6 Customer

6.1 C15—Average duration of an unplanned interruption: water (minutes)

6.1.1 Introduction

This indicator reports the average time (in minutes) that a customer is without a water supply due to an unforeseen interruption that requires attention by the utility. It also includes instances in which scheduled (planned) interruptions exceed the time limit originally notified by the utility. It is in part an indicator of customer service and the condition of the water network and also of how effectively the network is managed.

The average duration is influenced by the scale of the event that causes the interruption, the location of the interruption (its proximity to the utility's repair crews and, for example, the depth or location of a pipe that has burst), the utility's response policy for outlying areas, and the number of maintenance and repair staff at the utility's disposal. A single event affecting a small number of properties for a long duration can have a material effect on this indicator, particularly for smaller utilities, and hence there are often relatively large variations from year to year.

Average duration of an unplanned interruption (water supply) data for all utilities reporting C15 in 2015–16 can be found in Table A14 in Appendix A.

6.1.2 Key findings

A summary of the data for the average duration of an unplanned interruption, by utility size group, is presented in Table 6.1.

In 2015–16, 26 utilities reported increases, whereas 26 utilities reported decreases. The median value for all utilities did not change between the 2014–15 and 2015–16 reporting years (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 C15—Overview of results: Average duration of an unplanned interruption: water (minutes)

Size group (connected properties)	Range		Number of utilities with increase/decrease from 2014–15		Median		Change in the median from 2014–15
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2014–15	2015–16	%
100,000+	198	81.3	7	6	132.4	134	1
	Central Coast	South East Water					
50,000–100,000	118.4	63.9	3	4	89	92.8	4
	Coliban Water	Townsville					
20,000–50,000	206	23.9	9	6	95.1	106.7	12
	Riverina Water (W)	Redland City					
10,000–20,000	375	26	7	10	120	120	0
	Cassowary Coast	Livingstone					
All size groups (national)	375	23.9	26	26	112	112	0
	Cassowary Coast	Redland City					

Table note

Median average duration of an unplanned interruption: water (minutes) is calculated for all utilities that reported data for C15 in both 2014–15 and 2015–16.

6.1.3 Results and analysis—100,000+ size group

A ranked breakdown of the average duration of an unplanned interruption for this size group from 2010–11 to 2015–16 is presented in Figure 6.1.

In 2015–16, seven utilities in the 100,000+ size group reported increases while six reported decreases from 2014–15. The median for the size group remained consistent with 2014–15 at 134 minutes (an increase of only 1 per cent).

Central Coast Council reported the highest result with 198 minutes of unplanned interruption to their customers' water supply. SA Water Corporation again reported a high result, which at 185.7 minutes was 14 per cent higher than in the 2014–15 year. This result can be explained by new safety measures introduced in August 2015 to mitigate identified safety hazards in the repair of cast iron mains. Cast iron pipes are used extensively in South Australia and are more likely to fail from pressure issues. Previously, these pipes were repaired under pressure; however, new work, health, and safety (WHS) measures require the water supply to be shut down and the area excavated before the pipe can be repaired. This process increases the number of shutdowns and is more time consuming than the previous practice. Cast iron mains are no longer laid in South Australia but it is predicted that future failures will predominantly concern cast iron pipes and therefore the duration of repairs may not be reduced.

South East Water had the lowest duration of 81 minutes, a decrease of 9 per cent from 2014–15 due to a lower number of water main bursts requiring excavation and repairs within close proximity to other infrastructure (South East Water 2016).

6.2 C13—Total complaints: water and sewerage (per 1,000 properties)

6.2.1 Introduction

This indicator reports the total number of complaints received by a water utility per 1,000 properties. A complaint can be a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about an action or proposed action or a failure to act by the water utility, its employees, or contractors. Complaints from different customers arising from the same cause are recorded as separate complaints. The number of complaints is an indicator of the level of customer service and customer satisfaction and is a common performance indicator in many industries.

Total water and sewerage complaints (per 1,000 properties) data for all utilities reporting against this indicator in 2015–16 can be found in Table A12 in Appendix A.

