

# Executive summary

The *National performance report 2021–22: urban water utilities* (2022 Urban NPR) compares the performance of 81 utilities and councils (utilities) and 5 bulk water authorities providing urban water services to over 25 million people across Australia. The 2022 Urban NPR is published by the Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau) with information provided by utilities across Australia's states and territories. The report is the 17th in the series, and the ninth to be produced by the Bureau.

Part A of the report provides commentary on and analysis of key indicators. Part B of the report contains data for the full set of 166 indicators reported by utilities and bulk water authorities for all reporting years.

## Increased urban water supply mainly sourced from surface water with wetter and warmer climate in 2021–22

On a national scale, the total rainfall was 9% above the 1961–90 average in 2021–22. The eastern part of mainland Australia (that is, New South Wales and Queensland) experienced periods of flooding multiple times during the first half of 2022. The mean daily temperature was 0.96 °C above the 1961–90 average, the eighth-warmest financial year on record since records commenced in 1910. The annual mean temperatures were above to very much above average across most of Australia.

For most parts of the country, water supplies were high as a result of the improved rainfall and streamflow conditions and high surface water storage levels in 2021–22. Nationally, total urban water supply from different water sources rose by over 3% in 2021–22, despite varying results in major urban centres and different water sources. Sydney and Canberra reported a decrease in their water supply, whereas other major cities reported an increase in water supply.

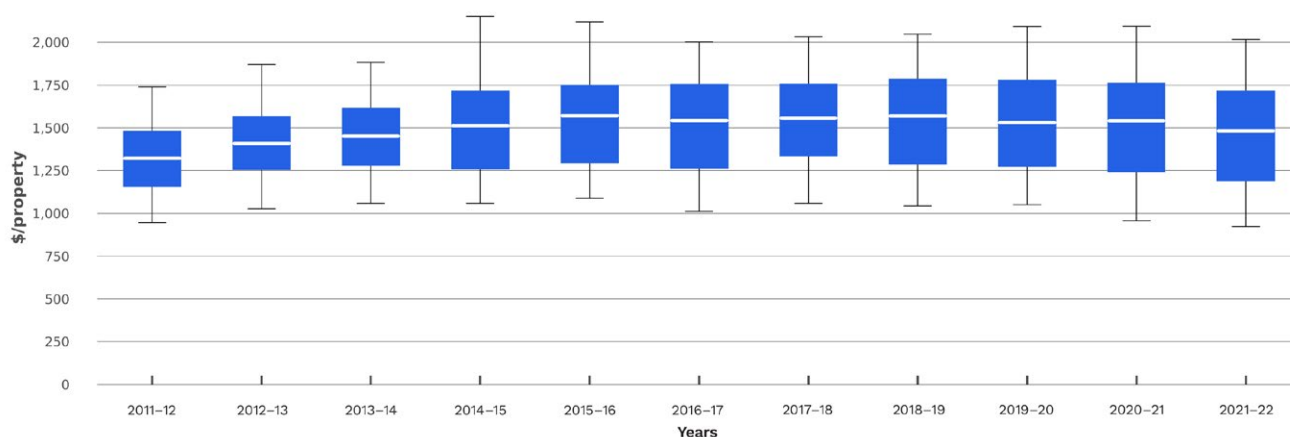
Similar to the previous year, surface water was the dominant source in all states and territories except Western Australia which relied mostly on groundwater. Overall, 80.3% of the total supplied water was sourced from surface water (5% increase from 2020–21), 6.3% from groundwater (6% decrease from 2020–21), 7.3% from desalinated water (10% decline from 2020–21) and 6.1% from recycled water (2% increase from 2020–21).

## Decreased greenhouse gas emissions in most major cities

Nationally, the total net greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 6% in 2021–22 compared to 2020–21. All major cities managed to decrease their greenhouse gas emissions in 2021–22, except Darwin which reported a 12% increase in its greenhouse gas emissions. Among all major cities, Perth reported the highest net greenhouse gas emissions, as the result of the higher use of desalinated water, but also reported a high decrease (18%) in greenhouse gas emissions compared to the previous year.

