which tend to increase water main failure rates. Additionally, we modified our water main renewal process to include a more detailed analysis of project constructability (to reduce unforeseen costs overruns during the construction phase of projects), which has impacted the delivery times of complex projects and resulted in more repeat failures.

We continue to monitor and prioritise customers who experience a high number of unplanned interruptions. Customers who experience three unplanned interruptions are identified, monitored to determine whether conditions will deteriorate, and managed so that further interruptions are planned rather than unplanned. If the unplanned water interruption is due to failures of other water assets, we include the area in a planned leak detection survey until the end of the year. This process has proven to be successful in reducing the number of extreme unplanned water supply interruptions in our service area and no customer experienced more than five unplanned water service interruptions in the last 12 months.

The percentage of planned water supply interruptions restored within five hours was below target in 2023-24. This was related to an increase in the number of developer-initiated planned water isolations, many of which have resulted in considerable outage durations. Moreover, a significant number of these cases involved developers scheduling multiple gas and water connections at the same time without appropriate resourcing and support, leading to extended outages.

The average time taken to restore unplanned water supply interruptions has increased marginally since 2022-23 and remains above target due to the number of complex bursts that took more than five hours to repair. Large and complex bursts take longer to repair and require immediate shut down of supply to the affected asset for public safety. Complex bursts can also include repairs next to other authorities' assets (including electricity and/or gas mains), where water is usually turned off earlier to prevent damage to these assets.

Our guaranteed service level scheme provides these customers with a payment in recognition of the lower level of service they received during the year.

Water quality

Indicator	Target	Result	Status
Customer satisfaction score on water quality via City West Water customer satisfaction surveys	91%	84%	● Not met
Number of water quality complaints per 1,000 customers	0.7	2.84*	● Not met
Number of non-compliances with Safe Drinking Water Act	0	0	● Met

* Data for May to June 2024 was estimated based on actual figures from preceding months due to limited access to data reports from our new billing system during the implementation phase.

Note: As Greater Western Water, our 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.

● Drinking water quality

At all times throughout 2023-24, Greater Western Water's water quality across its entire service area was compliant with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. Aesthetic-related complaints in our area previously serviced by City West Water increased in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23, with the majority relating to colour rather than taste and odour. This can be attributed to the water supply from Melbourne Water's Greenvale Reservoir that varies in colour depending on the catchment source.¹

The Greenvale Reservoir water supply can also cause naturally occurring sediments to settle across our network. Two major water main bursts in 2024 disturbed these sediments and resulted in a significant number of calls from impacted customers after the repairs had been completed. These events combined with an ongoing increased trend in water complaints across all retailers saw a higher level of complaints than our target.

Although customer complaints remain higher than our target, results from our monthly customer satisfaction survey show that Greater Western Water customers are generally satisfied with the level of water quality received in their homes, with 82 per cent of the customers we have interacted with during the past 12 months scoring our water quality seven out of ten or higher.

We expect to continue to deliver high quality and reliable services to all our community in 2024-25.

¹ Melbourne Water's bulk water supply is from protected water catchments where different levels of treatment are used depending on the source of the water from protected water catchments.

Sewerage services

Indicator	Target	Results	Status
Number of customers experiencing more than three (4+) unplanned sewerage service interruptions in a year	6	1*	● Met
Percentage of interruptions to sewerage services restored within five hours	98.0%	98.8%	● Met
Average time (from notification) to rectify a blockage or spill (main and house connection branch) (minutes)	124	126	● Largely met
Percentage of sewer spills contained within five hours of notification	100%	99.5%	● Largely met
Number of sewer spills within a house, that are a result of a failure in our pipes	13	9	● Met
Number of sewer spills within a house, that are a result of a failure in our pipes, not contained within one hour of notification	0	0	● Met

*Data for May to June 2024 was estimated based on actual figures from preceding months due to limited access to data reports from our new billing system during the implementation phase.

● Sewerage service reliability

We have met our target for the number of customers experiencing more than three unplanned sewerage service interruptions within a year every year since 2018-19.

In 2023-24, our sewer spill and blockage rectification times were slightly higher than target and the percentage of sewer spills contained within five hours of notification dropped marginally below the target of 100 per cent for the first time in this regulatory period. This was largely due to poor access to affected assets, with crews being unable to access maintenance holes to clear blockages when arriving onsite and having to locate other maintenance holes to undertake works from. Most (99.5 per cent) interruptions to sewerage services were restored within five hours.

