

# Media Release

**The Hon Lisa Neville MP**  
Minister for Water  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services



Friday, 27 March 2020

## DESALINATION PLANT SECURING OUR WATER SUPPLY

The Andrews Labor Government has ordered 125 gigalitres of water from the Desalination Plant for next financial year – to secure our water supplies in the face of population growth, climate change and falling rainfall.

The order mirrors last year's and won't result in any increase to average water bills for Melbourne households – which are already among the lowest in the country.

Although 2020 started wetter than average, rainfall in 2019 was five per cent lower than the 30-year average across Melbourne's four major catchments.

Over the last five years, Melbourne has used around 68 gigalitres (GL) more water each year than what flows into our catchments naturally. Desalinated water has made up the difference – supplying 190 GL into Melbourne's supply system since the plant was turned on in 2016-17.

Without vital rain-independent water from the plant, Melbourne's water storages would be 50.4 per cent or 10.8 per cent lower than the 61.2 per cent capacity they are at today.

As well as providing vital water for Melbourne, it also underpins water security for Geelong, Ballarat and other regional areas such as South Gippsland.

It is particularly important for Geelong, where storages fell to as low as 32 per cent last year. With the help of the connection to Melbourne, underpinned by the desalination plant, they are now above 56 per cent.

The Labor Government is ensuring our water supply is managed responsibly and that storages remain at healthy levels to avoid water restrictions. As well securing our supplies through desalinated water, the Government is easing demand on our drinking supplies by supporting more recycling and stormwater use.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

*"This order will boost water security and supply for Melbourne and major regional centres without increasing water bills for households."*

*"The fact is it's raining less and we're using more water – the desal plant makes up the difference, ensuring we have enough water to meet growing demand."*