

Media Release

The Hon Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Housing
Acting Minister for Water



Wednesday, 31 March 2021

DESALINATION ORDER TO SECURE OUR WATER SUPPLY FOR 2021

The Andrews Labor Government has ordered 125 gigalitres from the Victorian Desalination Plant in Wonthaggi to secure Melbourne's water supply for our growing population.

The order is the same as 2019 and 2020 and won't result in any increase to typical water bills for Melbourne households – which are already among the lowest in the country.

In deciding the size of the order Acting Minister for Water Richard Wynne considered current water storage conditions, projected water demands, future climate conditions, risk of system spill and the balance between securing supply and keeping bills stable.

High rainfall in key catchments since the last order has helped boost Melbourne's water storages to 72 per cent – which has reduced the water order from the previously forecast 150 gigalitres to 125 gigalitres.

With predicted drier conditions ahead and the underlying trend of declining storage levels, this order will help build a storage buffer to prepare Victoria for drier years to come.

The Victorian Desalination plant underpins water security for Melbourne and surrounding regions including Geelong and Ballarat. More than 300 gigalitres of desalinated water has been produced and delivered to the Melbourne system since the first order for water from the desalination plant was placed in 2016.

The desalination plant is becoming more and more critical to Victoria's water security with average rainfall continuing to fall and demand outstripping rainfall by more than 70 gigalitres a year — this gap is set to grow by another 10 gigalitres every year as the population grows and the climate continues to dry.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Water Richard Wynne

"We need to build a buffer to make sure storages don't reach critically low levels. Desal makes sure we can do that without water restrictions."

"Water bills will not increase due to this water order. There will be no additional charges for this year's water order passed on to consumers."

"We are using more water and demand is outstripping supply. The desal plant makes up the difference, ensuring we have enough water to meet growing demand."