6 Customer

6.1 Average duration of an unplanned interruption: water – C15

The average duration (minutes) of an unplanned interruption (C15), is the average time a customer is without water supply due to an unforeseen interruption that requires attention by the utility.

Unplanned interruptions include scheduled interruptions that exceed the time limit given in the original notification. The indicator is a measure of customer service, the condition of the water network and how effectively the network is managed.

The average duration is influenced by the:

- scale of the event causing the interruption
- location of the interruption (for example, the proximity to a repair crew and the depth of the burst pipe)
- utility's response policy for outlying areas
- number of maintenance and repair staff at the utility's disposal.

Note that a single event affecting a small number of properties for a long duration can cause large annual variations in this indicator, especially for smaller utilities.

Data on the average duration of an unplanned interruption (water supply) for all active utilities reporting in 2021–22 is presented in Table A10, Appendix A.

6.1.1 Key findings

Table 6.1 presents a summary of average duration of unplanned interruptions by utility size group.

Table 6.1 Overview of results: Average duration of an unplanned interruption: water (minutes)

Utility group	Range		No. utilities with increase/decrease from 2020–21		Median		Change from previous year (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2020–21	2021–22	
Major	203.0	87.7	4	9	147.0	137.0	-7
	Central Coast	South East Water					
Large	800.1	36.7	7	4	93.7	108.9	16
	Townsville	Cairns					
Medium	2,289.0	11.9	10	9	125.0	95.0	-24
	Tamworth	Mackay					
Small	510.0	19.9	9	10	130.0	105.8	-19
	Bega Valley	Livingstone					
All size groups (national)	**2,289.0**	**11.9**	**30**	**32**	**122.7**	**114.0**	**-7**
	Tamworth	**Mackay**					

Note: Median average duration of an unplanned interruption: water (minutes) for each year is calculated for all active utilities that reported data for C15 in that year.

The median average duration of unplanned interruptions decreased by 7% from 122.7 minutes in 2020–21 to 114 minutes in 2021–22 on a national scale. Tamworth Regional Council in New South Wales from the Medium size group had the longest (2,289 minutes) and Mackay Regional Council in Queensland in the Medium size group, had the shortest (11.9 minutes) duration of unplanned interruption of all size groups.

Water Corporation – Busselton (sewerage) in the Small utility size group reported the largest decrease (70.8%, from 130 minutes in 2020–21 to 37.9 minutes in 2021–22) while Tamworth Regional Council in the Medium utility size group reported the largest increase (990.0%, from 210 minutes in 2020–21 to 2,289 minutes in 2021–22).

6.1.2 Results and analysis – Major utility group

Figure 6.1 presents a ranked breakdown of the average duration of an unplanned interruption for the Major utility group from 2017–18 to 2021–22. The figure highlights the large year-to-year variation in the indicator for all utilities in the Major size group that can result from a single major mains break.

Central Coast Council reported the highest (203 minutes) and South East Water Corporation reported the lowest (87.7 minutes) in average duration of unplanned interruptions in 2021–22. A general increasing trend exists for City of Gold Coast in the average duration of unplanned interruptions from 116 minutes in 2017–18 to 158.5 minutes in 2021–22.

Figure 6.1 demonstrates both increases and decreases in the average duration of unplanned interruptions for the Major size group in 2021–22. Compared with 2020–21, Logan City Council reported the highest (21.9%) and South East Water Corporation reported the lowest (2%) percentage decrease in the average duration of unplanned interruptions. In contrast, Urban Utilities reported the highest (38.3%) and Water Corporation – Perth reported the lowest (0.7%) percentage increase in the average duration of unplanned interruptions compared with 2020–21.