## Decreased typical residential bills (water supply and wastewater)

Nationally, water and wastewater services for urban customers were 2% cheaper than the previous year. This continued the overall downward trend reported over the last several years. The total typical residential bill decreased across all major urban centres. Melbourne and Darwin reported the lowest and the highest total typical residential bills among the Major urban centres, respectively.

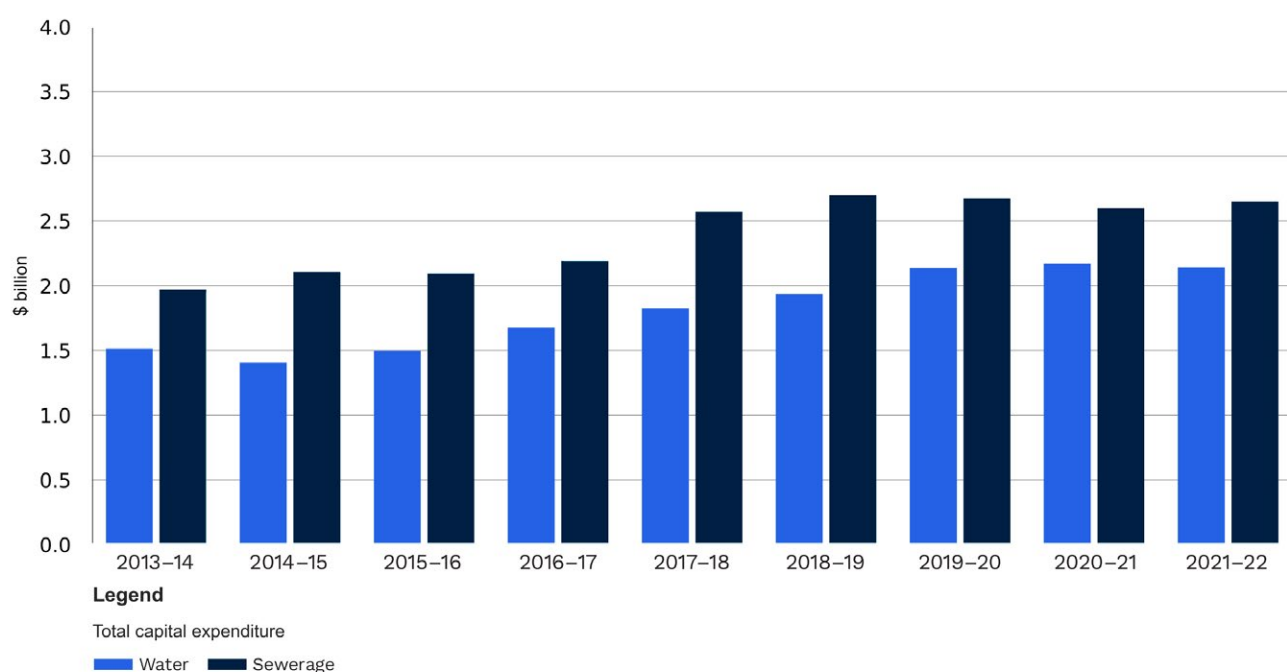


**Figure 1 Typical residential bill: water supply and wastewater (\$), 2011–12 to 2021–22**

For more information about bills, see Chapter 4 Pricing and Tables A3 and A4, Appendix A.

## Unchanged total capital expenditure on water supply and wastewater services

Nationally, the total capital expenditure on water supply and wastewater services remained almost unchanged (slightly increased by 0.9%) compared to 2020–21. However, among major cities, Canberra and Adelaide reported the largest decreases (27% and 15%, respectively), whereas Sydney and Darwin reported the largest increases (19% and 17%, respectively).



**Figure 2 Total capital expenditure: water supply and sewerage (\$ billion) for utilities that reported all 9 years (excluding bulk water utilities)**

For more details about capital expenditure see Chapter 5 Finance and Tables A5, Appendix A.