

Understanding the Value of Water

Results of customer research will inform our water
price submission 2018-23

Research conducted December 2016 – May 2017

Our approach: Four key stages conducted to explore value

Since 2012 we've been collecting feedback from our customers in different ways, and tracking how customers rate us for satisfaction and value. Over recent years, we know that you haven't rated us highly when it comes to delivering value. We were keen to learn what you care about most and used a few different ways to get the full picture:

1



Information Audit and
Stakeholder Interviews
n=15

2



Workshop with internal
working group to form
ideas for testing

3



Three-week
online community
n=35

4

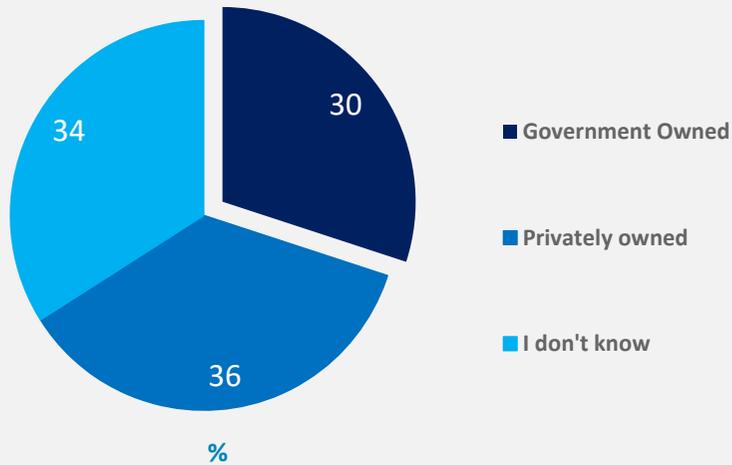


Online quantitative
survey
n=1511

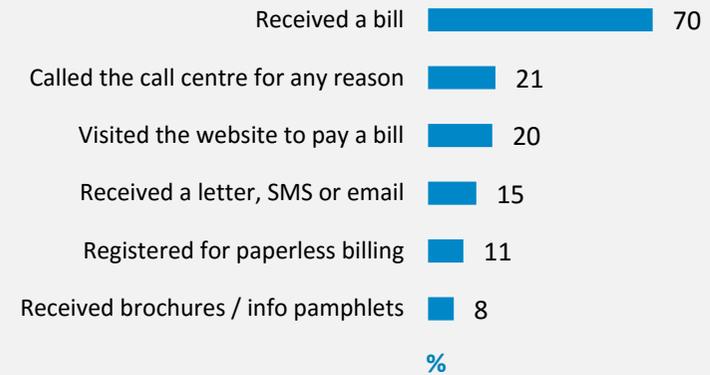
Customers and South East Water

Knowledge of, and engagement with, water companies is **low**

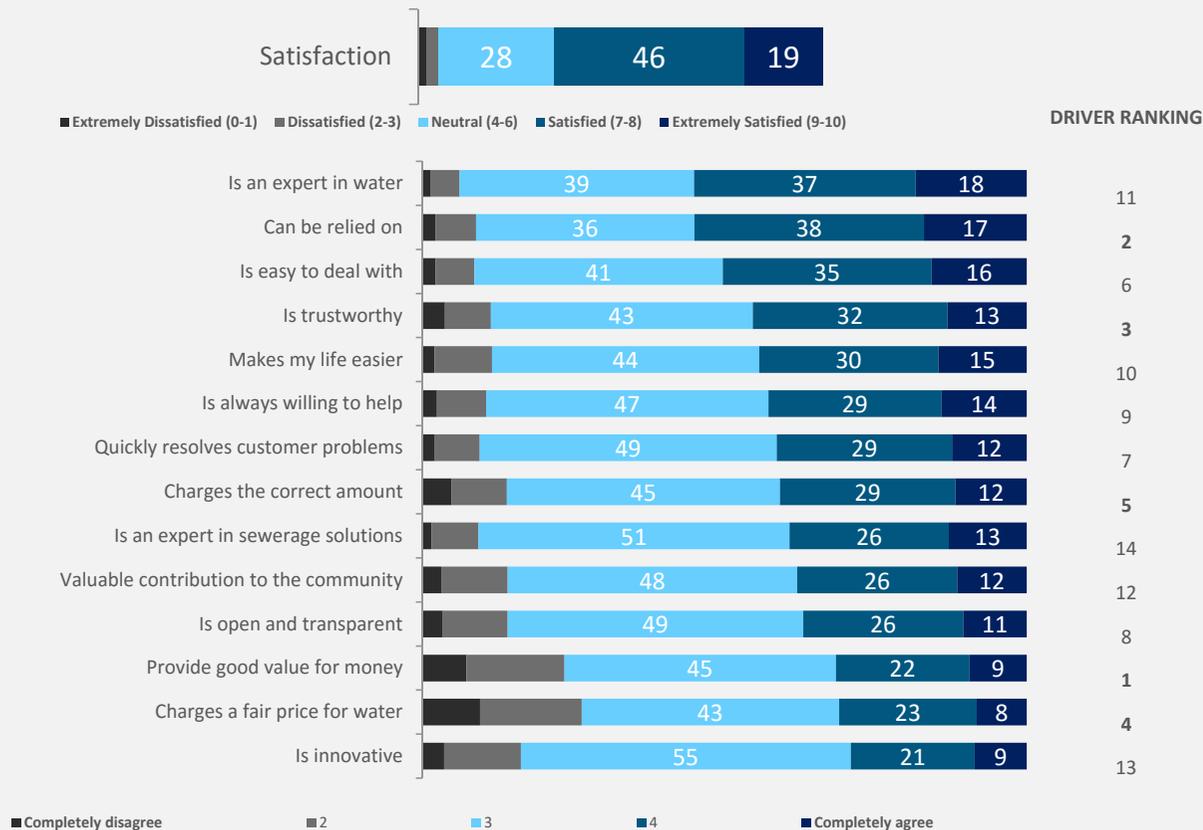
Knowledge of ownership structure



Contact points



Satisfaction is relatively high, but we have some work to do to improve



To understand what drives satisfaction, we analysed South East Water against 14 different drivers of customer satisfaction.

While South East Water is seen as experts and reliable, we're not always seen to be charging a fair price, or as providing good value for money. The main driver for customer satisfaction is value for money – so these results show we have some work to do.

How can we drive **value** for customers?

We asked customers to consider different expectations of South East Water, to make trade-offs between them. Their expectations were grouped into three areas.



A

The Basics

- Safe and clear water
- Fixing faults and emergencies
- Reliable supply
- Reliable meters
- Operationally efficient
- Sewerage is taken away and treated
- Water is always available for firefighting



B

Customer

- Recognition and rewards re: water saving efforts
- Minimise changes to my bill
- Bill clarity
- Check and monitor usage
- Responsiveness
- Greater control over my bill
- Advice and information
- Avoidance of bill shock
- Help paying my bill
- Leak alerts and advice
- Advice on what to do when I have a sewerage block



C

Environment & Community

- Global water initiatives
- Minimising environmental impact
- Protecting the environment