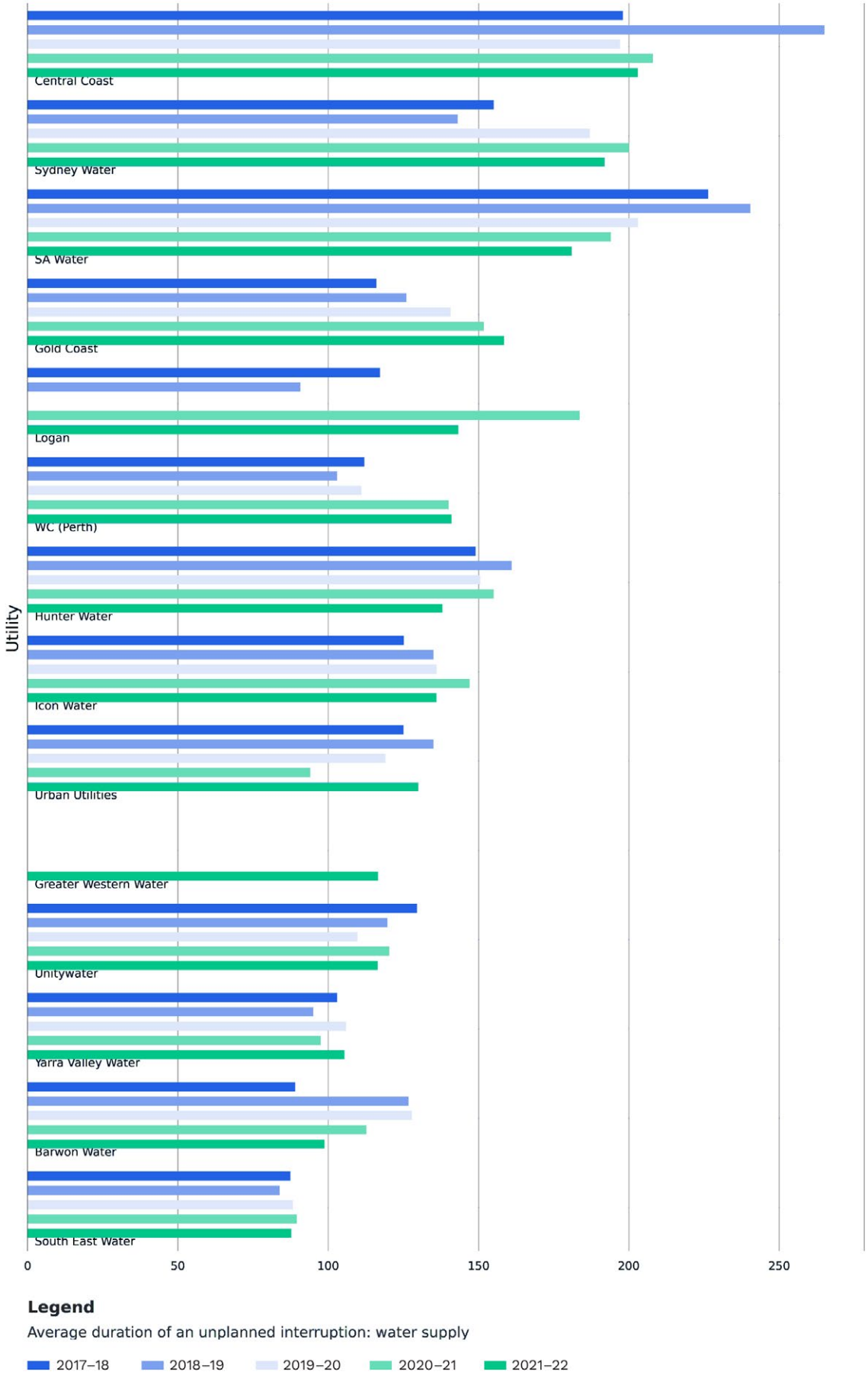

Figure 6.1 Average duration of an unplanned interruption: water (minutes) – Major utility group

6.2 Number of water and sewerage complaints per 1,000 properties – C13

The total number of water and sewerage complaints per 1,000 properties (C13) is a measure of a utility's customer satisfaction and operational performance. A complaint can be a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction made about an action, a proposed action or a failure to act by the water utility, its employees, or contractors.

Complaints from different customers about the same issue are counted as separate complaints.

Total water and sewerage complaints data for all active utilities reporting in 2021–22 is presented in Table A11, Appendix A.

