

5 February 2024

Dear Customer

Water Supply Update – February 2024

In January we provided you with updated information about your latest water usage, especially where usage was high.

In the past, the only water usage information provided was as part of your quarterly water bill. We recognised that this means there can be a 3-month gap between the updates which can make it difficult to address issues quickly.

We hoped that providing you with more current information would enable you to better manage your water usage and, as a result, your future water bills.

The water usage update provided in January has led to a number of enquiries from customers about the water service.

In this update we hope to clarify some aspects of your water bills and water supply.

Water usage levels

For a number of customers, we saw water usage rise significantly in November and December. Increases in these months most often coincides with an adjustment to reticulation settings in line with the start of summer, though of course there can be other reasons.

We appreciate those customers who reached out to us recently seeking further information on their usage. We undertook a detailed review of water use patterns for those customers – such as the times of the day that water use spiked, and the duration of those spikes. This detailed review indicated that in almost all cases, reticulation settings had been set too high and too frequently, resulting in a very large amount of water being used.

For some customers, adjustment of their reticulation timers has now resulted in a significant reduction in water consumption.

What these reviews again showed us is that irrigation systems use a lot of water and can often be the reason for a high water bill. By programming your tap timers and irrigation system correctly and regularly checking your system, you'll nurture your garden, while using water efficiently.

We urge you to check your reticulation settings now.

Water tanks

We have been asked about the use of domestic rainwater tanks to supplement water supplies and whether there are any restrictions on installation. Muchea Water has no role in the installation of tanks on your property and is not the ruling body on such matters – customers should refer to the relevant building covenants, council approvals and health guidelines to confirm suitability and the approval process.

Pricing

As is the common practice across WA, we have a tiered pricing system to encourage the careful use of water. The more water you use, the higher the price per kilolitre. Water use is measured and billed in kilolitres (kL).

Your account starts in tier 1 (the lowest tier) at the beginning of your bill year. If you have jumped to tier 2 or 3 within your bill year, you will revert to tier 1 when the new bill year starts on 1 July.

The highest tier (for usage over 550kL in a year, which is significantly above the average household consumption in WA of around 300kL pa) is currently priced at \$9.289 per kL. As a comparison, for water supplied (by the State's largest water provider) to Bindoon, the highest tier (for usage above 550kL in a year) is currently priced at \$9.930 per kL.

Water quality

The Department of Health regulates the quality of drinking water in Western Australia in line with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines published by the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australia's peak public health policy organisation. These guidelines are designed to provide an authoritative reference on what defines safe, good quality water, how it can be achieved and how it can be assured.

The drinking water supplied to your property is safe and meets all Australian Drinking Water Guidelines for health.

The drinking water quality is monitored continuously by on-line instruments, by frequent field tests and is regularly tested by an independent NATA accredited laboratory to ensure it always meets the requirements of the Department of Health. After review by the Department of Health, a quarterly summary of our sampling and lab results is uploaded onto our website for public review.

Muchea Water, like much of the Perth northern suburbs, sources water from an underground aquifer. The groundwater we source is, in general, very good quality except for a few parameters, notably iron. Iron in water does not result in any health related impact but, can sometimes be noticed as a discolouration. Our water treatment process is designed to (amongst other things) remove iron. Whilst our sampling indicates removal of iron, there remains a low residual iron concentration (below the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines aesthetic value) in the treated water. We recognise this and whilst improvements have been made we continue to work on improving the treatment processes to improve the removal of iron from our water.

The water extracted from the aquifer is treated with the addition of a sodium hypochlorite solution (chlorination) which is the accepted form of drinking water disinfection across Australia. Sometimes residual chlorine in water can be smelt, even whilst the water remains within Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. This can be particularly so in colder weather, as chlorine levels decline more slowly in cooler weather, or in periods of high use when water passes quickly from the treatment plant to taps. Whilst some customers are more sensitive to aesthetic aspects

than others, maintaining a safe water supply is dependent on maintaining a level of chlorination. We continue to monitor levels constantly in an effort to improve all aspects of water quality.

Water pressure

We have received a number of enquiries about water pressure.

In summary, our performance standards set out a minimum static pressure of 13 metres of water, a maximum static pressure of 100 metres of water and a minimum flow of 20 litres per minute to the boundary of your property. These details are included within our standard terms and conditions available from our website.

We constantly monitor the pressures being delivered into the water network at the water treatment plant to ensure these standards are being delivered. In addition, we regularly measure the water pressure at customer meters on the property boundary. All our past testing has confirmed the supplied pressures are within the required performance standards.

Last week we engaged an alternate plumbing contractor to again measure water pressure at a number of customer properties across the Estate. In all cases, this testing again confirmed pressure within the required performance standards.

What we have observed during the checking of water meters, is that a number of properties have pressure reducing valves installed on the house side of the meter. These devices are manually set to limit pressure into the property and consequently, may reduce flow rate into the property. These devices would have been installed by your builder or domestic plumber. **They are NOT installed by Muchea Water.** As they are not part of the mains water supply we are not able to advise on their usage. You should contact your builder or plumber for further advice on why these devices were installed and whether these or other installed appliances are impacting the water pressure you are experiencing.

In addition to these updates, we have a section on our website responding to other frequently asked questions about the water supply, please refer to: www.mucheawater.com.au/faqs/

We hope you find this information of assistance. If you have other questions, you can reach out at any time via the 'Contact us' page on our website, at www.mucheawater.com.au/contact-us/

Kind regards

Customer Support