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Bureau of Meteorology

National performance report 2015–16: **urban water utilities**

PART A



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Disclaimer

This report has been produced by the Bureau of Meteorology; the Water Services Association of Australia; and the parties to the National Water Initiative (NWI), being the Australian Government and the governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory, Tasmania, and Western Australia (the contributors). These contributors accept no responsibility for the completeness or accuracy of any of the information contained in this report and make no representations about its suitability for any particular purpose. Users of this report should make their own judgements about those matters. To the extent permitted by law, the contributors exclude all liability for loss or damage arising from the use of or reliance on the information contained in this report, whether or not caused by any negligence or wrongdoing on the part of the contributors or their agents.



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PART A



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning



Department of
Primary Industries
Water



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Explanatory notes

Utilities

Within the tables and charts of this report, utilities that form part of a city council, shire council, regional council, or similar local government entity are reported under only the town or city name (e.g. Dubbo Regional Council is referred to as 'Dubbo' in tables and charts throughout the report).

In addition, several utilities are represented by shorter forms of their full names to aid presentation in charts and tables:

- WC = Water Corporation
- Aqwest–Bunbury = Aqwest–Bunbury Water Corporation
- Busselton = Busselton Water Corporation
- Kal–Boulder = Kalgoorlie–Boulder
- P&W = Power and Water
- Queanbeyan = Queanbeyan–Palerang Regional Council

Utility types

Nine of the reporting utilities are 'single-service' utilities, five of which provide water services only and four of which provide sewerage services only. Utilities that provide water-only services are denoted by '(W)' after its name; those that provide sewerage-only services are denoted by '(S)'.

Note also that Goldenfields Water has two businesses: a bulk business, Goldenfields (B), and a water reticulation business, Goldenfields (R).

Bulk water agencies operate in a number of jurisdictions across Australia. These agencies are wholesalers of water and wastewater services and do not have a direct relationship with retail customers. For example, Melbourne Water supplies bulk water and wastewater services to the eight retail utilities within the Victorian region (City West Water, South East Water, Yarra Valley Water, Western Water, Gippsland Water, Barwon Water, South Gippsland Water, and Westernport Water).

Utility groups

For the purpose of this report, the 79 contributing utilities are grouped according to number of connected properties (the 7 bulk water suppliers are grouped separately). There are four size groups, as follows:

- 100,000+ connected-properties group (100,000+ size group)
- 50,000–100,000 connected-properties group (50,000–100,000 size group)
- 20,000–50,000 connected-properties group (20,000–50,000 size group)
- 10,000–20,000 connected-properties group (10,000–20,000 size group).

Reporting years

In the context of this report:

- The terms '2015–16' and 'reporting year' refer to the 2015–16 reporting year.
- References to years are according to reporting years (1 July – 30 June) and not by calendar year.

Tables

In the context of the tables in this report, certain data have the following meaning:

0 = result was 0

blank = result was not supplied, was not available, or results were not applicable

It should be noted that historical values for all financial indicators have been adjusted using consumer price index (CPI) data to facilitate comparison in real terms.

Other common abbreviations

NPR	=	national performance report
Urban NPR	=	National performance report: urban water utilities
2016 Urban NPR	=	2015–16 National performance report: urban water utilities
2015 Urban NPR	=	2014–15 National performance report: urban water utilities
Bureau	=	Bureau of Meteorology

Interpreting the ‘Overview of results’ tables

Figure EN1 demonstrates how to interpret the ‘Overview of results’ table provided for each indicator.

Size group	Range		Number of utilities with increase/decrease from previous year		Median		Change in median from previous year %
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	Previous year	Current year	
100,000+ connected properties	249 WC (Perth)	140 Logan	10	1	158	162	3
50,000–100,000 connected properties	454 P&W (Darwin)	130 Toowoomba	9	1	164	181	10
20,000–50,000 connected properties	479 Lower Murray Water	143 MidCoast Water	17	1	175	201	15
10,000–20,000 connected properties	450 Multiple utilities	80 Ballina	19	5	174	179	3
All size groups	479 Lower Murray Water	80 Ballina	55	8	166	177	7

- 1 The range shows the utilities with the highest and lowest result in the current reporting year for each size group.
- 2 These columns show the number of utilities that reported an increase and those that reported a decrease from the previous year result for each size group. Where a utility did not report in both years it is not included in this column.
- 3 The median value is the middle number in the range of results. For example, if there were five utilities reporting for this indicator and their results were 190, 195, 206, 207, and 210, the median is 206 as it is the middle number. For indicators that are not represented as an ‘average’ for the utility (e.g. average duration of water interruptions) or have been divided by the number of properties (per property), the summary tables presents the sum (or total) of the results. Where a utility did not report in both years it is not included in this column.
- 4 This column shows the percentage change between the current and previous years and has been rounded to the nearest integer.
- 5 ‘Multiple utilities’ means that more than one utility recorded this value.