6.2.2 Key findings

A summary of the data for total water and sewerage complaints, by utility size group, is presented in Table 6.2.

In 2015–16, the median number of complaints increased by 1 (from 4 to 5) from that of 2014–15, equating to five complaints per 1,000 properties. Total water and sewerage complaints (per 1,000 properties) increased across all size groups, with the 20,000–50,000 size group reporting the largest increase of 29 per cent, equating to 4.9 complaints per 1,000 properties (Table 6.2).

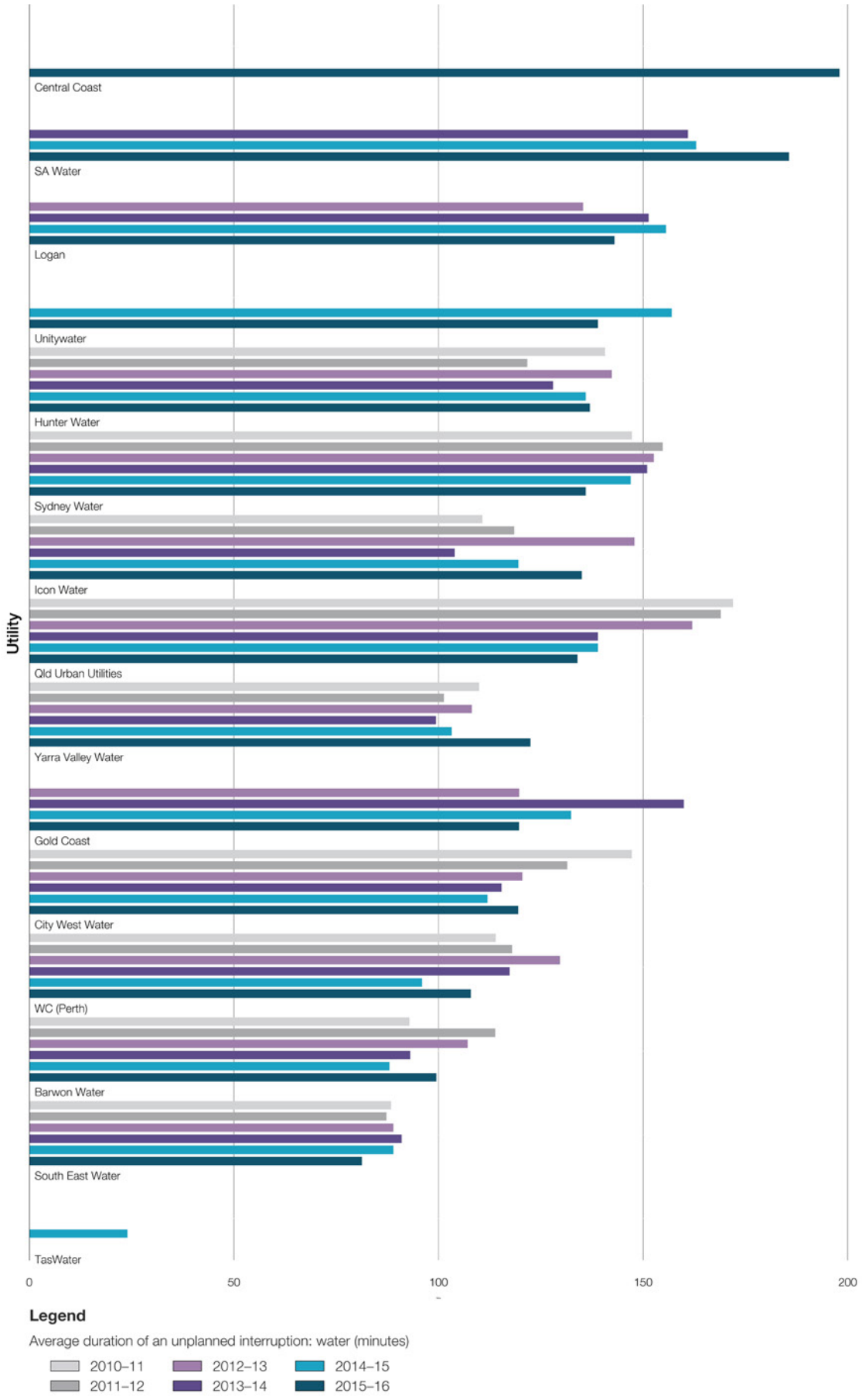

Figure 6.1 C15—Average duration of unplanned interruption: water (minutes), for utilities with 100,000+ connected properties, 2010–11 to 2015–16