Outcome 2:

Customer service is accessible and my enquiries are resolved promptly

Overall rating achieved for this outcome: ● **amber (largely met)**

We always strive to provide exceptional customer service and be accessible and easy to deal with. As we change the way we work as a business, we are looking for ways to better meet our customers' needs. Of our eight outcome measures, four were green (met) and four were red (not met).

While we successfully delivered against our outcomes for customer correspondence, we have noted a drop in satisfaction in our responses to enquiries from residential and non-residential customers. We are working to improve these measures through changes to our customer assist programs and the implementation of our new billing system.

Indicator	Target	Result	Status
Percentage of calls resolved on first contact	90.0%	96.1%*	● Met
Percentage of customer correspondence (emails) responded to within one business day	95.0%	100%	● Met
Percentage of customer correspondence (emails and mail) responded to within 10 business days	100.0%	100%	● Met
Residential customer satisfaction with response to an enquiry (percentage of scores that are 7 out of 10 or higher)	85.0%	79%	● Not met
Non-residential customer satisfaction with response to an enquiry (percentage of scores that are 7 out of 10 or higher)	85.0%	51%	● Not met
Residential customer satisfaction with response to complaint (percentage of scores that are 7 out of 10 or higher)	50.0%	35%	● Not met
Non-residential customer satisfaction with response to a complaint (percentage of scores that are 7 out of 10 or higher)	50.0%	41%	● Not met
Number of complaints investigated by the Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria (per 1,000 customers)	0.10	0.05	● Met

* Data for May to June 2024 was estimated based on actual figures from preceding months due to limited access to data reports from our new billing system during the implementation phase.

Note: As Greater Western Water, our annual customer satisfaction survey on satisfaction on enquiries or complaints 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.

● Residential and non-residential customer satisfaction survey results

We are committed to responding to our customers' needs.

Over 2023-24, we have seen a steady increase in the number of complaints relating to bills and payments, and customer satisfaction in our response to enquiries and complaints has been lower than target. Data from the annual customer satisfaction survey indicated that customers' concerns about being able to pay utility bills has increased, which is consistent with ongoing cost of living pressures being felt across the economy.

Many of the complaints over the last year related to the financial pressures being placed on households and small businesses. To support

customers experiencing payment difficulties, we have extended our hardship support to cover both residential and small non-residential customers. Payment difficulty support applications are also assessed and reviewed on a case-by-case basis so that each customer receives the assistance option that is most appropriate to their individual circumstances.

Staff attrition has also exacerbated poorer customer satisfaction to our responses due to slower response times. We launched our new billing system in May 2024 and note that satisfaction results were also impacted by service issues we faced in the early stages of the implementation of the new billing system.

Outcome 3:

Billing and payment options are efficient and convenient

Overall rating achieved for this outcome: ● **red (not met)**

We strive to deliver timely and accurate bills for our customers.

Our performance for this outcome has been significantly impacted by increasing cost of living pressures, changes to our payment options and the recent launch of our new billing system. We consider our overall performance to be 'red' for 2023-24.

Indicator	Target	Result	Status
Number of payment issue complaints (per 1,000 customers)	1.20	1.66	● Not met
Estimated meter reads used for billing (percentage of total reads)	≤2%	2.63%*	● Not met
Customers with registered online accounts (percentage of all accounts)	30.0%	N/A	N/A

* Data for 2023-24 represents actual figures from preceding months (specifically July 2023 to April 2024) due to limited access to data reports from our new billing system during the implementation phase.

● Payment issue complaints

Affordability is always front of mind for Greater Western Water. Our 2024 price submission engagement found that affordability was the top priority for many of our customers and we have addressed this concern through our price submission by delivering stable bills.

Payment issue complaints in 2023-24 related to customers experiencing difficulties using our website and customer portals to make payments

and changes to credit card payments. Customers are no longer able to make direct debit payments via credit card and Greater Western Water stopped taking credit card payments over the phone to ensure that all financial transactions are safe, secure and meet PCI Data Security Standards. Customers who previously paid their bills over the phone have been provided with support and can continue to pay via post office payments and BPAY.

● **Customers with registered online accounts**

MyAccount was introduced to customers in May 2020, following engagement in 2019-20 with our customers on their billing and payment needs. The online portal gave customers easy access to bill payments and records. Registrations were initially strong but we paused proactive promotion of our MyAccount portal while we developed and rolled out our new billing and accounts system to allow for a smooth changeover.