Figure EN1 Example and explanation of an ‘Overview of results’ table

Interpreting the box-and-whisker plots

In order to show trends in the annual distribution of key indicators the report utilises box-and-whisker plots. Figure EN2 demonstrates how to interpret these figures.

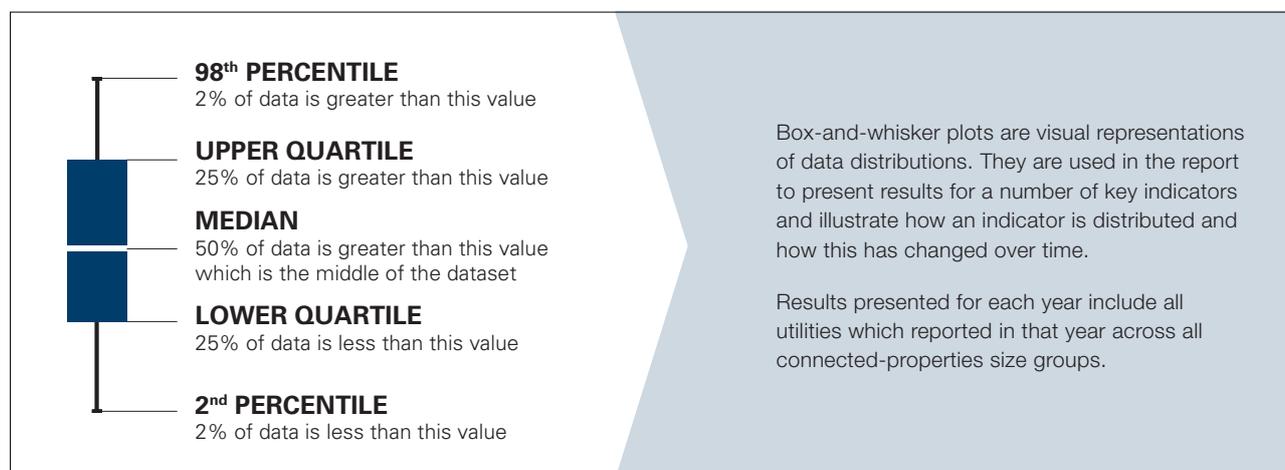


Figure EN2 Example and explanation of a box-and-whisker plot

Notes on commentary

When interpreting the data and commentary in this report, the following matters should be considered:

- The indicator codes in the titles of each section, chart, and table are specific to each indicator and can be cross-referenced with the *National Performance Framework: 2015–16 urban water performance report indicators and definitions handbook*.
- The 2016 Urban NPR presents analysis based on median values. The median is the preferred metric for the Urban NPR dataset because in many cases there are outlying results that can affect the average. Using the average in these cases can skew results towards the outliers. With the median, 50 per cent of utilities fall above and 50 per cent fall below the median value. In cases where average results are presented in addition to the median, they should be interpreted in conjunction with the data itself.
- Individual performance indicators in this report should not be interpreted in isolation. A low ranking for a particular indicator does not necessarily mean that the utility is performing well or badly because a number of factors can influence performance. For example, a utility might have a low operating cost per property but also poor drinking water quality and environmental performance and a high level of complaints.
- In discussions of indicators, the ‘normaliser’ has often been omitted to improve the flow of the commentary. For example, in the discussion of results for water main breaks per 100 km of water main, the commentary refers to a utility’s ‘water main breaks’. It is important to remember that it is not the absolute number of water main breaks that is being referenced, but rather the number of breaks per 100 km of water main.
- Single-service utilities are included in the ‘Overview of results’ tables only where comparisons can still be made on a like-for-like basis with utilities that provide both water and sewerage services. Otherwise, they have been excluded from calculations of the median values and high/low results. For example, the overview tables for water and sewerage operating expenditure per connected property and for typical residential bills do not include single-service providers, but the overview tables for sewer overflows per 100 km of sewer main include all utilities that provide sewerage services.
- Charts and tables are presented in order of reported results, that is, from the utility with the highest result for the indicator to the utility with the lowest.

- Financial time-series information is given in real 2015–16 dollars; that is, the impact of inflation has been removed to ensure that years can be compared on a like-for-like basis. CPI figures can be found at Appendix E (CPI Indexation).
- The ‘% change’ column (the last column in most tables) is calculated from 2014–15 and 2015–16 and figures have been rounded (usually) to the nearest integer.
- For indicators P3 and P6 (‘Typical residential bill’), the adjective ‘typical’ is used in this report rather than ‘average’ because the average is affected by vacant lots that pay no usage charges and by pensioners, who generally receive a pensioner concession.
- The 2016 Urban NPR provides summary tables covering all utility groups. Commentary is limited to a discussion of the 100,000+ utility size group only.