

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 which 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; and
- 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 2019–20 are presented in Table A10, Appendix A.

6.1.1 Key findings

Table 6.1 presents a summary 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 2018–19		Median		Change in median from 2018–19 (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2018–19	2019–20	
Major	203	88.2	8	5	126.3	131.9	4
	SA Water	South East Water					
Large	121.4	64	4	6	94.7	104.7	11
	Central Highlands Water (Vic)	WC (Mandurah)					
Medium	245	19.6	7	12	109.9	99	-10
	Wingecarribee	Mackay					
Small	278.3	18.3	8	8	108	90	-17
	Whitsunday	Livingstone					
All size groups (national)	278.3	18.3	27	31	113.4	110.5	-3
	Whitsunday	Livingstone					

Table note:

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

Nationally, the median average duration of unplanned interruptions remained consistent with 2018–19; there was a slight (3 per cent) decrease from 113 minutes to 110 minutes. Whitsunday Regional Council had the highest duration of unplanned interruptions of all utility groups (278.3 minutes). Kempsey Shire Council reported the highest percentage increase (148 per cent) while Tamworth Regional Council reported the highest percentage decrease (80 per cent) from 2018–19.

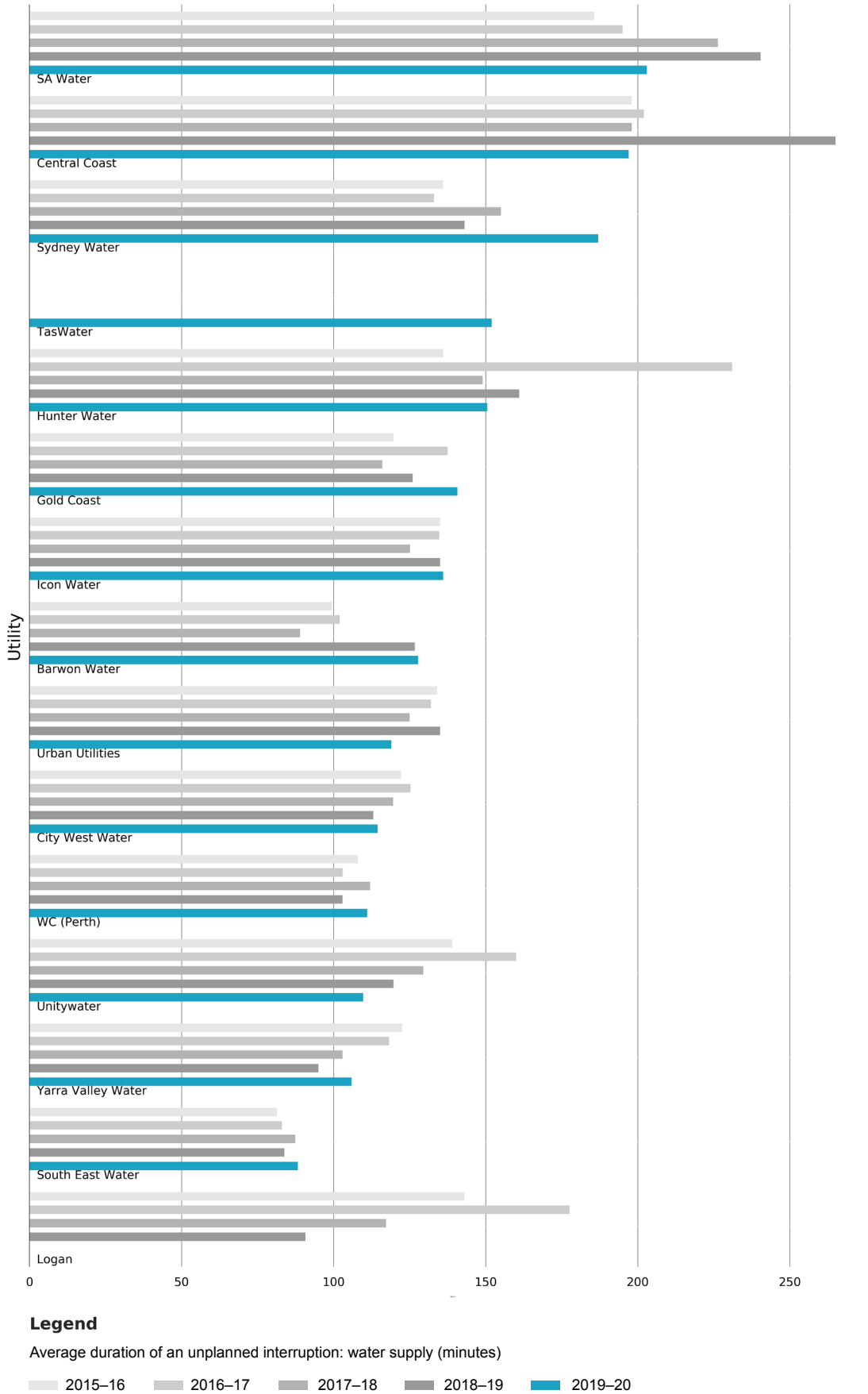


Figure 6.1 Average duration of an unplanned interruption: water (minutes)—Major utility group.

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 2015–16 to 2019–20. The figure highlights the large year-to-year variation in the indicator that can result from a single major mains break.