We have moved existing customers to our new customer portal through implementation of our new billing system. However, given the changes in our system, this data is no longer appropriate to reflect progress against this outcome. To ensure consistency of reporting over time, we have opted to not report this measure for 2023-24. We expect to see steady increases in online account registrations as we promote our new online customer portal.

● **Estimated meter reads used for billing**

Due to the transition to our new billing system, we are unable to determine the exact percentage of meter reads that were estimated between May and June 2024. To ensure transparency, we have opted to report the April 2024 YTD and state that we have not met our target for 2023-24.





Since the unwinding of pandemic restrictions in the second half of 2021-22, estimated meter readings have reduced in volume and are continuing to trend down, however we remain above pre-pandemic levels. This is due to a lack of access to shops and businesses that are still closed or empty. We have also experienced an increase in meters hidden under bushes in overgrown yards due to increased rainfall, which prevents our meter readers from safely locating and obtaining readings.

Outcome 4: Customers in hardship are supported

Overall rating achieved for this outcome:  **amber (largely met)**

We recognise the essential nature of the services we provide and the importance of providing options and appropriate assistance to customers who may be experiencing payment difficulties and/or be impacted by domestic violence.

Our ongoing commitment to fostering an environment of inclusivity through regular case management and follow up ensures we are having the right conversations and continuously evaluating our customer support program to be effective and responsive to the evolving needs in the community.

Indicator	Target	Result	Status
Anticipated customers on instalment plans at the end of reporting period (number per 1000 customers)	40	40.3 [^]	 Met
Anticipated residential customers receiving hardship grants (number per 1000 customers)	1.2	1.01 [*]	 Not met
Number of customers taking up Water Assist to improve their water efficiency	200	114	 Not met
Prior to restriction being applied, CWW has undertaken reasonable endeavours to ensure customer is not in hardship	100%	100%	 Met

* Data for May to June 2024 was estimated based on actual figures from preceding months due to limited access to data reports from our new billing system during the implementation phase.

[^] In our new billing system, we are no longer able to differentiate between customers in the Central and Western regions. Hence, we have reported the Greater Western Water figure for customers on instalment plans in 2023-24.

● Customers on instalment plans

The number of customers on instalment plans has increased in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23. Additionally, the compliance percentage has risen and stayed consistently high all year. Clearly communicating to customers the terms and conditions of the agreed payment arrangements including potential consequences of late or missed payments and sending friendly reminders of upcoming payment due dates – are some of the strategies we used to foster and build trust, improve customer engagement, and increase the likelihood of customers paying their instalments on time.

● Supporting customers experiencing hardship

We are committed to supporting customers experiencing hardship.

We believe that financial stability can be successfully attained when working together with customers who are experiencing short and long-term financial difficulties. We are committed to ensuring customers are aware that there is support available and they will be assisted and provided with the right information when they reach out to us. We encourage customers to communicate their financial difficulties early, we provide multiple channels (direct phone calls and email) for customers and/or financial counsellors and case worker organisations to access support, and we ensure our staff are adequately trained to manage and handle cases professionally and with appropriate care.

As a business, our customer support program includes a dedicated team and hotline that provides tailored options to residential and small non-residential customers experiencing financial difficulties. Payment difficulty support applications are assessed and reviewed on a case-by-case basis, so that each customer receives the assistance option that is most appropriate to their individual circumstance. The most common forms of support options provided by the customer support program include:

- Flexible and affordable payment plans, which have been customised to each customer's unique circumstances
- Referral to a financial counselling agency or the Thriving Communities partnership 'One stop, One story' app

- Family and domestic violence support including full or partial waivers, securing and restricting access to accounts
- Utilising payment history data and reports to identify and proactively outreach 'at risk' customers to regularly follow up and reassess situations if necessary
- High usage leak adjustments
- Water Assist Program for general plumbing and maintenance repairs
- Hardship grants
- Utility Relief Grants
- Incentivised payment plans

Our Water Assist Program continues to provide valuable plumbing maintenance support to improve water efficiency and repair leaks which are often the primary cause of high and long-term debt. The decrease in customers taking up Water Assist is not reflective of the demand but rather the limited Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) funding and budget constraints, and the consequential limitations needing to be applied in the selection and referral process in 2023-24.

We saw a decline in the number of customers who received a hardship grant in 2023-24 compared with 2022-23 due to an increase in uptake for the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Utility Relief Grant scheme, which continues to be the main and most popular source of hardship support.

We will continue to provide support for customers who experience hardship in 2024-25.

