

Last updated: 03 Apr 2023

Charges on water bills (regional urban water corporations)

Explains the main charges on the bills of regional water customers.

The regional urban water corporations are:

* These water corporations also provide rural water services.	
Barwon Water	Greater Western Water
Central Highlands Water	Lower Murray Water*
Coliban Water*	North East Water
East Gippsland Water	South Gippsland Water
Central Gippsland Water*	Wannon Water
Goulburn Valley Water*	Westernport Water
Grampians-Wimmera Mallee Water*	

What can the water corporation bill me for?

There is legislation that sets out how the water corporations in regional areas charge. **

The water corporations don't set their own prices. They submit proposed prices to the Victorian Essential Services Commission (ESC), the independent industry regulator. The ESC undertakes an inquiry, consults about proposed prices, and issues a final pricing decision.

Water corporations don't charge the same prices because their costs and responsibilities differ. For example, maintenance costs are higher where infrastructure, including pipes and storage and treatment facilities, is older.

Residential water bills usually include two charges—usage charges and service availability charges (service charges).

Need help?

1800 500 509 (Freecall)

Monday to Friday between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm

Email & Web

Email us at ewovinfo@ewov.com.au
or visit ewov.com.au

Post

GPO Box 469, Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Translating and Interpreting Service:

131 450

****Slightly different rules apply to the Melbourne metropolitan area — see our Charges on water bills (metropolitan water corporations) fact sheet: ewov.com.au/fact-sheets/charges-on-water-bills-metro**

Usage charges

Residential customers of regional urban water corporations generally pay for usage and sewerage charges.

Usage charges are based on meter readings. Depending on the water corporation, meters are usually read quarterly, but sometimes every four months.

Some water corporations are moving towards block tariffs where different levels of water consumption are charged at different rates. Others charge a flat volumetric rate.

Service charges

These are flat fees on each 'property' for access to the water and sewerage systems

Service charges may be for water and sewerage, or wastewater. They apply to each separate occupancy on a parcel of land, regardless of whether the occupancy has a water meter. For example, a group of four flats on one or more titles attracts four service charges, not one.

Service charges can also apply to vacant land not connected to the water system — if the water corporation has made provision for water services to that land (section 144 of the Water Act 1989 (classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/wa198983/)). In some cases, these charges are much less than those for developed properties. Some water corporations don't charge if the land isn't connected to services and doesn't have any improvements (buildings) on it.

What can happen if service charges aren't paid?

Interest and a caveat are options

Water corporations have the power to charge interest on the debt. Although the interest rate is regulated, the debt can grow, see section 281 of the Water Act 1989: classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/wa198983/.

The water corporation can register a caveat on the title of the property. This means it will be paid, with interest, when the property is sold or transferred (the debt is a 'charge on the property'), see section 274 of the Water Act 1989: classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/wa198983/.

Need help?

1800 500 509 (Freecall)

Monday to Friday between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm

Email & Web


Email us at ewovinfo@ewov.com.au
or visit ewov.com.au

Post


GPO Box 469, Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Translating and Interpreting Service:

131 450



EXAMPLE
WATER
COMPANY



Mr and Mrs Example
105 MADEUP STREET
MELBOURNE VIC 3456


Pay your bill: **1234 567 8910**
Account enquiries: **123 456**
Faults: **123 456** (24 hours)

Account summary
Issued 15 December 2015

Supply address	105 MADEUP STREET MELBOURNE VIC 3456
Property number	123/45678/910
Last account	\$189.18
Payment received	\$189.18 cr
Balance	\$0
Example Water Company charges	\$247.54
Other authority charges	\$93.87
Concessions and discounts	\$0
Total due (GST does not apply)	\$341.41

Account number	123456789
Invoice number	123456789
Due date	30 December 2015
Amount	\$341.41

Average usage in litres per day



Month	Average usage (litres per day)
Dec 2015	250
Mar 2015	220
Jun 2015	220
Sep 2015	240
Dec 2015	260

Who pays for usage if there's a residential tenant in the property?

It depends on the type of tenant and whether there's a separate meter

If it's a residential tenancy and there's a separate meter, the tenant pays the usage charges.

Under section 273B of the Water Act 1989 (classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/wa198983/), a tenant must notify the water corporation if they're moving out. If they don't, they become responsible for all water use until the next meter read.

If there's a gap between tenants, the landlord is responsible for the water usage in that period. See section 273B of the Water Act 1989 (classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/wa198983/).

Need help?

1800 500 509 (Freecall)

Monday to Friday between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm

Email & Web

Email us at ewovinfo@ewov.com.au
or visit ewov.com.au

Post

GPO Box 469, Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Translating and Interpreting Service:

131 450

What if the residential tenant doesn't pay?

The water corporation will follow up on the debt

Usage charges can't be transferred to an owner of a residential property because a residential tenant doesn't pay. See section 273B of the Water Act 1989 (classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/wa198983/).

The water corporation needs to pursue the tenant through its usual credit management processes.

A water corporation may charge a regulated amount of interest on a debt and/or restrict the flow of water to a household. However, it can't restrict supply until it has sent the required reminder notices and restriction warning notices. Other steps may also be required in some situations.

The water corporation must also have offered to help a residential customer if they're having trouble paying their water bills. See clause 9.1 of the ESC Water Industry Standard - Rural Customer Service: esc.vic.gov.au/water/codes-and-guidelines/water-industry-standards.

What if there's no residential tenant and the owner doesn't pay?

The water corporation has a number of options

As with service charges, unpaid usage charges may be a charge on the land.

Interest may be applied to them, see section 281 of the Water Act 1989: classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/wa198983/.

Owner-occupiers may also be subject to a restriction of water flow.

Received a water bill for the common area?

If you live in a unit or a housing complex, you may get a separate bill for water used in the 'common area'

Even if you don't use the common area, you'll probably have to contribute to the water bill. There's just one meter for the common area and the amount is divided among all the occupiers.

Whether you have to contribute will depend on the owners' corporation rules.

Need help?

1800 500 509 (Freecall)

Monday to Friday between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm

Email & Web

Email us at ewovinfo@ewov.com.au
or visit ewov.com.au

Post

GPO Box 469, Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Translating and Interpreting Service:

131 450

Water concessions

Pension card holders can get water concessions

If you hold a Health Care Card or a Gold Card, it's likely that you can get a concession on your water bills. However, the name and address on your bill must be the same as that on the concession card.

You can also apply to have the concession automatically credited to your bill. Be aware that some concessions must be applied for again each year.

More information about concessions can be found by contacting your water corporation. You can also view our Concessions and Grants fact Sheet ewov.com.au/fact-sheets/concessions-and-grants and or contact the Information Line for the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing: 1800 658 521 or visit services.dffh.vic.gov.au/concessions-and-benefits.

Need further help? If you have a complaint, contact the company first. If you're not happy with its response, contact EWOV – we're here to help!

Need help?

1800 500 509 (Freecall)

Monday to Friday between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm

Email & Web

Email us at ewovinfo@ewov.com.au
or visit ewov.com.au

Post

GPO Box 469, Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Translating and Interpreting Service:

131 450