

6 Customer

6.1 Average duration of an unplanned interruptions: water—C15

The average duration 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 which exceeded the time limit 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;
- the location of the interruption—for example, the proximity to a repair crew and the depth of the burst pipe;
- the utility's response policy for outlying areas; and
- the 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 utilities reporting in 2018–19 are presented in Table A10, Appendix A.

6.1.1 Key findings

A summary of the data for unplanned interruptions, by utility group, is shown in Table 6.1.

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

Utility group	Range		No. utilities with increase/decrease from 2017–18		Median		Change in median from 2017–18 (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2017–18	2018–19	
Major	265.0	83.8	7	7	122.3	126.3	3
	Central Coast	South East Water					
Large	1,798.8	44.5	5	4	102.5	98.6	-4
	Toowoomba	Cairns					
Medium	420.0	19.1	10	9	79.3	94.0	19
	Tamworth	Mackay					
Small	341.0	16.3	8	12	135.0	120.0	-11
	Wingecarribee	Livingstone					
All size groups (national)	1,798.8	16.3	30	32	117.2	113.8	-3
	Toowoomba	Livingstone					

Nationally, the median average duration of unplanned interruptions remained consistent with 2017–18, with a slight decrease from 118 minutes to 114 minutes (3 per cent). Toowoomba had the highest duration of unplanned interruptions of all utility groups (1,798.8 minutes); it also recorded the highest duration in the previous two reporting periods. Gladstone Regional Council and Port Macquarie Hastings Council both reported large percentage increases (201 per cent and 200 per cent, respectively).

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 this utility group from 2014–15 to 2018–19. The figure highlights the large year-to-year variation in the indicator that can result from a single major mains break.

Central Coast Council reported the highest median, and Barwon Water reported an increase of 42 per cent compared to 2017–18.

Central Coast Council reported a fourth consecutive year of average duration well above the national and group median. This result in part reflects the more distributed nature of the area served by the utility.

SA Water reported the second-highest average duration. As reported in previous Urban NPRs, these results are explained by the procedures followed to mitigate the safety hazards associated with the repair of cast iron mains. Cast iron pipes have been used extensively in South Australia and are more likely to fail from pressure issues. Previously, these pipes were repaired under pressure; however, work, health, and safety measures require the water supply to be shut down and the area excavated before the pipe is repaired.

6.2 Total complaints: water and sewerage (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 utilities reporting in 2018–19 are presented in Table A11, Appendix A.

6.2.1 Key findings

A summary of data for total water and sewerage complaints by utility group is shown in Table 6.2. Nationally, there was a 38 per cent increase in the median number of complaints; this arose from increases for the Large and Small utility groups.

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

Utility group	Range		No. utilities with increase/decrease from 2017–18		Median		Change in median from 2017–18 (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2017–18	2018–19	
Major	14.3	0.8	8	7	3.5	3.5	0
	Logan	WC (Perth)					
Large	60.4	0.5	4	4	3.6	3.9	8
	P&W (Darwin)	Townsville					
Medium	88.4	0	9	11	6.0	3.8	-37
	Queanbeyan	Gladstone					
Small	121.9	0.2	16	8	5.4	6.9	28
	P&W (Alice Springs)	Western Downs					
All utility groups (national)	121.9	0	37	30	3.9	5.4	38
	P&W (Alice Springs)	Gladstone					

Table note

Median total complaints: water and sewerage (per 1,000 properties) are calculated for the all non-bulk reporting utilities that provide both reticulated water supply and sewerage services.