6.2.1 Key findings

Table 6.2 presents a summary of the total water and sewerage complaints by utility size group. Nationally, there was a 12% increase in the median number of complaints from 2020–21. The Major and Medium utility size groups reported decreases in their median number of complaints while the Large and Small utility size groups showed increases. The highest number of complaints per 1,000 properties for 2021–22 was reported by Snowy Monaro Regional Council (171) in the Small size group while the lowest number was reported by Coffs Harbour City Council (0) in the Medium size group.

Table 6.2 Overview of results: Number of water and sewerage complaints per 1,000 properties (complaints/1,000 properties)

Utility group	Range		No. utilities with increase/decrease from 2020–21		Median		Change from previous year (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2020–21	2021–22	
Major	20.29	0.35	8	6	4.45	4.33	-3
	Icon Water	WC (Perth)					
Large	49.00	0.21	4	8	4.03	4.44	10
	P&W (Darwin)	WC (Mandurah)					
Medium	118.00	0.00	8	12	15.90	12.00	-25
	Clarence Valley	Coffs Harbour					
Small	171.00	0.06	9	10	4.50	10.40	131
	Snowy Monaro	WC (Albany)					
All size groups (national)	**171.00**	**0.00**	**29**	**36**	**5.05**	**5.68**	**12**
	Snowy Monaro	**Coffs Harbour**					

Note: The median number of water and sewerage complaints per 1,000 properties for each year is calculated for all active and non-bulk reporting utilities that provide both reticulated water supply and wastewater services in that year.

6.2.2 Results and analysis – Major utility group

Figure 6.2 shows a ranked breakdown of the total water and sewerage complaints per 1,000 properties from 2017–18 to 2021–22 for the Major utility group.

In this group, Icon Water in New South Wales reported the highest number (20.29) and Water Corporation – Perth in Western Australia reported the lowest number (0.35) of total complaints per 1,000 properties for 2021–22. Icon Water reported the highest (830.7%) and Unitywater in Queensland reported the lowest (8.2%) percentage increase compared with the previous year.

Water Corporation – Perth in Western Australia reported the highest (40.7%) and South East Water Corporation in Victoria reported the lowest (2.6%) percentage of decrease in the total water and sewerage complaints per 1,000 properties from 2020–21.

