

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 that 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
- 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 2020–21 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 2019–20		Median		Change in median from 2019–20 (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2019–20	2020–21	
Major	208	89.5	9	5	131.9	147	11
	Central Coast	South East Water					
Large	141.5	45	2	9	106.3	87.3	-18
	Coliban Water	Cairns					
Medium	220	23.3	9	10	95	125	32
	Queanbeyan	Mackay					
Small	251	28.6	9	8	90	130	44
	Bega Valley	Livingstone					
All size groups (national)	251	23.3	29	32	110	120	9
	Bega Valley	Mackay					

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 increased by 9% from 110 minutes in 2019–20 to 120 minutes in 2020–21. Bega Valley Shire Council in the Small utility group had the highest duration of unplanned interruption of all utility group (251 minutes). Queanbeyan–Palerang Regional Council reported the highest percentage increase (478.9%, from 38 to 220 minutes) while East Gippsland Water reported the highest percentage decrease (56.2%, from 169 to 74 minutes) from 2019–20.

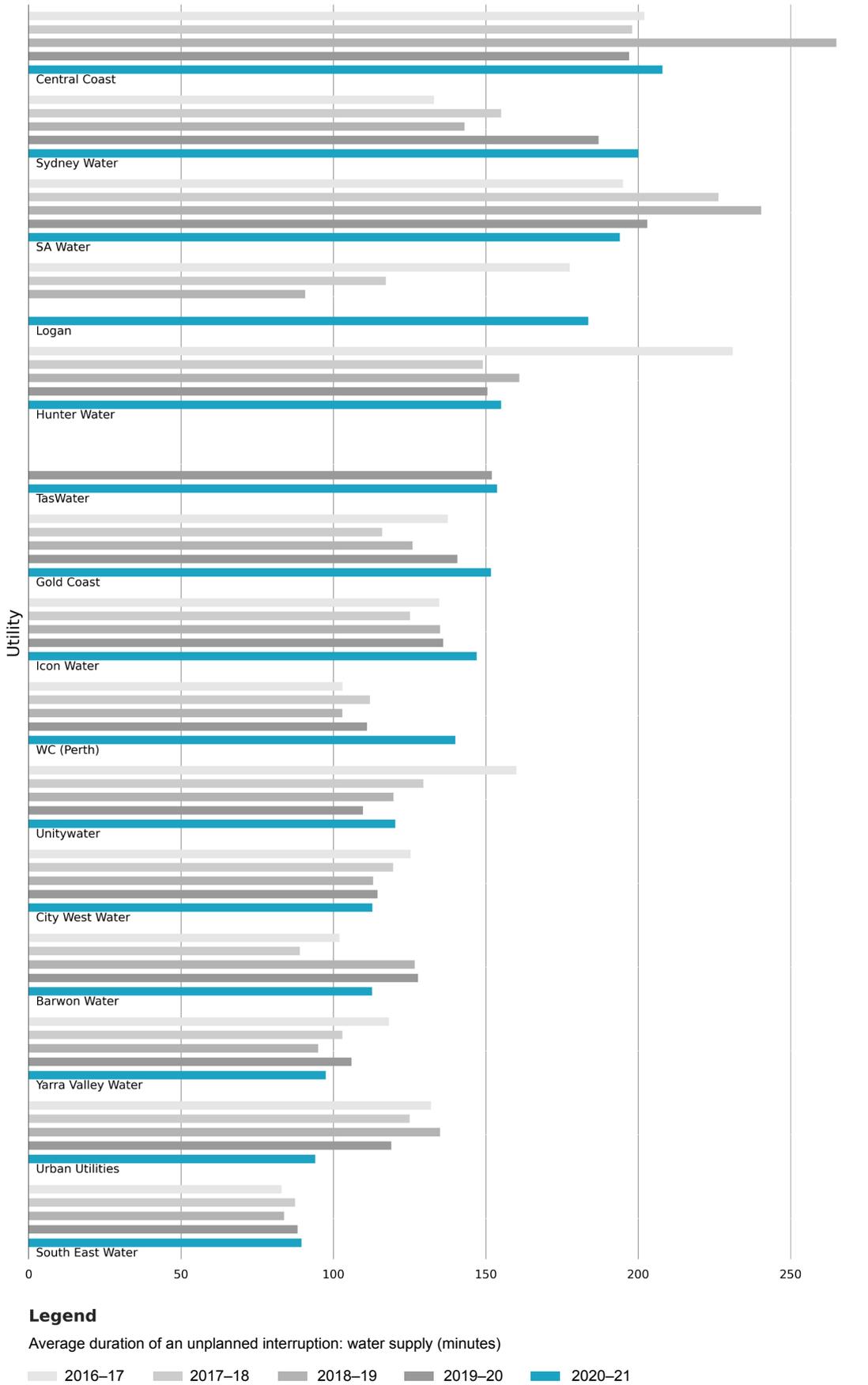


Figure 6.1 Average duration of an unplanned interruption: water (minutes) – Major utility group

