



Urban national performance report

The Bureau's *Urban national performance report* provides an annual, independent benchmark of pricing and service quality of Australian urban water utilities.

What is included in the report?

The *Urban national performance report* compares water service provider performance. In 2015–16 the reporting process collected up to 182 performance indicators from 86 service providers; comprised of water utilities and councils, collectively referred to as utilities, and bulk water suppliers. Of the 86 service providers, 79 are customer-facing utilities and seven provide bulk water services. These utilities provide urban water services to over 20 million people across Australia. Performance indicators are from the following categories: water resources, finance, pricing, assets, health, environment and customers.

The reports are published on behalf of the regulators and lead water agencies in each State and Territory. Data is collected annually with data providers reporting a single annual value for each indicator based on their organisational boundary.

Part A of the report provides commentary and analysis for the key indicators. It includes an overview of water performance drivers, including recent climate conditions—such as rainfall and temperature, utility size, and water source availability.

Part B of the report contains the complete dataset and includes all indicators reported from 2006–07 onwards. It can be downloaded for further use and analysis.

What are the benefits of the report?

The report benchmarks a range of parameters that influence the cost and quality of urban water provision across Australia. Its independent and public nature helps consumers and government determine whether the water sector is operating in an efficient and cost effective manner. Benchmarking informs customers, and provides a catalyst to support industry innovation, improved service delivery, and efficiency gains.

Valuable information provided annually includes:

- influence of recent climatic conditions on utility performance
- trends in use of alternative water sources such as desalinated and recycled water supplied by utilities
- diversification of water sources
- residential bill comparisons
- capital expenditure of utilities
- operating costs of utilities
- water quality compliance.

Jurisdiction	Bulk utility	100,000+	50,000–100,000	20,000–50,000	10,000–20,000	Total
Australian Capital Territory	0	1	0	0	0	1
New South Wales	4	3	0	12	12	31
Northern Territory	0	0	1	0	1	2
Queensland	2	4	3	7	6	22
South Australia	0	1	0	0	0	1
Tasmania	0	1	0	0	0	1
Victoria	1	4	5	5	2	17
Western Australia	0	1	0	1	9	11
Total	7	15	9	25	30	86

Table showing utilities reporting in the 2015–16 *Urban national performance report* by size group and jurisdiction. Size group refers to the number of connected properties. A full list of water utilities can be found in the report.



Who can use the report?

The *Urban national performance report* is available on the Bureau's website and anyone can use it—water authorities and utilities, business water users, government agencies, policy makers and the general public.

For example, using 2015–16 data, a residential customer could compare their water bill to the typical residential bill of other customers of their own utility, or alternatively they can contrast it to a similar size utility in another State or city.

The report also offers the ability to understand where water is sourced from in a particular year in different parts of the country. It describes recent climate conditions and puts information about water sources into context. For example in 2015–16, Perth reported a 58 per cent reduction in surface water use compared to the previous year. This can be explained, in part, by climate conditions. Prolonged periods of very-much-below average rainfall reduced surface water inflows which meant it was necessary to source a higher proportion of groundwater and desalinated water. This is in contrast to the Adelaide region which experienced above average rainfall in 2015–16. It reported an 18 per cent increase in surface water use with a 66 per cent decrease in desalinated water use.

Why is the Bureau involved?

The Bureau's Improving Water Information Programme provides a comprehensive and reliable picture of Australia's water resources to support policy and planning.

It provides nationally consistent urban water information as part of its role and responsibilities under the *Water Act 2007*.

The *Urban national performance report* supports the commitments made by States and Territories under the National Water Initiative to report publicly and independently on the performance of water utilities.

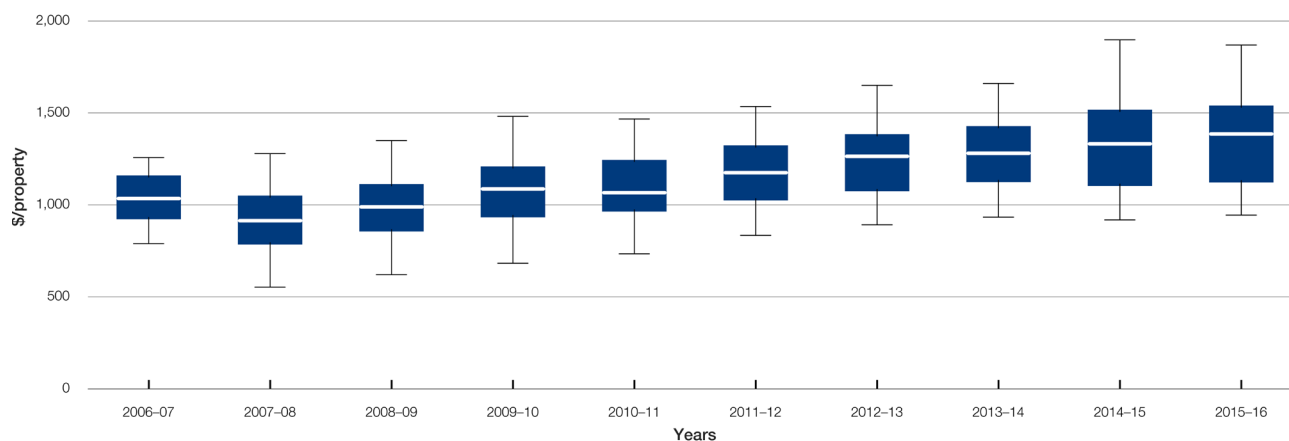


Diagram showing typical residential bill, based on average annual volume supplied, for water and sewerage (\$) from 2006–07 to 2015–16

FIND OUT MORE

Read the latest *Urban national performance report* at www.bom.gov.au/water/npr or contact urban_npr@bom.gov.au

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Images: Panorama shot of Canberra from Mount Ainslie, Australian Capital Territory.