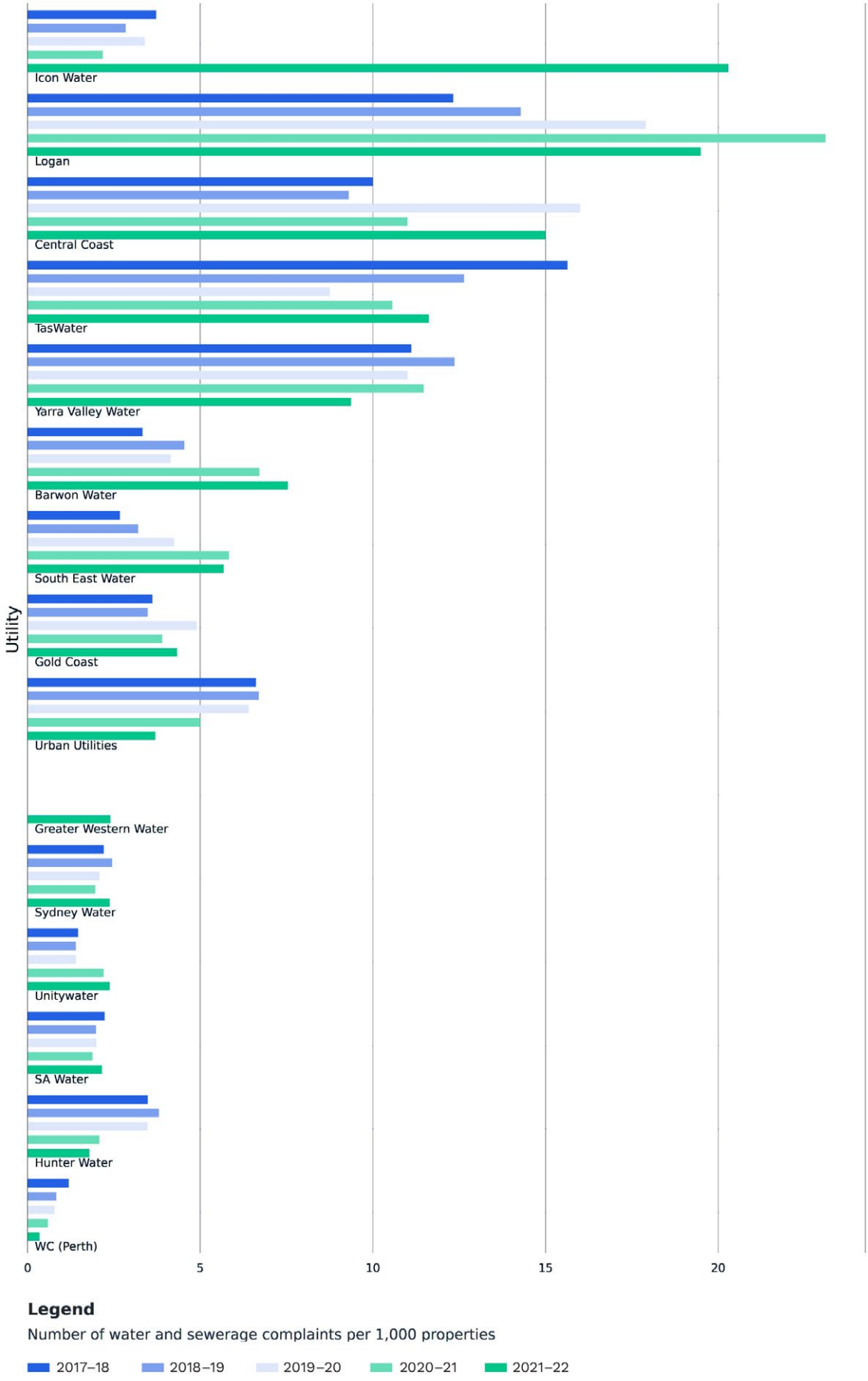

Figure 6.2 Total complaints: water and sewerage (per 1,000 properties) – Major utility group

6.3 Percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds – C14

The percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds (C14) measures the number of calls answered within 30 seconds after the 'operator' option is selected. It is a measure of the efficiency of a utility's customer service centre and is affected by:

- the ratio of customer service staff to customers
- severe events, such as storms or floods, that result in a large increase in customer calls.

Data on the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds for all active utilities reporting in 2021–22 are presented in Table A12, Appendix A.

Table 6.3 Overview of results: Percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds (%)

Utility group	Range		No. utilities with increase/decrease from 2020–21		Median		Change from previous year (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2020–21	2021–22	
Major	85.2	23.7	3	9	72.3	65.3	-10
	SA Water	Gold Coast					
Large	96.5	43.3	4	5	79.0	77.6	-2
	North East Water	Townsville					
Medium	99.4	0.0	5	8	83.5	78.0	-7
	East Gippsland Water	Gladstone					
Small	97.0	65.0	2	3	73.5	78.5	7
	Westernport Water	Cassowary Coast					
All size groups (national)	**99.4**	**0.0**	**14**	**25**	**78.0**	**75.0**	**-4**
	East Gippsland Water	**Gladstone**					

Note: Median percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds for each year is calculated for all active utilities reporting data in that year.

6.3.1 Key findings

Nationally, the median percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds for 2021–22 decreased by 4% from 2020–21. Compared with 2020–21, the Small size group utilities reported an increase of 7% while the other utility size groups reported decrease in the median percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds. Among all utility size groups, East Gippsland Water in Victoria answered 99.4% of the calls within 30 seconds while Gladstone Regional Council in Queensland answered no calls within 30 seconds (0%).

6.3.2 Results and analysis – Major utility group

Figure 6.3 shows a ranked breakdown of the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds from 2017–18 to 2021–22 for the Major utility group.

Compared with 2020–21, the Major utility size group reported both increases and decreases in the percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds. In this size group, SA Water Corporation had the best performance, answering 85.2% of calls within 30 seconds while City of Gold Coast showed the lowest performance, answering 23.7% of calls within 30 seconds.

