

Mid-year performance assessment

In the first six months of our assessment period, our performance against our customer outcomes was mixed. We are on track, or nearly on track to meet many of our individual targets that we use to measure the achievement of our outcomes, however we have failed to meet some key customer targets. Our Customer Forum considered each individual measure and assessed our performance. Their assessment is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Performance against GWW outcomes, as committed to in 2024.

| Outcomes | 2023-24 | Mid 2024-25 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Your water is safe, consistent and resilient | Largely met | Largely met |
| 2. When things go wrong, we fix them | Not met | Largely met |
| 3. We support our diverse communities and customers | Met | Not met |
| 4. We enable growth and help businesses thrive | Largely met | Largely met |
| 5. We heal and care for Country | Not met | Largely met |
| Overall | | Largely met |

Legend

Met The outcome was met or on track

Largely met The outcome was largely met or nearly on track

Not met The outcome was Not met or off track

Our performance

Our delivery of water supply and sewer services was strong, however the difficulties we experienced transitioning to a new customer billing system caused delays and disruptions to some key services our customers rely on.

We met or exceeded our targets for ensuring consistent and reliable water services to our customers. Our recycled water network grew with the connection of Werribee Open Range Zoo to our low-salt recycled water supply. The zoo uses our recycled water in animal exhibits and to irrigate its gardens and grounds. We were also faster at fixing water supply and sewer outages than we were six months ago.

GWW continued to perform strongly against Outcome 5: We heal and care for Country. We are on track to meet our targets for reusing biosolids (a waste product of the sewerage treatment process), reducing carbon dioxide emissions and our commitments to the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate.

The problems we experienced transitioning to a new billing system were felt by many of our customers. Some customers experienced delayed bills, and others experienced problems with getting the information they needed to sell or connect a house. This also caused an increase in the number of customers calling us causing longer customer wait times. This has influenced the decline in customers' satisfaction with their interactions with us as measured by a phone survey. We are continuing to work through these difficulties, and we are confident that our customer experience will be greatly improved when the project is completed.

The delayed bills some of our customers received covered a longer period than usual and were therefore higher than normal. GWW offered extended payment terms on delayed bills and further encouraged payment support for people who needed it.

Other challenges in the first half of 2024-25:

- While we always delivered safe water compliant with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, our customer satisfaction with our water quality is slightly lower than our target.
- Sewer interruptions and EPA-notifiable sewer spills continued to exceed our targets. We continue to monitor our sewer assets proactively to identify and manage areas at higher risk of failure.
- Some customers continued to experience a relatively high number of unplanned water supply interruptions, including four who experienced six outages in the past year. However, the total number of unplanned outages decreased compared to last year. Some complex water supply outages required coordination with multiple agencies, resulting in us marginally missing our target for fixing 95% of unplanned water supply outages in less than five hours.
- Standard plumbing applications were affected by the customer billing incident. We have worked through this and completion times have returned to their previous levels. We will continue to work to improve this processing time.

Improving performance

This report covers the first six months of our new regulatory period. During 2024-2028, we will be investing in new water and sewerage infrastructure, treatment, system renewals and technologies to better meet the needs of our customers and our growing service region. The following are highlights of priority improvements.

In the priority area of **water quality complaints**, there were the following improvement actions:

- Develop and implement ongoing water main pipe flushing programs to improve the appearance of the water we supply in areas where a consistently high number of complaints are received.
- Maintain our systems and testing regimes to ensure we are 100% compliant with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. We are continually improving the way we manage our water quality outcomes by adopting best practice to ensure we mitigate emerging risks.

In the priority area of **network reliability**, there were the following improvement actions:

- We are reviewing the way we deliver maintenance activities, including investigating opportunities to increase our internal capability to manage and maintain our water and sewerage assets. This will ensure we have the right model in place to meet the current and future needs of our customers.
- Our sewer renewal program, preventative maintenance and condition monitoring is focused on our highest risk and poorest performing assets to reduce the rate of sewer interruptions and EPA-notifiable spills.

In the priority area of **service connection applications**, there were the following improvement actions:

- Process and efficiency review is identifying opportunities for improvement to the processing of property connection applications. One initiative to improve standard plumbing application times will be ensuring customers have ready access to application requirements and understand the importance of providing all the information needed when they first apply.

In the priority area of **customer satisfaction**, there were the following improvement actions:

- Continue to offer a range of payment options and programs to customers who need extra support, especially those who received larger than normal bills. We expect customers to be back to their usual quarterly billing cycle by mid-year which will alleviate the financial burden some customers have experienced.
- Stabilisation of our new customer billing system, including continuing to evolve the My GWW online account platform to provide a smoother experience for our customers.
- Keep customers informed about any further issues with our billing system, by continuing to publish frequent updates on our website and social media, and sending customers targeted messages via SMS, email and mail when required. We are committed to being transparent with our customers and keeping them informed when things don't go as planned.

In the priority area of **partnerships with Traditional Owners**, there were the following improvement actions:

- Continue our focus of developing strong trusted relationships with Traditional Owner groups of the lands on which we operate to support mutually beneficial partnerships. So far GWW has commenced partnership discussions with four of the five Traditional Owner groups in our region.