SA Water Corporation reported the highest (203 minutes) and South East Water Ltd reported the lowest (88 minutes) average duration of unplanned interruptions in 2019–20.

Sydney Water Corporation reported the highest percentage increase in average duration of an unplanned interruption (31 per cent) compared with 2018–19. This was as a result of hot and dry weather conditions over the past 3 years which exacerbated soil movement, leading to an increase in breaks and leaks in water mains which have been complex to repair and difficult to arrange alternative water supply.

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 utilities reporting in 2019–20 are presented in Table A11, Appendix A.

6.2.1 Key findings

Table 6.2 presents a summary of total water and sewerage complaints by utility size group. Nationally, there was a 9 per cent decrease in the median number of complaints. Clarence Valley Council reported the highest total number of water and sewerage complaints per 1,000 properties in all size groups (115). Gladstone Regional Council and Coffs Harbour City Council reported no water and sewerage complaints per 1,000 properties for 2019–20.

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 2018–19		Median		Change in median from 2018–19 (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2018–19	2019–20	
Major	17.9	0.8	6	6	3.5	4.2	20
	Logan	WC (Perth)					
Large	50.9	0.6	6	5	3.5	4	14
	P&W (Darwin)	Multiple utilities					
Medium	115	0	9	10	7.9	10.3	32
	Clarence Valley	Multiple utilities					
Small	103.1	0.3	9	12	6.9	6.5	-7
	P&W (Alice Springs)	Western Downs					
All utility groups (national)	115	0	30	33	5.4	4.9	-9
	Clarence Valley	Multiple utilities					