Outcome 5:

The whole of the water cycle is managed in an environmentally sustainable way

Overall rating achieved for this outcome: ● **green (met)**

In our 2018 price submission, our customers told us they wanted to see us manage our water resources responsibly for the benefit of current and future generations. This includes local measures to save water, such as stormwater harvesting and water education to schools, as well as central system interventions that increase our water supplies, such as ordering water from the Victorian Desalination Project. We manage the sewerage system to avoid spills and to recycle sewage for productive uses in line with our customers' expectations.

To date, we have co-funded 14 stormwater harvesting programs across our region to promote sustainable water management and reduce our demand on drinking water by capturing, treating and reusing stormwater to irrigate parks and reserves.

Greater Western Water continues to support programs that increase tree canopy cover and open space across our service region through partnerships with government agencies and key collaborations such as Greening the West and Chain of Ponds. In partnership with Greening the West and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), we launched the Trees for Schools Program in 2023. Through this program, 29 schools received up to 50 trees to plant onsite, providing an opportunity for sustainability and environmental education, as well as the numerous health, shading, and aesthetic benefits that tree cover provides. In partnership with DEECA's More Trees for a Cooler Greener West initiative, we received funding to plant 5,000 trees at Surbiton Park in Melton and West Werribee. This supported the delivery of the program's overall target of 500,000 trees across the west of Melbourne.

We met most (five of six) of our targets for Outcome 5 and consider our overall performance was 'green' for commitments made in our 2018 price submission.

Indicator	Target	Result	Status
Water lost from the network (as a percentage of total water supplied)	9.3%	11.1%*	● Not met
Water storage levels remain (in November) as per the water outlook zones in our Urban Water Strategy	≥40%	95%	● Met
Percentage of emergency relief structures compliant with requirement to not spill in dry weather	100%	100%	● Met
Number of licence non-compliances with the Environment Protection Authority's discharge licence requirements	0	0	● Met
Net-zero emissions by 2030: Greenhouse gas reductions (percentage reduction from 12,401 tonnes of CO ₂ e) – as City West Water – No longer applicable beyond 30 June 2021	70%	N/A	N/A
Net-zero emissions by 2030: Net greenhouse gas emissions - as Greater Western Water from 1 July 2021 (tonnes of CO ₂ e)	≤ 39,358	33,000	● Met
Number of stormwater partnerships in place	9	14	● Met

* Data for May to June 2024 was estimated based on actual figures from preceding months due to limited access to data reports from our new billing system during the implementation phase.

● Water lost from network

We saw a slight increase in water lost from our network over the last three years, mainly due to ageing customer water meters within our water supply network. The replacement of these meters has been delayed and contributed to the shortfall against our target. We are ramping up our meter replacement program to address this challenge and are targeting our oldest meters as a priority. We have replaced approximately 5,000 meters in 2023-24 and will continue to replace more ageing meters in 2024-25.

We have also reviewed non-revenue water programs, including leak detection programs, to ensure they fit with our integrated business and investment goals. We are trialling near real-time monitoring technology to target high risk aging pipelines. We continue to develop and improve our asset management plans, plan and construct water main renewals, plan and develop district metered areas and pressure management, trial new leak detection technology, and undertake targeted leak surveys. We are also working with Melbourne Water to ensure measurements at our bulk meter points are accurate.

● Greenhouse gas emissions

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

As Greater Western Water, these measures are not appropriate in capturing a whole of business view on our net greenhouse gas emissions. However, we remain committed to honouring our current outcomes and measures. With integration we adopted a new consistent measure that represents our net greenhouse gas emissions as Greater Western Water. This consolidated measure is outlined in our 2024 price submission.

Our Statement of Obligations and 2030 Strategy commits 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. Although our corporate strategy represents a 'step up' on our existing emission reduction targets established in our price submissions, we have maintained the existing commitments for the remainder of the period.

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

We continue to deliver on our emission target of net zero by 2030.

Measure	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
City West Water emissions target (% reduction of CO ₂ e from 12,401 tonnes)	0%	5%	5%	60%	70%	70%
City West Water equivalent target in tonnes of emissions (tonnes of CO ₂ e)	12,401	11,781	11,781	4,960	3,720	3,720
Western Water emissions target (tonnes of CO ₂ e)	35,638	36,223	35,638	35,638	35,638	35,638
Combined Greater Western Water emissions target as per price submission commitments (tonnes of CO₂e)	48,039	48,004	47,419	40,598	39,358	39,358

Outcome 6:

We are a valued partner in servicing a growing Melbourne

Overall rating achieved for this outcome: ● **amber (largely met)**

One of our key roles is to help our partners deliver new water infrastructure to supply the growing communities across our service area.