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 2016–17 to 2020–21. 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 (208 minutes) and South East Water Ltd reported the lowest (89.5 minutes) average duration of unplanned interruptions in 2020–21.

Water Corporation – Perth reported highest percentage increase in average duration of an unplanned interruption water (26.1%) compared with 2019–20. This result was caused by an increase in the number of burst mains in 2020–21 that incurred a relatively long repair time compared to that of a planned service.

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 2020–21 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 6% increase in the median number of complaints. Queanbeyan–Palerang Regional Council reported the highest total number of water and sewerage complaints per 1,000 properties for 2020–21 in all size groups (103) while Shoalhaven City Council reported the lowest (0.06).

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 2019–20		Median		Change in median from 2019–20 (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2019–20	2020–21	
Major	23.1	0.6	5	8	4.2	4.1	-2
	Logan	WC (Perth)					
Large	59.2	0.06	5	7	3	4	33
	P&W (Darwin)	Shoalhaven					
Medium	103	0.4	10	9	12	15.9	33
	Queanbeyan	Coffs Harbour					
Small	97.8	0.4	8	11	6.5	4.5	-31
	P&W (Alice Springs)	WC (Albany)					
All utility groups (national)	103	0.06	28	35	4.7	5	6
	Queanbeyan	Shoalhaven					

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.