Sydney Water Corporation reported the largest decrease (53.4%) and Unitywater in Queensland reported the smallest decrease (3.8%) in the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds from 2020–21 to 2021–22.

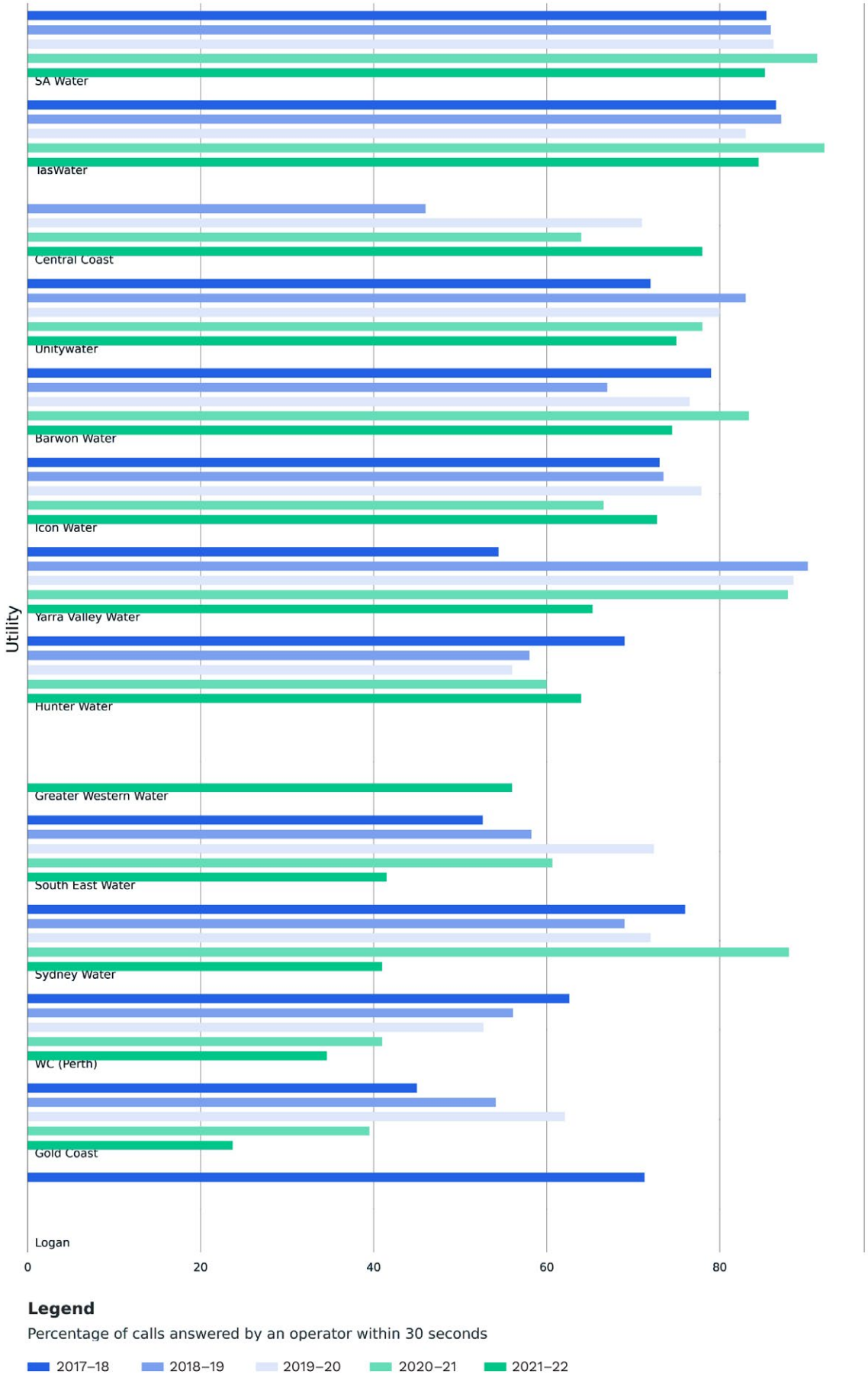

Figure 6.3 Percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds – Major utility group