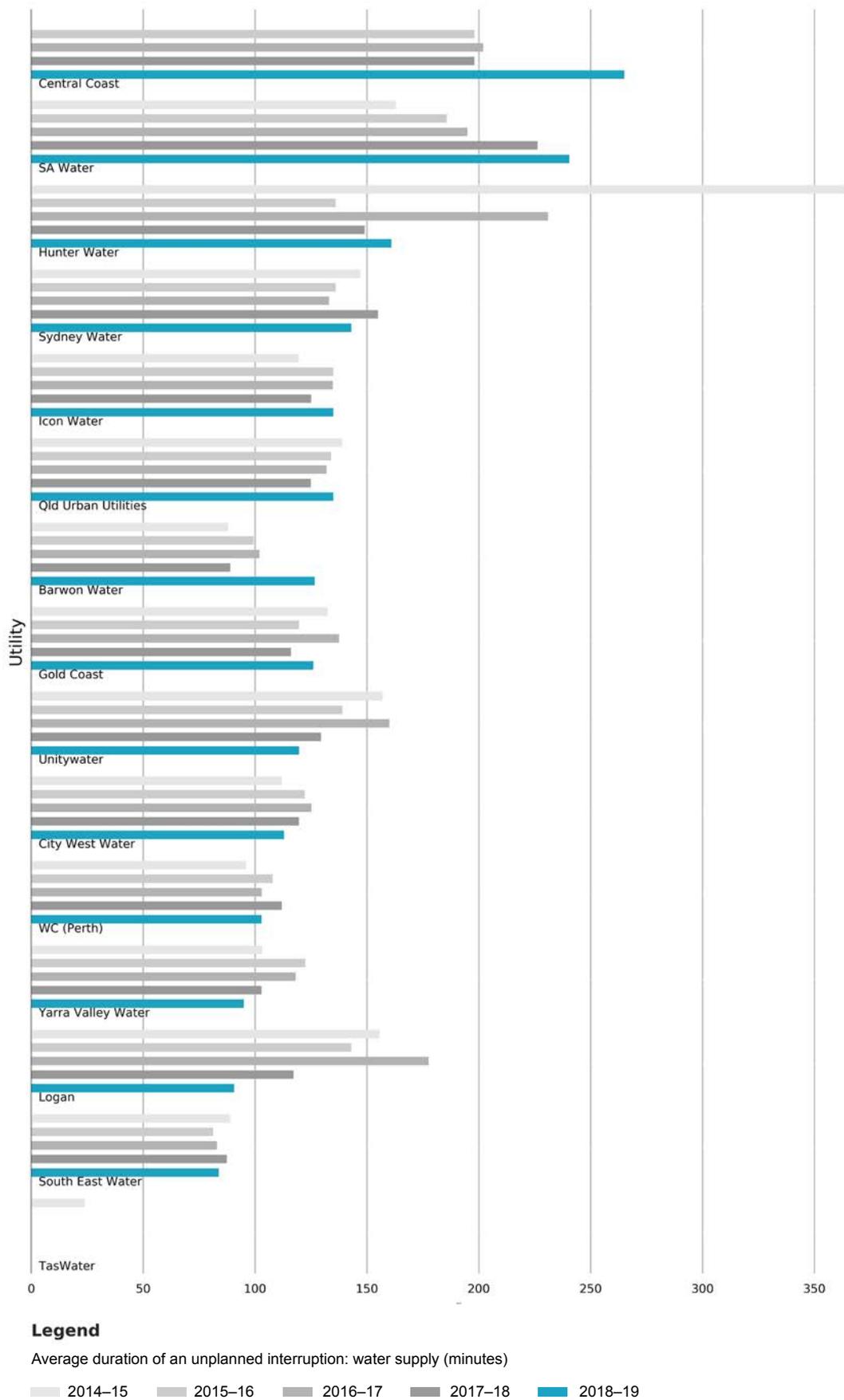


Figure 6.1 Average duration of an unplanned interruption: water (minutes)—Major utility group.

6.2.2 Results and analysis—Major utility group

Figure 6.2 shows a ranked breakdown of the total water and sewerage complaints from 2014–15 to 2018–19.

Logan City Council, Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Corporation, Yarra Valley Water and Central Coast Council reported the highest number of total complaints among the Major utilities for 2018–19. Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Corporation and Central Coast Council reported a decrease of 19 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively, compared to the previous year.

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; and
- 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 utilities reporting in 2018–19 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 2017–18		Median		Change in median from 2017–18 (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2017–18	2018–19	
Major	90.2	50.5	7	5	72.5	68	-6
	Yarra Valley Water	City West Water					
Large	96.7	67.8	2	4	81.8	78.4	-4
	Goulburn Valley Water	Gippsland Water					
Medium	99	69	3	8	96	93	-3
	East Gippsland Water	Tweed					
Small	100	60	7	5	87.7	88.3	1
	Multiple utilities	Essential Energy					
All size groups (national)	100	50.5	19	22	84.9	82	-3
	Bathurst	City West Water					

Table note

Median percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds is calculated for all utilities reporting data in both 2017–18 and 2018–19.