Table 6.2 C13—Overview of results: Total complaints: water and sewerage (per 1,000 properties)

Size group (connected properties)	Range		Number of utilities with increase/decrease from 2014–15		Median		Change in the median from 2014–15
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2014–15	2015–16	%
100,000+	6.3	0.8	6	6	3.9	4.1	5
	Gold Coast	WC (Perth)					
50,000–100,000	66	0.7	6	3	4.3	5.5	28
	P&W (Darwin)	Townsville					
20,000–50,000	54.5	0	9	8	3.8	4.9	29
	Tamworth	Gladstone RC					
10,000–20,000	184.2	0.3	11	11	5	6	20
	Central Highlands	Lismore					
All size groups (national)	184.2	0	32	28	4	5	25
	Central Highlands	Gladstone RC					

Table note

Median total complaints: water and sewerage (per 1,000 properties) is calculated for all utilities that reported data for C13 in both 2014–15 and 2015–16.

6.2.3 Results and analysis–100,000+ size group

A ranked breakdown of the total water and sewerage complaints from 2010–11 to 2015–16 is presented in Figure 6.2.

In the 100,000 size group, six utilities reported increases in the number of complaints and six reported decreases in 2015–16 compared with 2014–15. Unity Water reported the largest decrease in complaints amongst the utilities at 40 per cent in 2015–16 compared with 2014–15. Water Corporation—Perth reported the lowest number of compaints per 1,000 properties since 2012–13, as shown in Table A12 in Appendix A. In 2015–16, this utility again reported the lowest number of complaints (0.8 per 1,000), and Gold Coast City Council reported the highest (6.3 per 1,000). This result is still comparatively low, equating to only 6 complaints per 1,000 properties.

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

6.3.1 Introduction

Where utilities use interactive voice response systems, this indicator measures the number of calls answered within 30 seconds after the 'operator' option has been selected. It gives an indication of the efficiency of the utility's customer service centre and is affected by the ratio of customer service staff to customers, particularly when severe events such as storms or floods result in a large increase in customer calls.

A summary of the data for the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds, by utility size group, is presented in Table 6.3.

Data on the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds for all utilities reporting C14 in 2015–16 can be found in Table A13 in Appendix A.

6.3.2 Key findings

In 2015–16, 20 utilities recorded a decrease in the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds while 10 utilities recorded an increase from the previous year; overall, there was a minor change of 1 per cent in the median percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds between 2014–15 and 2015–16 (Table 6.3).