Once again, we saw unprecedented rates of urban development and construction activity across our region. Over 10,520 new residential and non-residential customers moved into the area previously serviced by City West Water in 2023-24 and we were able to meet most of our targets. We did this by automating some processes, simplifying internal processes, addressing technology constraints, and training extra staff to provide support during busy periods.

In 2023-24, we reported new customer contribution and pressure and flow applications measures as a Greater Western Water. However, other applications (such as plumbing and asset information requests) are still reported as City West Water.

Ongoing challenges impacted our performance against our targets for processing asset information and plumbing applications. Staffing challenges remain as we continue to recruit, train and cross-skill our people to improve overall processing times. We had various system issues which prevented us from issuing consent and processing payments. Furthermore, we experienced a significant increase in the volume of calls received in 2023-24, which further exacerbated our already strained resources.

While we did not meet our target for asset information and plumbing applications in 2023-24, we have improved or maintained turnaround times during a period of unexpected high growth. We consider our overall Outcome 6 performance was 'amber'.

We expect high growth to continue in our service area into 2024-25 and we will strive to deliver continued value to our business customers through this time.

Indicator	Target	Result	Status
Percentage of standard plumbing applications completed within five business days	≥95%	47.2%	● Not met
Percentage of pressure and flow information applications processed within five business days	≥95%	97.0%	● Met
Percentage of asset information applications processed within two business days	≥95%	14.6%	● Not met
Percentage of standard new customer contribution applications processed within 45 business days	≥95%	100.0%	● Met
Percentage of standard 20mm new meter supply and assembly installed within 10 business days of CWW consent	≥95%	99.5%	● Met

Part B

Greater Western

Water customer

outcomes

performance

(previously Western Water area)

Summary

Western Water submitted a price submission to the Essential Services Commission in 2020. This section of the report relates to the regulatory period of 2020-24, focusing on the five outcomes Western Water committed to in its 2020 price submission.

Overall, we met (green) our targets in two of our five commitment areas, we largely met three targets (amber). Our overall rating is ‘largely met’ (amber).

Our commitments

Our commitments (known as outcomes) outline what customers can expect from us over the regulatory period.

For this regulatory period, our commitments to customers relate to the following five outcomes:

1. Fair and affordable charges for all customers
2. Reliable, safe services to existing and new customers
3. Innovative approaches to addressing customer needs
4. Care of the environment
5. Sustainable contribution to the community and regional liveability

We have proposed some changes to our outcome measures where processes have aligned or where they are no longer fit-for-purpose. Where they have changed, we have maintained our existing commitments established in our previous price submissions.

Our performance

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

We have assessed two of our outcome areas as green and three as amber by the RAG status (red, amber, green). Of our individual indicators, 12 were green, two were amber and five were red.

We have assigned ‘amber’ status for overall performance.

Outcome	2022-23	2023-24
Fair and affordable charges for all customers	● Met	● Largely met
Reliable, safe services to existing and new customers	● Met	● Met
Innovative approaches to addressing customer needs	● Met	● Met
Care of the environment	● Not met	● Largely met
Sustainable contribution to the community and regional liveability	● Largely met	● Largely met
Overall	● Met	● Largely met

Outcome 1:

Fair and affordable charges for all customers

Overall rating achieved for this outcome: ● **amber (largely met)**

We are committed to delivering better value for money and we understand affordability is front of mind for most customers.

Our customers have told us we need to ensure our prices and charges are fair and affordable for everyone. We also recognise that we provide

an essential service and the importance of helping customers who are experiencing financial hardship. Engagement for our 2024 price submission found that affordability remains a top priority for our customers, as is how we support customers who are experiencing hardship or difficulty paying their bills.

Indicator	Target	Results	Status
Customer satisfaction that the price of water services represents value for money (average rating out of 10 via survey)	≥6.5	5.8	● Not met
Percentage of customer hardship program participants who have cleared outstanding debt	≥20%	33.9%*	● Met

* Data for May to June 2024 was estimated based on actual figures from preceding months due to limited access to data reports from our new billing system during the implementation phase.

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.

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

Greater Western Water is committed to delivering value for money and we understand that affordability is front of mind for our customers.