6.3.1 Key findings

Nationally, the median percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds remained consistent with 2017–18, decreasing by 3 per cent from 2017–18, to 82 per cent of calls answered within 30 seconds. The challenge faced by Major utilities in managing call volumes and Major and Small utilities in supporting effective customer service staff to customer ratios is highlighted by the variation in median response times of the groups.

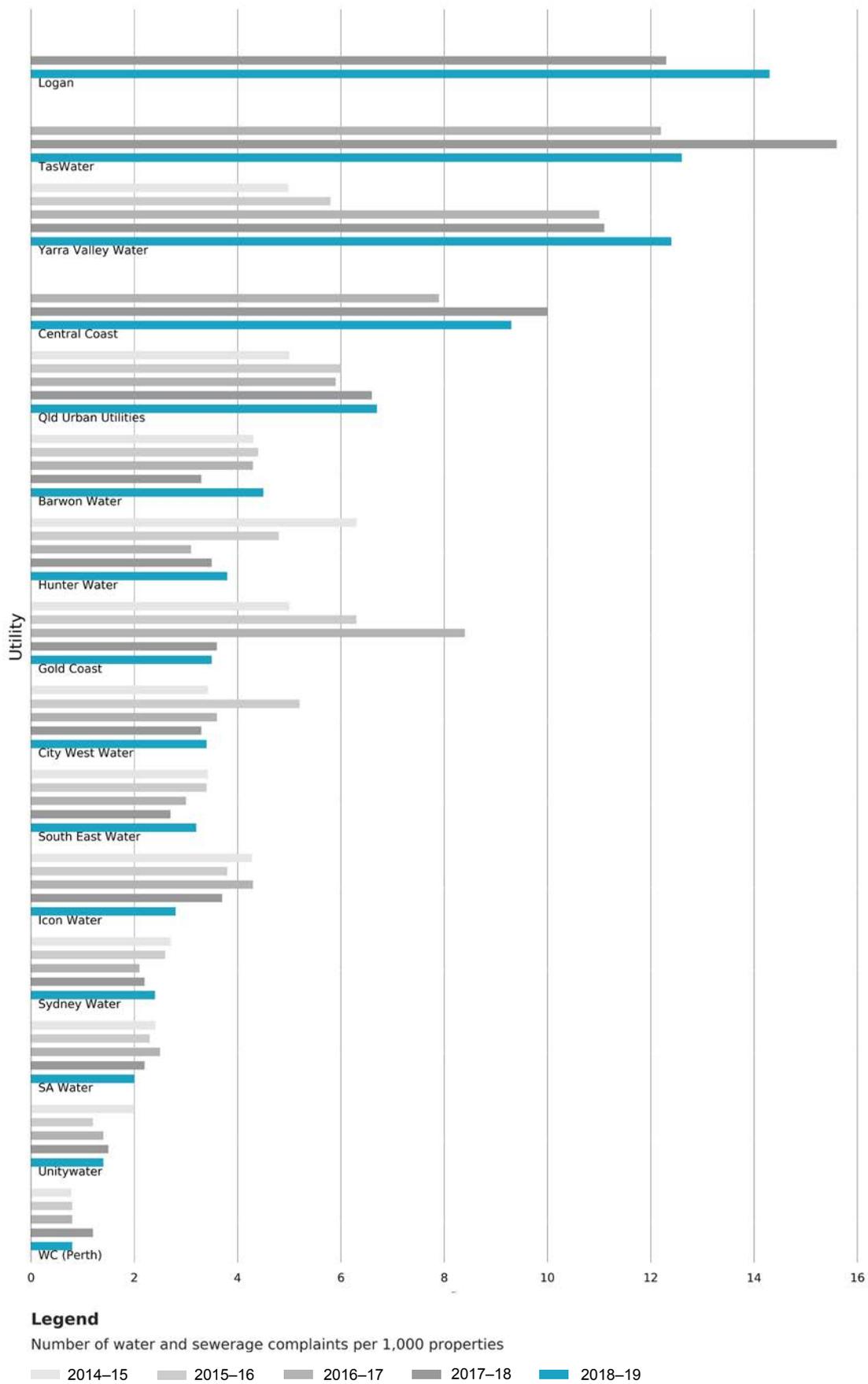


Figure 6.2 Total complaints: water and sewerage (per 1,000 properties)—Major utility group.