Table note

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

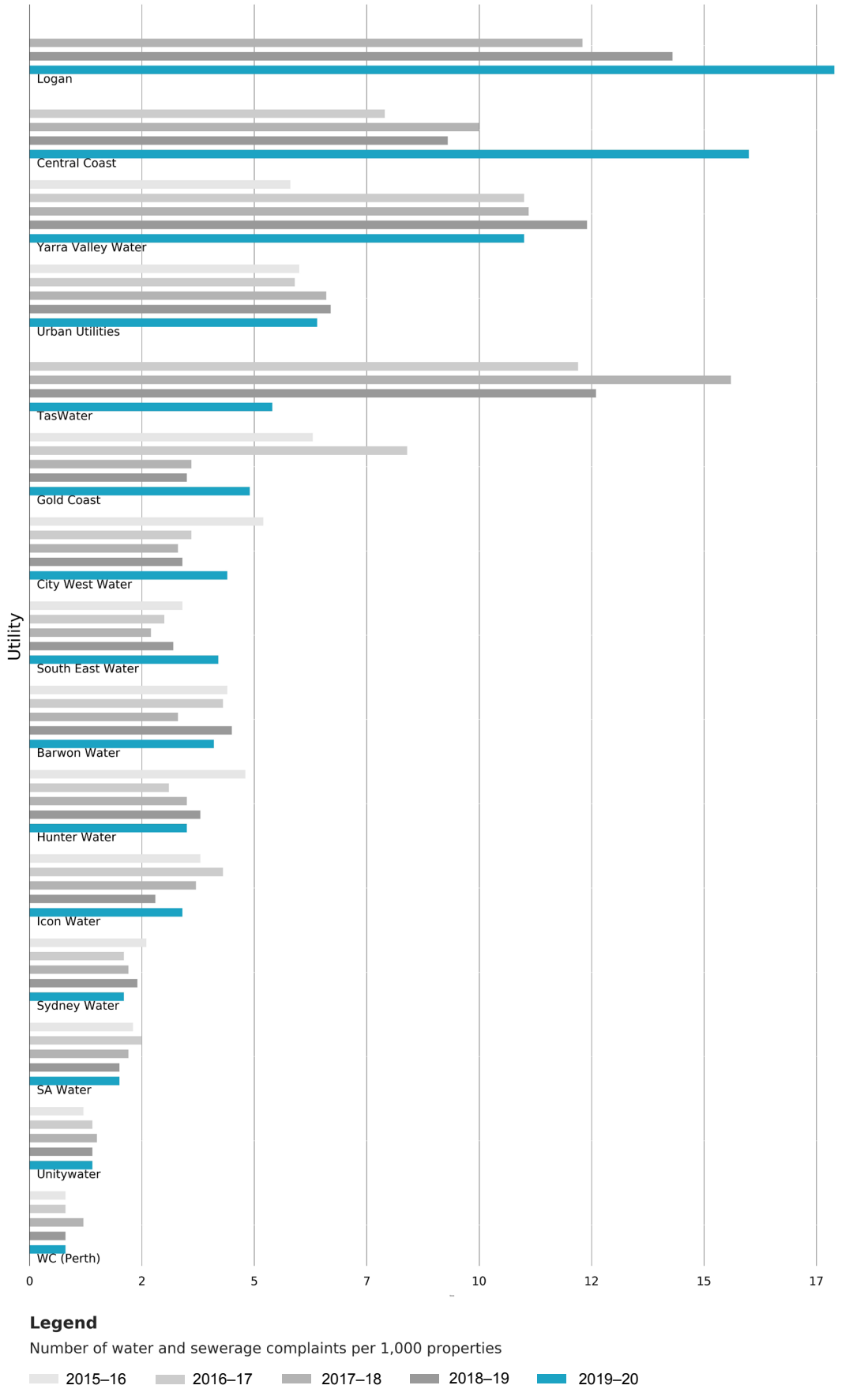


Figure 6.2 Total complaints: water and sewerage (per 1,000 properties)—Major utility group.

6.2.2 Results and analysis—Major utility group

Figure 6.2 shows a ranked breakdown of the total water and sewerage complaints from 2015–16 to 2019–20 for the Major utility group.

Logan City Council reported the highest number (17.9) and Water Corporation – Perth reported the lowest number (0.8) of total complaints among the Major utilities for 2019–20. Central Coast Council reported the highest percentage increase (72 per cent) and TasWater reported the highest percentage decrease (57 per cent) in this size group in 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 2019–20 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 2018–19		Median		Change in median from 2018–19 (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2018–19	2019–20	
Major	88.5	52.7	8	5	67	73.7	10.0
	Yarra Valley Water	WC (Perth)					
Large	98.6	47.7	4	4	81	81.2	0.2
	North East Water	Townsville					
Medium	99	60	4	7	92	89	-3.3
	East Gippsland Water	Albury					
Small	97	63	4	4	82.3	74.5	-9.5
	Westernport Water	Essential Energy					
All size groups (national)	99	47.7	20	20	75.9	77.9	2.6
	East Gippsland Water	Townsville					

Table note

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

6.3.1 Key findings

Nationally, the median percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds increased by 2.6 per cent from 2018–19 to 2019–20 (to 78 per cent). Medium and Small utility groups reported a decrease in the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds, the highest percentage decrease (9.5 per cent) being in the Small utility group. East Gippsland Water reported the best performance with the highest percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds (99 per cent) across all size groups.