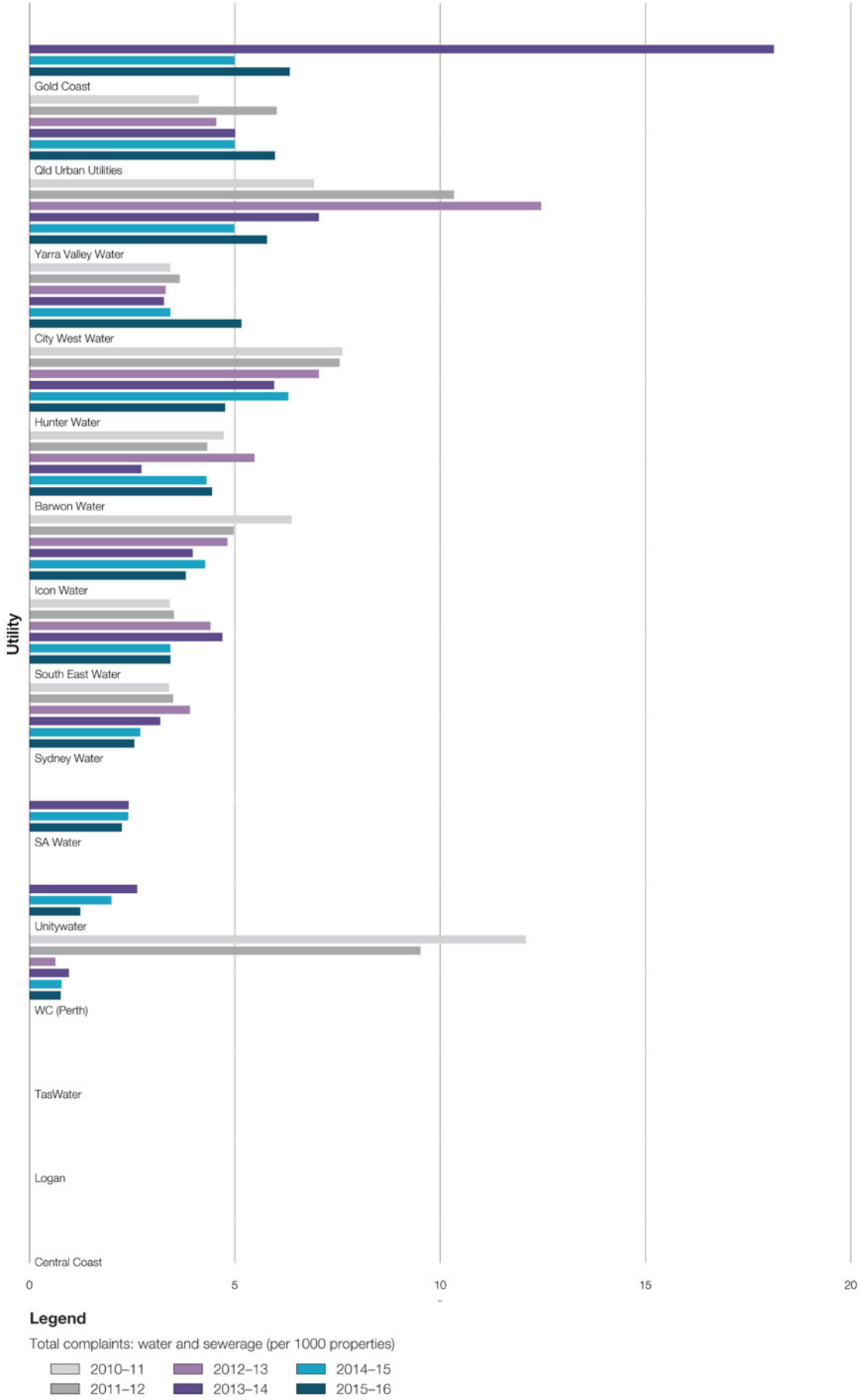

Figure 6.2 C13—Total complaints: water and sewerage (per 1,000 properties), for utilities with 100,000+ connected properties, 2010–11 to 2015–16

Table 6.3 C14—Overview of results: Percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds (%)

Size group (connected properties)	Range		Number of utilities with increase/decrease from 2014–15		Median		Change in the median from 2014–15
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2014–15	2015–16	%
100,000+	88.5	46.9	3	8	79.5	78.6	–1
	TasWater	Yarra Valley Water					
50,000–100,000	97.2	88.2	1	4	92	88.8	–3
	Goulburn Valley Water	Central Highlands Water					
20,000–50,000	100	49	5	3	94	98	4
	Wagga Wagga (S)	Tweed					
10,000–20,000	100	42	1	5	88.8	77.5	–13
	Kal–Boulder (S)	Kempsey					
All size groups (national)	100	0	10	20	86.4	87.2	1
	Multiple utilities	Melbourne Water					

Table note

Median percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds (%) is calculated for all utilities that reported data for C14 in both 2014–15 and 2015–16.

6.3.3 Results and analysis—100,000+ size group

A ranked breakdown of the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds from 2010–11 to 2015–16 is presented in Figure 6.3.

In the 100,000+ size group, there was little change in the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds between the 2014–15 and 2015–16 reporting years. The median decreased by 1 per cent, with the highest percentage of calls answered reported by Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Corporation (88.5 per cent) and the lowest by Yarra Valley Water (46.9 per cent) (Table 6.3).