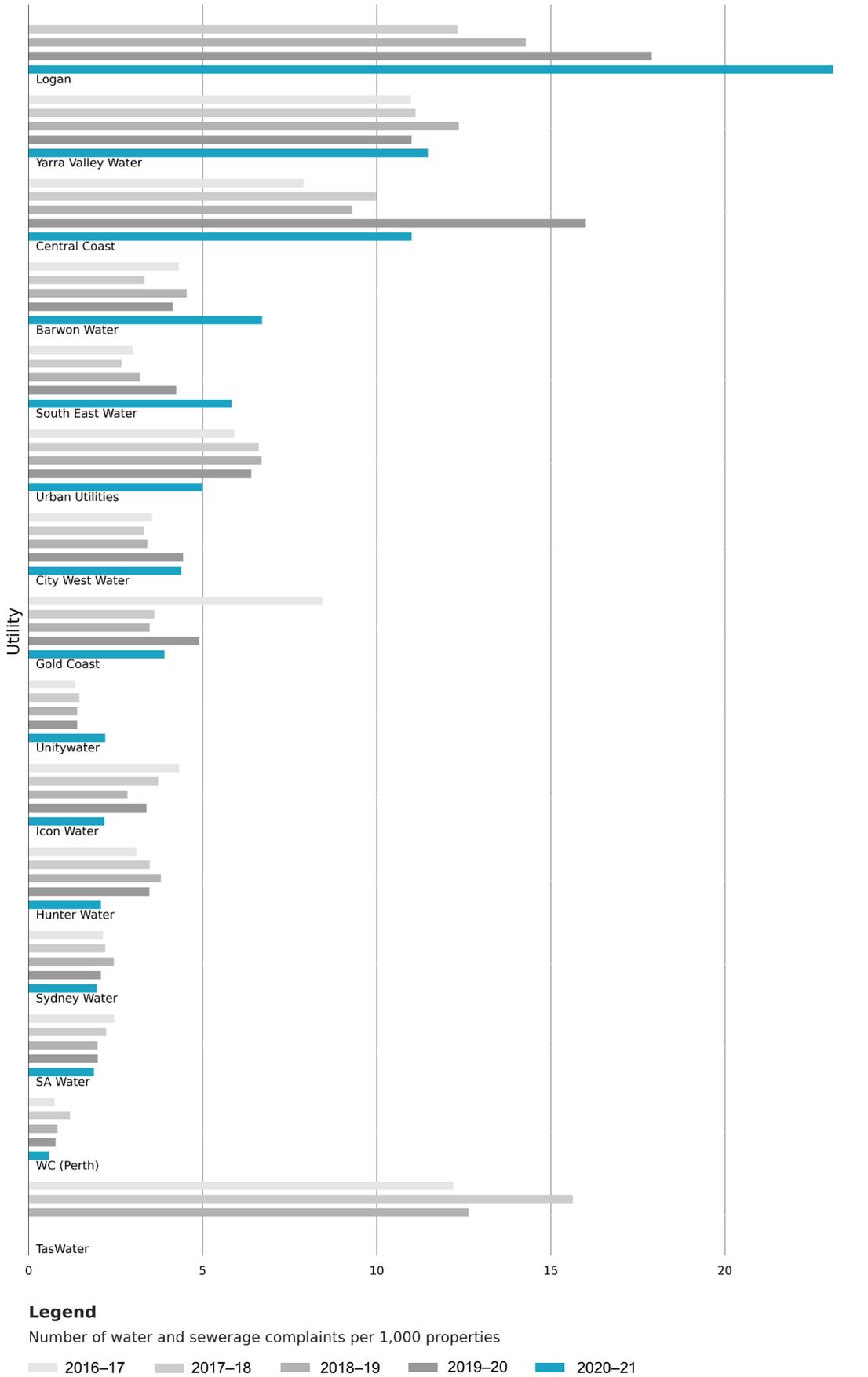


Figure 6.2 Total complaints: water and sewerage (per 1,000 properties) – Major utility group

6.2.2 Results and analysis – Major utility group

Figure 6.2 shows a ranked breakdown of the total water and sewerage complaints from 2016–17 to 2020–21 for the Major utility group.

In a similar result to the previous year, Logan City Council reported the highest number (23.1) and Water Corporation – Perth reported the lowest number (0.6) of total complaints per 1,000 properties for 2020–21. Barwon Water reported the highest percentage increase (63.4%) and Hunter Water Corporation reported the largest percentage decrease (40.0%) in this size group 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
- 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 2020–21 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 2019–20		Median		Change in median from 2020–21 (%)
	High	Low	Increase	Decrease	2019–20	2020–21	
Major	92.1	39.5	5	8	73.7	66.6	-10
	TasWater	Gold Coast					
Large	98.8	46.2	4	5	81.6	78.5	-4
	North East Water	Central Highlands Water (Vic)					
Medium	99	0	7	6	85.5	83.5	-2
	East Gippsland Water	Tamworth					
Small	97	48.4	2	3	74.5	73.5	-1
	Westernport Water	Western Downs					
All size groups (national)	99	0	18	22	78.2	78	-0.3
	East Gippsland Water	Tamworth					

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 (78%) was very similar to the previous year. All groups reported a decrease in the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds, the highest percentage decrease (10%) being in the Major utility group. In 2020–21, East Gippsland Water reported the best performance with the highest percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds (99%) across all size groups.

