

Media Release

The Hon Harriet Shing MP

Minister for Water
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy
Minister for Equality



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MELBOURNE WATER SUPPLY IN HEALTHY POSITION

Following above-average rainfall and three consecutive La Niña events, Melbourne’s water supply for the year ahead is secure – with water storage levels currently above 91 per cent.

Based on these storage levels, projected weather patterns, and demand, Minister for Water Harriet Shing today announced that, based on Melbourne Water’s independent advice, there is no requirement for a desalination order this year.

The decision follows consultation with retail water corporations Greater Western Water, South East Water and Yarra Valley Water – and will ensure households don’t face additional charges on their water bills in 2023-24.

The Victorian Desalination Plant is critical to managing Victoria’s water supply amid a changing climate and a future of volatile weather, hotter temperatures and more severe droughts – giving the state’s communities, farmers, industry and tourism confidence in our future water supply.

The plant provides a scalable approach to supplement Greater Melbourne’s water supplies and storage to avoid severe water restrictions and better withstand dry years, drought and fires – and meet the needs of a growing population.

Demand from our rainfall-dependent water sources already outstrips supply – Melburnians currently use 50 to 70 gigalitres more water each year than what flows into our storages, and our desalination plant has supplied around 25 per cent of storage capacity since 2016.

Without regular desalination orders, Victoria would not be able to meet the growth in demand. To plan for this, the Andrews Labor Government is implementing the *Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy*, outlining a pathway to secure the region’s water future over the next 50 years.

In a severe drought, storage levels can drop by 20 percent in as little as a year – which is why Victoria’s water supply must be responsibly managed to avoid challenging water restrictions like those in place during the Millennium Drought.

The Desalination Plant is part of Victoria’s long-term water strategy that positions the state to avoid water shortages and adverse social and economic impacts of water restrictions on households, businesses, and farmers.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

“While above-average rainfall means an order of water is not required this year, our Desalination Plant is a critical part of our long-term water supply – we keep our water storages as high as possible to protect water security for the future.”

“We are acting on the best advice about our water resource position – adapting to the very rare event of three successive La Niña events and the wet conditions we’ve experienced over the past three years.”