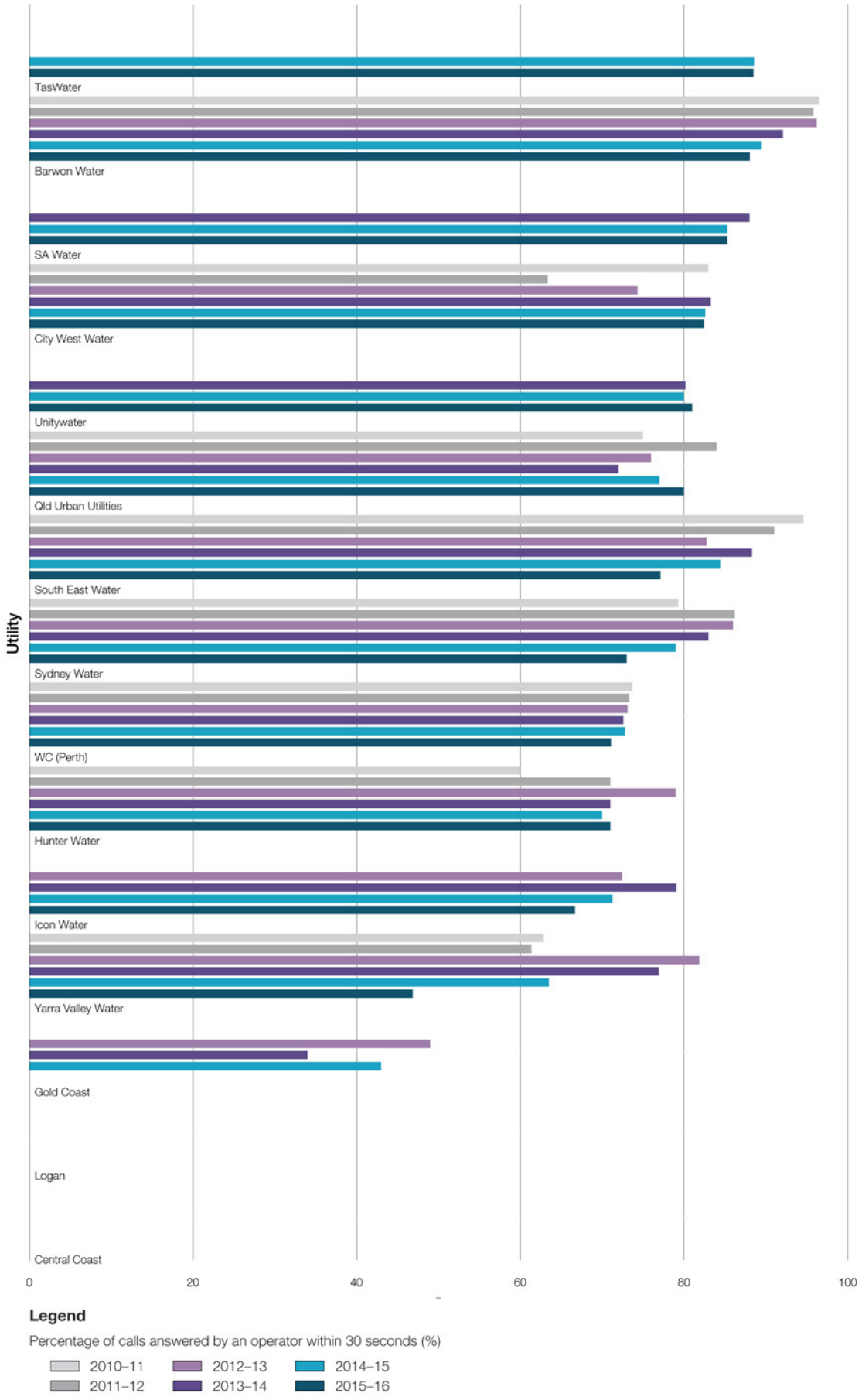

Figure 6.3 C14—Percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds, for utilities with 100,000+ connected properties, 2010–11 to 2015–16