

Media Release

The Hon Harriet Shing MP
Minister for Housing
Minister for Water
Minister for Equality



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CHEAPER BILLS AND HEALTHY WATER SUPPLY FOR MELBOURNE

Following four consecutive years of above-average rainfall, Melbourne's water supply for the year ahead remains secure – with water storage levels currently at a healthy 91 per cent.

Following independent technical advice from Melbourne Water - based on storage levels, projected weather patterns, and demand, Minister for Water Harriet Shing today announced there is no requirement for a desalinated water order for this year.

The decision follows consultation with metropolitan retail water corporations – Greater Western Water, South East Water and Yarra Valley Water.

The decision will ensure Melbourne's water bills remain the lowest of the major cities across Australia - with a typical household paying \$88 less than those in Sydney and a whopping \$658 less than those in Perth.

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 and industry confidence in our future water supply.

While individual seasons or years may see high rainfall, the longer-term trend of warmer and drier conditions is expected to continue.

On average, our annual water usage is already exceeding the amount of water that can be reliably supplied from our catchment areas alone, particularly in drier years.

The plant supplements Melbourne's water supplies and storage to avoid severe water restrictions and helps the city better withstand dry years, drought and fires – and meet the needs of a growing population.

To prepare for the increase demand for water due to population growth, the Allan Labor Government is investing in water efficiency for homes, businesses and farms and driving the transition away from a reliance on river water through the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy.

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

The Desalination Plant is part of the state's long-term water strategy that positions the state to avoid water shortages and adverse impacts of water restrictions on Victorians, businesses, and farmers – while also reducing Melbourne's water use and diversifying future water supplies.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

“Our water storage levels are currently healthy following three wetter than average years, and so an order of desalinated water is not required this year. However, the Desalination Plant remains a critical part of meeting our long-term water supply needs - particularly as the population increases.”

“Even with regular orders from the Desalination Plant, Melburnians pay lower bills on average than any other capital city.”

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