Customer satisfaction survey results about value for money were likely impacted by the ongoing cost of living pressures. We passed considerable savings to our customers in our tariff basket application in 2021-22 by charging below the Essential Services Commission's maximum allowed prices in 2022-23 and 2023-24 for customers in the previous Western Water area. We have some of the lowest bills in Victoria.

● Supporting customers in hardship

We are committed to supporting customers experiencing hardship.

We believe that financial stability can be successfully attained when working together with customers who are experiencing short and long-term financial difficulties. We are committed to ensuring customers are aware that there is support available and that we will help them find the right information and tools when they reach out to us. We encourage customers to communicate their financial difficulties early, we provide multiple channels (direct phone calls and email) for customers and/or financial counsellors and case worker organisations to access support, and we ensure staff are adequately trained to manage and handle cases professionally and with appropriate care.

Our customer support program includes a dedicated phone line, manned by a team specially trained to provide tailored options to residential and small non-residential customers experiencing financial difficulties. Financial support applications are assessed and reviewed on a case-by-case basis, so that each customer receives the assistance option that is most appropriate to their circumstances.

The most common forms of support options provided by our customer support program include:

- Flexible and affordable payment plans, which have been customised to each customer's unique circumstances
- Referral to a financial counselling agency or the Thriving Communities partnership 'One stop, One story' app
- Family and domestic violence support including full or partial waivers, securing and restricting access to accounts
- Utilising payment history data and reports to identify and proactively outreach 'at risk' customers to regularly follow up and reassess situations if necessary
- High usage leak adjustments
- Water Assist Program for general plumbing and maintenance repairs
- Hardship grants
- Utility Relief Grants
- Incentivised payment plans

Our measure of success for the hardship program is the percentage of participants who clear outstanding debt. We are pleased to report that over 30 per cent of customers in the hardship program cleared outstanding debts.

Outcome 2:

Reliable, safe services to existing and new customers

Overall rating achieved for this outcome: ● **green (met)**

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 all of our six reliability targets for Outcome 2 in 2023-24 and rated our performance 'green' (met).

Indicator	Target	Results	Status
Number of water quality complaints per 1,000 customers	≤4	2.74*	● Met
Average response time to priority 1 water incidents (minutes)	≤30	28.71	● Met
Average response time to priority 1 sewer spills (minutes)	≤30	29.59	● Met
Number of customers experiencing more than three sewer service interruptions	0	0*	● Met
Number of Safe Drinking Water Act non-compliances (water sampling and audit)	0	0	● Met
Number of customers experiencing more than five water supply interruptions	0	0*	● Met

* Data for May to June 2024 was estimated based on actual figures from preceding months due to limited access to data reports from our new billing system during the implementation phase.

● Drinking water quality

At all times throughout 2023-24, the water quality across our entire service area was compliant with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. Aesthetic-related complaints in the area previously serviced by Western Water increased in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23, with the majority relating to colour rather than taste and odour. This can be attributed to the water supply from Melbourne Water's Greenvale Reservoir that varies in colour depending on the catchment source².

The Greenvale Reservoir supply can also cause naturally occurring sediments to settle across the Greater Western Water network. Two major water main bursts in 2024 disturbed these sediments and resulted in a significant number of calls from impacted customers after the repairs had been completed. These events combined with an ongoing increased trend in water complaints across all retailers saw a higher level of complaints than target.

We expect to continue to deliver high quality and reliable services to all our community in 2024-25.

2 Melbourne Water's bulk water supply is from protected water catchments where different levels of treatment are used depending on the source of the water from protected water catchments.

● Water network reliability

Our average time to respond to priority 1 water incidents in 2023-24 has increased compared to 2022-23. However, we achieved our target and there has been a decrease in the number of bursts and leaks per 100km of water main since 2022-23.

Our guaranteed service level scheme provides customers a payment in recognition of the lower level of service they received during the year. The scheme compensates customers who may have had interruptions during peak hours or who may have had an interruption that lasted longer than the time advised in our outage notification. Additionally, the guaranteed service level scheme has been expanded to customers in the area previously serviced by Western Water. These customers will now be compensated if:

- they experience more than three unplanned water supply interruptions within any 12-month period
- they are not given at least two business days' notice of a planned water supply interruption
- a sewer blockage is not restored within five hours of notification
- a spill is not contained within five hours of notification
- a sewage spill in a house is caused by the business or a failure of the business' system(s).

Outcome 3: Innovative approaches to addressing customer needs

Overall rating achieved for this outcome: ● **green (met)**

We pride ourselves on providing accessible and timely advice to customers and strive to communicate and engage with customers in ways that suits their needs.