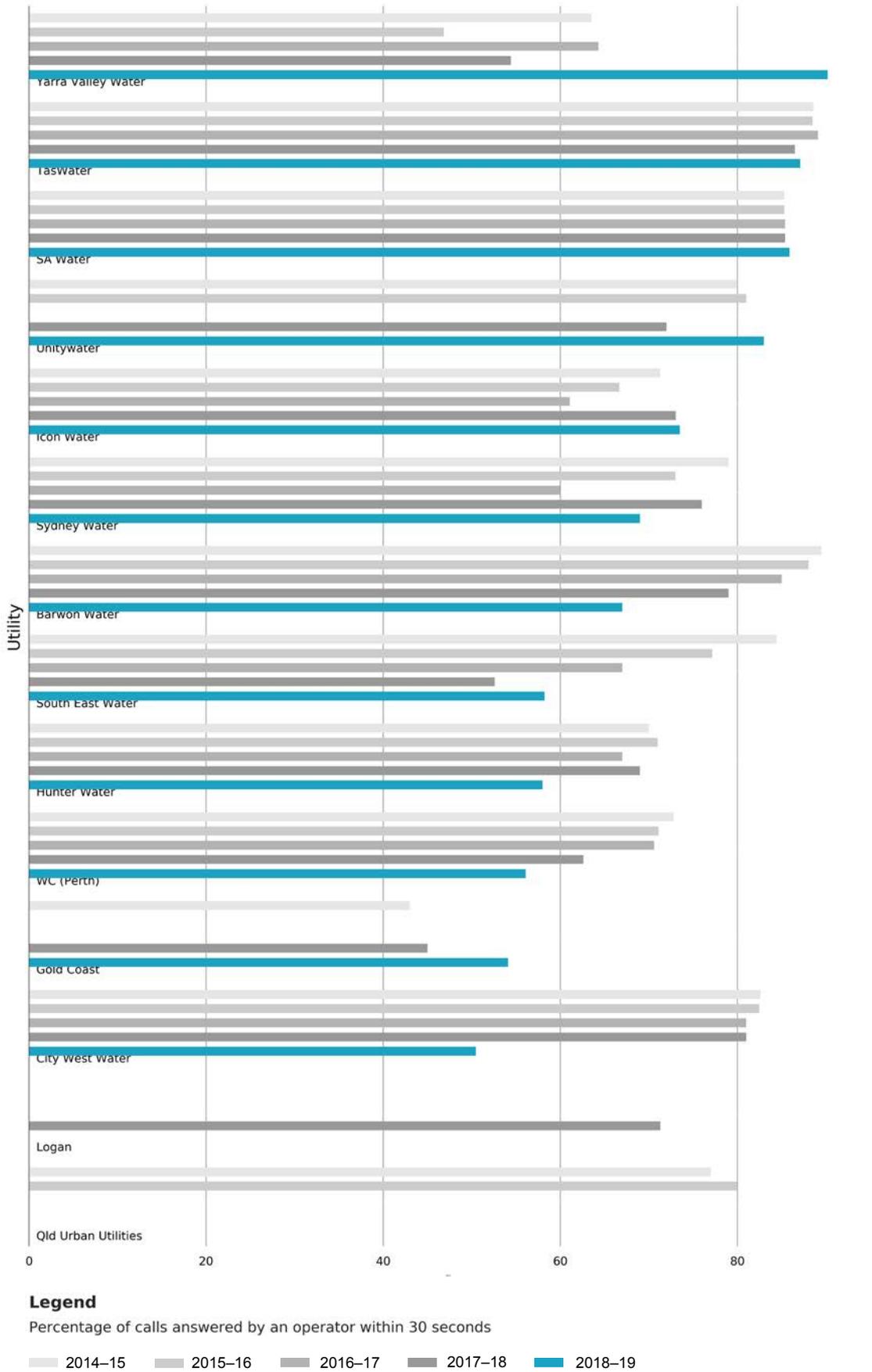


Figure 6.3 Percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds—Major utility group.

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 2014–15 to 2018–19.

Yarra Valley Water Corporation reported the highest percentage at 90.2, and also the largest increase compared to last year (up from 54.4 per cent in 2017–18). City West Water reported the biggest decrease in performance (37.7 per cent) for this indicator.