

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police
Minister for Water



Getting Things Done.
Making Things Fair.

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DESALINATED WATER TO BOOST SUPPLY AND PROTECT VICTORIANS

The Andrews Labor Government will order 15GL of water for the 2018/19 financial year from the Desalination Plant to boost storages and protect against drought.

This is the second year that the Labor Government has ordered water as part of a three-year trial of 15 GL minimum orders to deliver water security, better plant and pipeline management and steadier prices for Victorians.

The order is based on scientific modelling and advice from Melbourne Water and Melbourne's other water corporations about rainfall, inflows into catchments, population growth and climate change.

Melbourne households will not face additional charges on their water bills for this year or last year's 15 GL order, or the 50GL order made for 2016-17. These orders will instead be funded from the sale of surplus Renewable Energy Certificates.

Rainfall in February was 69 per cent below average with only 18 mm falling around the catchments – this led to reduced streamflow into water storages, down 46 per cent on February last year.

The Bureau of Meteorology's latest three-month seasonal climate outlook also predicts above average autumn temperatures for Melbourne.

Without the 61 billion litres already delivered by Victoria's desalination plant over the past two years, Melbourne's storages would be 3.4 per cent lower today – dropping below 60 per cent.

Victoria's desalination plant delivers water security for Melbourne and surrounding regions through the water grid and is managed to ensure storages do not reach dangerously low levels.

The plant is a key part of the grid, helping to build resilience and avoid the social and economic costs of water restrictions on households, businesses and farmers.

The water crisis in Cape Town in South Africa reaffirms the value of planning ahead to ensure water storage levels don't reach emergency levels.

The Labor Government continues to drive water efficiency, with *Target 155* campaign supporting households to do their bit to reduce water use and help reduce bills.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"We've listened to the science, and will order 15 GL of water for the next financial year to help restore Melbourne's buffer against severe drought."

"The desalination plant boosts Victoria's water supplies, ensuring storages don't drop to dangerously low levels."

"There will be no additional charges to households or changes to water bills due to this year's water order."