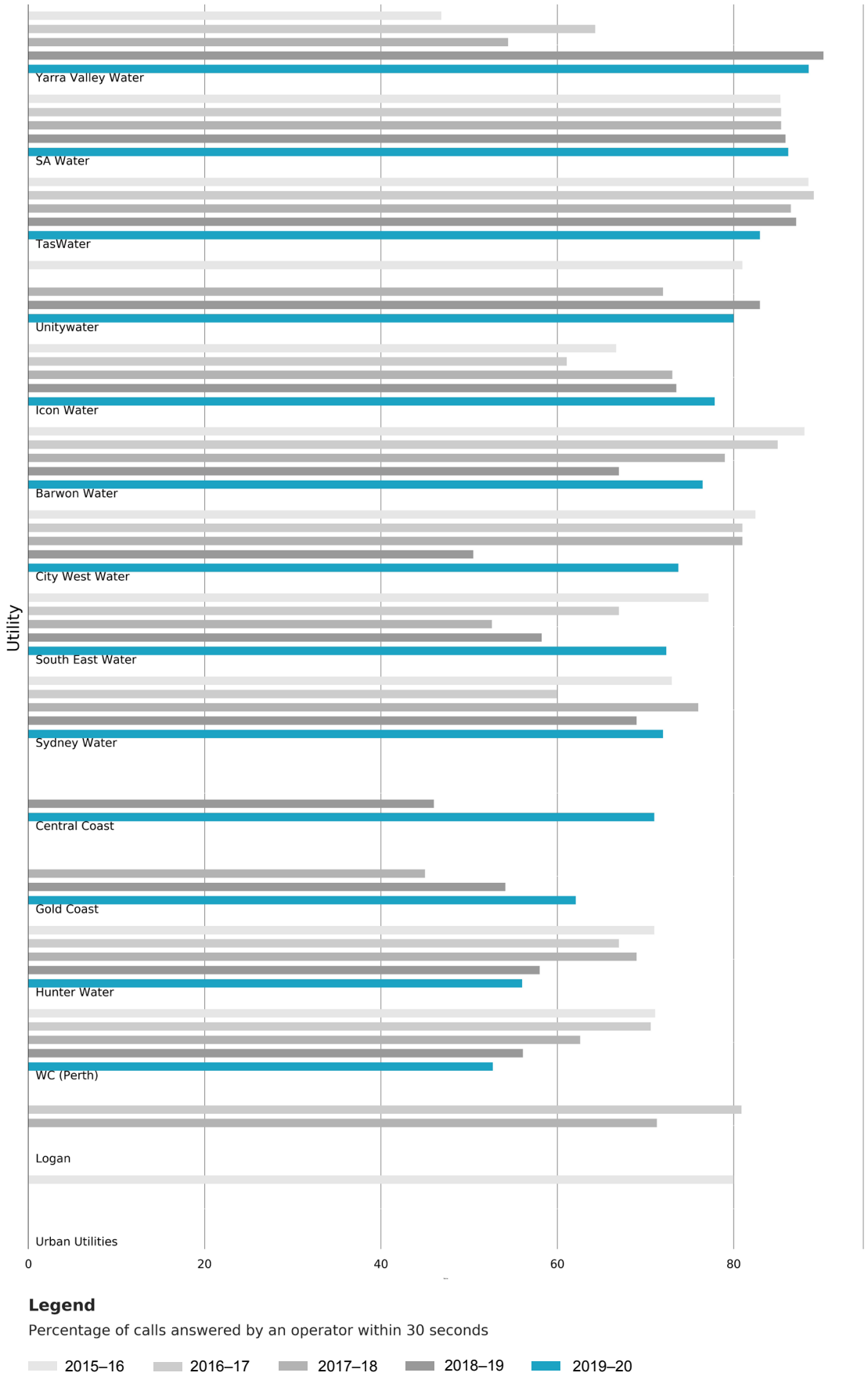


Figure 6.3 Percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds—Major utility group.

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 2015–16 to 2019–20 for the Major utility group.

Central Coast Council reported the biggest increase (54 per cent) in the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds from 2018–19 to 2019–20. Yarra Valley Water Corporation reported the best performance with the highest percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds (89 per cent) in the Major utility group.