Drinking Water Quality Policy

Purpose

To provide Greater Western Water Corporation (GWW) staff and contractors with an approach and commitment of GWW to deliver safe, reliable and aesthetically acceptable drinking water to its customers.

Objectives

Our objectives are to:

1. Provide trusted water services for our communities and future generations.
2. Meet our customer commitments for drinking water quality as part of our Customer Charter.

To meet our objectives, GWW will supply its customers with drinking water that complies with the requirements of the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003 (Vic)* and any subordinate regulations to achieve our objectives. This policy applies to all GWW activities and applies to all GWW employees and all 'in house' contractors and consultants working for GWW, including those engaged through an employment agency responsible for the planning, project delivery, management, treatment, operations, maintenance and monitoring of our drinking water treatment and supply network from catchment to tap.

Commitment

To achieve our strategic objectives, we are committed to delivery of safe (biologically, chemically, radiologically and physically), reliable and aesthetically acceptable drinking water to our customers that is intended for immediate human consumption or purposes connected with human consumption without further treatment, by:

- Managing and monitor water quality objectives as required by the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003 (Vic)*, the *Safe Drinking Water Regulation 2025* and any subordinate regulations.
- Managing water quality as per the Statement of Obligations (General) 2015 issued by the Minister for Water under the *Water Industry Act 1994 (Vic)*.
- Meeting our obligations under the Bulk Water Supply Agreement with Melbourne Water and bulk entitlements with Southern Rural Water and holding them to account for the quality of water they supply.
- Managing GWW owned and/or managed reservoirs, water catchments and treatment facilities utilising the catchment to tap multi barrier approach to ensure adequate consideration is given to both the protection of source waters and treatment controls to manage risks and meet standards for water quality and environmental protection in the provision of safe drinking water.
- Manage our catchment and water entitlements that compliment or help deliver on our commitments to caring for country.

- Utilising customer insights relating to water quality to continuously improve service delivery to customers.
- Committing to the continual improvement of our drinking water quality management practices in alignment with the twelve elements set out in the *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011*.
- Ensuring our staff and contractors possess and maintain the appropriate training and competencies required to make informed decisions that strengthen and support the safe operation of our drinking water systems
- Strengthening transparency for our customers by ensuring water quality data is easily accessible

Implementation

To implement this Policy, GWW will, in partnership with stakeholders and relevant agencies:

- Adopt and meet the requirements of Victoria's *Safe Drinking Water Act (2003)* and the *Safe Drinking Water Regulation 2025* and implement a management system that is based on the 12 elements and principles outlined in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011, which define processes for managing and providing safe drinking water.
- Support State Government policy regarding the addition of fluoride to all water supplies (fluoridation of water will be maintained to all areas supplied through bulk entitlements from the Melbourne Water system and intermittent fluoridated areas of supply will be appropriately managed).
- Purchase bulk water from reliable supplier(s), sustainably harvesting storage and distribution, put systems in place that monitor the quality of this supply and use NATA accredited laboratories to monitor drinking water quality.
- Implement and maintain a certified quality assurance system to manage the quality of water delivered to customers to provide a catchment to tap multi barrier approach, to effectively manage risks to drinking water quality and in line with international best practice.
- Maintain an appropriate Water Quality Risk Register that is forward facing and considers the effects on safe water from significant events or emerging risks such as climate change, drought, water restrictions, PFAS or micro plastics.
- Develop and maintain drinking water quality expertise and capabilities and ensure all staff understand their role in applying the 12 elements of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines
- Establish routine water quality monitoring programs and share the results of the monitoring program with our community and respond to any enquiries on drinking water quality in a timely manner.

- Maintain an incident response and emergency management system to respond to water quality incidents.
- Where properties are in a dual water supply area, and are supplied with drinking water and/or raw or recycled water (noting that raw and recycled water is not provided nor intended for human consumption) we will:
    - Maintain Class A water (recycled water) as microbiologically safe to minimise any public health risk from accidental human consumption, via inappropriate use by the householder or accidental internal cross connection.
    - Educate and inform dual supply customers of the risks of inappropriate use of alternative water supplies.
    - Continue to maintain accessible information for customers on how to check for cross connections at their dual supply properties.
- Actively participate in industry meetings focussed on drinking water quality to stay current with research, regulatory developments and best practices, engaging in research and development opportunities that advance drinking water quality management; and
- Continually improve our water quality management practices by assessing performance against corporate commitments, implementing endorsed and approved management frameworks and stakeholder expectations.