We have moved existing customers to our new portal however we are unable to report the percentage of unique new customers registered to use our customer portal in 2023-24 due to limited access to data reports from our new

billing system and customer portal during the implementation phase. To ensure transparency, we have opted to not report this measure for 2023-24. We expect a steady increases in online account registrations as we promote our new online customer portal.

We met the remaining three targets for our Outcome 3 commitments in 2023-24 and rated our performance 'green' (met).

Indicator	Target	Results	Status
Percentage of customers using e-billing	≥20%	43%^1	● Met
Percentage of customers mobile numbers registered for SMS communications	≥75%	78%^1	● Met
Percentage of customers email accounts registered for communications and engagement	≥50%	88%^2	● Met
Customer portal usage (percentage of new customers registered)	≥10%	N/A	N/A

¹Data for 2023-24 is the year to date as at May 24th due to limited access to data reports from our new billing system during the implementation phase.




²We no longer differentiate between customers previously serviced by City West Water or Western Water so the data provided is for Greater Western Water.

Outcome 4: Care of the environment

Overall rating achieved for this outcome:  **amber (largely met)**

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

In 2023-24, two of the targets for this outcome were not met. Our performance in this area was impacted by high rainfall and unprecedented flooding over much of the western region. We are continuing to work to update and improve our processes. We consider our overall Outcome 4 performance was 'amber' (largely met).

Indicator	Target	Results	Status
Net greenhouse gas emissions (as Western Water – No longer applicable beyond 30 June 2021) (tonnes of CO ₂ e)	≤ 35,638	N/A	N/A
Net greenhouse gas emissions (as Greater Western Water from 1 July 2021) (tonnes of CO ₂ e)	≤ 39,358	33,000	 Met
Customer satisfaction with the way that Western Water cares for the environment (average rating out of 10 via survey)	≥ 8	7.7	 Largely met
Number of sewer spills	0	101	 Not met

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.

Sewer spills

The number of sewer spills for the year was higher than our target of zero.

Moving forward, we are committed to sewer spill prevention and will deliver on this through initiatives like capturing data on asset performance and developing targeted programs to remove excess tree roots, clean high demand mains and address aging infrastructure and related failures.

● Customer satisfaction on care for the environment

Research indicates that while rising concerns about cost of living are front of mind for customers, the environment remains firmly on the agenda for communities across the country.

In 2023, Greater Western Water was issued with an Environment Protection Authority (EPA) infringement notice in relation to a discharge of stormwater containing sediment from an irrigation dam at the Romsey Recycled Water Plant into Deep Creek. An independent ecological risk assessment confirmed there were no long-term environmental impacts to Deep Creek due to the discharge. This assessment was provided to EPA Victoria as part of their investigation. Greater Western Water is implementing measures to stabilise the irrigation dam and drainage channels to prevent sediment build up in stormwater runoff, in compliance with an EPA Victoria improvement notice at the site. Media attention around this issue has likely influenced the latest customer rating for environmental care. We are currently engaging with the Romsey and Macedon communities to better understand their expectations and needs, and how we can best care for the local environment.

● Greenhouse gas emissions

Our outcome measures on net greenhouse gas emissions vary between the areas previously serviced by City West Water and Western Water. For the area previously serviced by Western Water, we measure delivery and commitment to reducing emissions against a target that measures emissions in tonnes. As Greater Western Water, these measures are not appropriate in capturing a whole of business view on our net greenhouse gas emissions. We remain committed to honouring our current outcomes and measures. With integration, we adopted a new consistent measure that represents our net greenhouse gas emissions as Greater Western Water. This consolidated measure is outlined in our 2024 price submission.

Our Statement of Obligations and 2030 Strategy commits us 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.

Our 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. We continue to deliver on our emission target of net zero by 2030.

Measure	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
City West Water emissions target (% reduction of CO ₂ e from 12,401 tonnes)	0%	5%	5%	60%	70%	70%
City West Water equivalent target in tonnes of emissions (tonnes of CO ₂ e)	12,401	11,781	11,781	4,960	3,720	3,720
Western Water emissions target (tonnes of CO ₂ e)	35,638	36,223	35,638	35,638	35,638	35,638
Combined Greater Western Water emissions target as per price submission commitments (tonnes of CO₂e)	48,039	48,004	47,419	40,598	39,358	39,358

Outcome 5: Sustainable contribution to the community and regional liveability

Overall rating achieved for this outcome: ● **amber (largely met)**

We strive to provide exceptional customer service and to be accessible and easy to deal with.

