

9 Health

9.1 H3—Percentage of population for which microbiological compliance was achieved (%)

9.1.1 Introduction

This indicator reports the percentage of the population serviced by the utility for which microbiological compliance was achieved. Compliance is assessed against the *Australian drinking water guidelines 2011* or licence conditions imposed on the utility by the regulator. Typically, utilities record very high (often 100 per cent) compliance, but occasionally there are unforeseen events that result in lower compliance. The cause of non-compliance is not always traceable.

The percentage of the population for which microbiological compliance was achieved for all utilities reporting against H3 in 2015–16 can be found in Table A20 in Appendix A.

9.1.2 Key findings

A summary of the percentage of population for which microbiological compliance was achieved, by utility size group, is presented in Table 8.1.

In 2015–16, nationwide and across all size groups, most utilities achieved 100 per cent microbiological compliance (Table 8.1), with Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Corporation (99.2 per cent) and Central Gippsland Water (88.6 per cent) being the only exceptions. Central Gippsland Water reported two *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) detections in the Sale locality between 16–17 February 2016 which were treated with an extensive flushing program. Subsequent investigations determined the sample point was in close proximity to connected redundant pipework which may have led to the contamination of the initial sample. The pipework was subsequently removed and the sample point relocated (Gippsland Water 2016).

Table 9.1 H3—Overview of results: Percentage of population for which microbiological compliance was achieved (%)

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+	100	99.2	1	0	100	100	0
	Multiple utilities	TasWater					
50,000–100,000	100	88.6	0	1	100	100	0
	Multiple utilities	Gippsland Water					
20,000–50,000	100	100	0	0	100	100	0
	Multiple utilities	Multiple utilities					
10,000–20,000	100	100	0	0	100	100	0
	Multiple utilities	Multiple utilities					
All size groups (national)	100	88.6	1	1	100	100	0
	Multiple utilities	Gippsland Water					

Table note

The median percentage of population for which microbiological compliance was achieved was calculated using data from all utilities supplying both water services that reported data against H3 for both 2014–15 and 2015–16.

9.1.3 Results and analysis—100,000+ size group

Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Corporation has identified remoteness, open catchments and ageing reticulation networks as contributing to its less than 100 per cent compliance. Permanent boil water alerts have been applied to 17 drinking water supply systems in Tasmania due to the utility not being able to adequately treat the systems to ensure they are clear of bacteria. The utility has identified further investment is required to minimise the need to apply boil water alerts, particularly during periods of high rainfall (TasWater 2016).

As part of its strategy to improve water quality, Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Corporation continued to progress major water quality projects with a commitment to spend \$330 million between 2015–16 and 2017–18 on projects and programmes focusing on the upgrade and development of infrastructure (TasWater 2016).