Roles and responsibilities

The Board is responsible for overseeing implementation of this Policy and that appropriate governance and oversight of drinking water management is applied across the organisation.

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is responsible for incorporating GWW's drinking water quality responsibilities into business planning and operational activities and ongoing appropriate reporting to the Board.

The General Manager of Service Delivery is accountable to ensure the robust and risk-based management of drinking water resources, operations, treatment and distribution to customers and responsible for directing, reviewing, and reporting upon the implementation of this Policy at GWW.

The General Manager Asset Planning and Delivery is accountable to ensure Water Quality risks are included in all asset planning activities and investment considerations. This includes identifying as assessing potential water quality impacts associated with proposed new assets, renewal and other programs, ensuring that long term capital investments support the organisation's water quality objectives.

Senior Leadership Team and Team Leaders are responsible for and involved in the planning, project delivery, treatment, backflow prevention, asset maintenance, supply and monitoring of drinking water are responsible for understanding, implementing, maintaining, and continuously improving the performance drinking water quality management system of drinking water quality.

The Drinking Water Quality Executive Committee is responsible for the monitoring of the effectiveness of the drinking water quality management system and this policy to manage current, future and emerging risks to drinking water quality.

As part of the quality assurance system the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) team, made up of GWW staff with core skills and expertise in drinking water management and implementation of HACCP principles, is responsible for maintaining knowledge and technical competence, conducting reviews of drinking water quality hazards analysis, maintaining an internal and external audit program and implementation of the HACCP Plan.

All employees are responsible for complying with relevant GWW policies, guidelines and processes related to this policy in a manner that safeguards drinking water.

References and related documents

Greater Western Water Risk Management policy
Greater Western Water Health, Safety, Environment and Quality policy
Greater Western Water Backflow prevention and containment policy
Greater Western Water Alternative Water Policy
Statement of Obligations (General) 2015
Bulk Water Supply Agreement with Melbourne Water dated 1998
Greater Western Water Customer Charter
Greater Western Water Drinking Water Risk Management Plan
Melbourne Metropolitan Water Industry Response
Safe Drinking Water Act 2003 (Vic) and any subordinate regulations
Safe Drinking Water Regulation 2025
Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (2011) version 3.8, updated September 2022, or the most recent version electronically published, referred to as Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (2011)
Environmental Protection Act 2017 (Vic)
Health (Fluoridation) Act 1973 (Vic)
Code of Practice for Fluoridation of Drinking Water Supplies
Food Act 1984 (Vic)
Essential Services Commission Act 2001 (Vic)
Competition and Consumer Act 2010
Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2022
Blue Green Algae Circular
Environmental Management System - ISO 14001
Quality Management System – ISO 9001

Occupational Health & Safety Management System - AS 45001
Greater Western Water Risk Management Plan
Drinking Water Quality Management System
HACCP Principles & Systems Procedures

Review Process

The policy will be reviewed biennially or more frequently as required
Approved by the Board – August 2026.
Next due for review by the Board in August 2028.

Version control table

Version No.	Doc Owner	Change / Update	Date
6.0	Head of Water Supply and Operations	Added detail on SDWR 2025, included Traditional Owner reference, added Accountabilities for GM Asset Planning and Delivery,	August 2026
5.0	Head of Water Supply and Operations	Minor updates to clarify objectives and ensure that legislative and contractual obligations are correctly referenced.	24 June2025
4.0	Head of Water Supply and Operations	Updated to new template Updated the roles and responsibilities to reflect the outcomes of the Drinking water benchmarking actions. Minor edits.	1 February 2024
3.0	Manager of Water Supply and Operations	Addition of 'chemically' to definition of safe drinking water and addition of references to understanding our roles and applying the 12 elements of the ADWG in the Implementation section. Updated document references and Policy review dates.	27 June 2023