Outcome 5 recognises the important role in supporting our diverse communities, regional prosperity and ensuring that water resources are managed efficiently for the long term.

In 2023-24, we continued to see mixed results for this outcome, largely due to factors outside of our control. This included the contracts with our education partners limiting the number of presentations we could deliver, wetter conditions reducing demand for recycled water, and external stakeholders delaying the Sunbury Integrated Water Management Plan. Hence, we have rated our performance as 'amber' (largely met).

Indicator	Target	Result	Status
Percentage of preschools and primary schools in the previously Western Water region receiving education presentations by GWW	≥90%	53%	● Not met
Customers agree that Western Water is a valuable member of the community (percentage of scores that are 4 or 5 out of 5, via survey)	≥70%	68%	● Largely met
Minimise usage (average litres per person per day)	≤185	161.1*	● Met
Develop Sunbury Integrated Water Management Plan	Met	Not met	● Not met
Percentage of recycled water produced that is reused	≥75%	49.1%*	● Not met
Deliver Western Water Reconciliation Action Plan to plan	N/A	N/A	N/A

* Data for May to June 2024 was estimated based on actual figures from preceding months due to limited access to data reports from our new billing system during the implementation phase.

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.

● Supporting community through events and education

Greater Western Water delivered education presentations to schools, preschools, and community groups across all 11 local government areas this financial year. A total of 635 presentations were delivered with 16,387 students participating in the Greater Western Water community education program.

There has been an increase in the demand for presentations in growth areas including Wyndham, Melton, and Hume. Following integration, we have revised our education offering program to provide a more consistent offering across the whole service region. This has made previous Western Water targets unachievable. We have procured an education delivery partner to update and refresh the existing education program and meet the growing demand across our service region.

● Development of Sunbury Integrated Water Management Plan

This work is a joint initiative, with Melbourne Water leading the project. Melbourne Water has put this project on hold while it reviews the scheme based on various challenges.

● Customer satisfaction on our contribution to our local community

We have not met our target for customer satisfaction regarding care for the environment, falling just below the set benchmark. Lower customer sentiment across most indicators, influenced by cost of living pressures and perceptions around value for money, has played a significant role. Additionally, adverse media coverage surrounding the Romsey Environmental Protection Agency incident has negatively impacted our reputation and standing within the community.

● Water and recycled water use and planning

We continue to work with customers to raise awareness of how they can manage water use and control their bills. In 2023-24, in the area previously serviced by Western Water the average water usage per household remained below target at 161L per person, per day.

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 drinking and recycled water to water their gardens. Similarly, we reused less recycled water than target in 2023-24. Several factors contributed this including:

- rapid population growth, which led to higher volumes of recycled water produced across our treatment plants
- very wet conditions through peak summer irrigation months, which reduced the demand for recycled water
- the closure of several large customer businesses due to economic conditions, which also reduced the demand for recycled water
- delays in the completion and commissioning of the Western Irrigation Network (WIN) due to ongoing supply chain constrictions and cultural heritage obligations.

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

Reconciliation Action Plan

Greater Western Water has a strong commitment to working towards reconciliation and recognises the important cultural and spiritual connections that First Nations peoples have with lands and waters.

In 2022, we commenced our journey to develop our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Our initial goal was to establish a Stretch RAP but after consultation with our First Nations community it was agreed that Greater Western Water was not yet mature enough for that level of RAP and instead, we commenced the development of our Innovate RAP.

We are now 12 months into our two year innovate RAP. Greater Western Water is committed to an internal goal of achieving 85 per cent of actions either commenced or completed, we are currently on track to exceed that goal. The highlights of the past year include:

- the commencement of a collaboration with Wadawurrung Traditional Owner corporation in the development of a bush tucker garden on our Werribee West Recycled Water Plant site
- supporting local Aboriginal community organisations in their National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) activities like sponsoring the western NAIDOC ball and providing a water truck and water bottles for the Long Walk activation site at the Melbourne Cricket Ground
- the installation Acknowledgement of Country plaques on all Greater Western Water sites
- the attendance of Greater Western Water employees at NAIDOC march
- the inaugural Greater Western Water Reconciliation Walk to support reconciliation and acknowledge the Stolen Generations
- approximately 250 people attending cultural safety sessions
- cultural safety and Traditional Owner information session delivered to the Greater Western Water board
- development of a procurement dashboard to track our investment in First Nations initiatives.



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