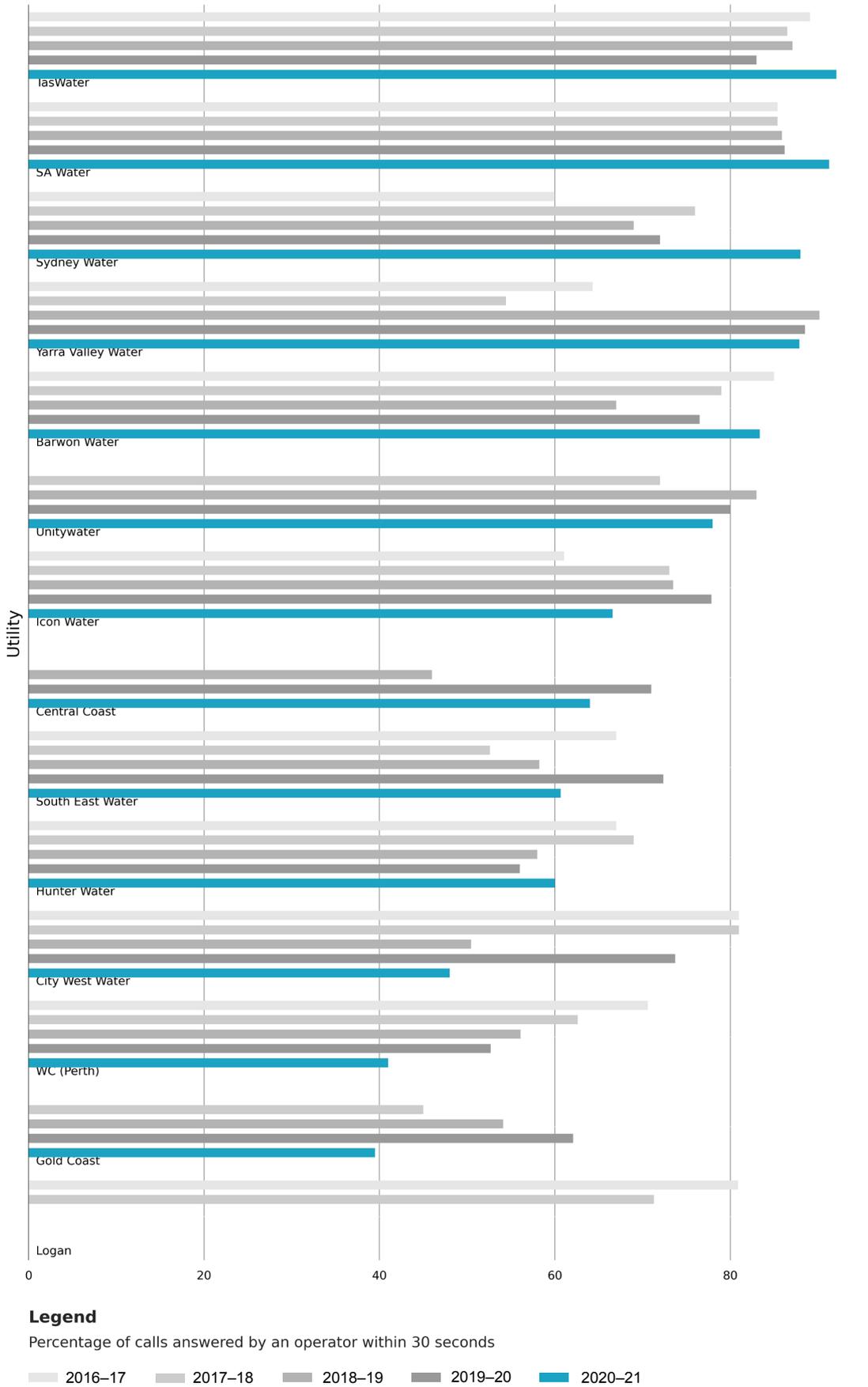


Figure 6.3 Percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds – Major utility group

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 2016–17 to 2020–21 for the Major utility group.

Sydney Water reported the biggest increase (22.2%) in the percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds from 2019–20 to 2020–21. TasWater reported the best performance with the highest percentage of calls answered by an operator within 30 seconds (92.1%) in the Major utility group.