- Contributing to clean beaches and waterways
- Future water quality
- Future reliability
- Improved amenity
- Storm water used effectively
- Ensuring all people had access to water and sewerage in our area

Customers ranked the importance of expectations. These are your top 9:



A

The Basics

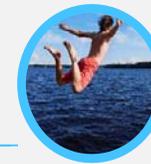
- 1 Safe and clear water customers can rely on
- 3 Focused on operational efficiency
- 4 Sewerage is taken away and treated safely



B

Customer

- 2 Water saving efforts are recognised and rewarded
- 6 Clarity of billing and avoidance of bill shock
- 7 Responsive to customers
- 9 Provision of information and control



C

Environment & Community

- 5 Caring for the environment
- 8 Always there, now and in the future

What customers said about the issues and topics that are most important to them

“

The utility I probably think of the least is water because I have rarely had any issues with supply and, to the best of my memory, I have never had to contact the supplier regarding an issue.”

“

I think it would be really good for companies to give you a good clear presentation of your usage and ways to help you monitor your consumption of utilities (so that you can appreciate how much you use and possible ways of reducing usage). I often find my bills to be perplexing and hard to understand, so anything that can be done to help with this would be good too.”

“

Because only one body CAN deliver water to households, there is no incentive to try and deliver water at a cost effective or competitive price. Water is a government body, and public servants are not the most innovative bodies in the commercial world. (I am not picking on public servants, as I myself am one) I just know they lack innovation and creativity in the workforce, and generally can only deliver a commodity at a more expensive price than a private or commercial venture.”

“

Investing in easier to understand and more accurate billing/home monitoring will build confidence and trust in users and make users feel empowered to do their bit with saving water (good for the environment and also for reducing bills).”

“

I have never paid much attention to the water bill, we just pay it...we have water saving taps and shower heads etc. in the house, but we don't think twice before using water. We constantly have long hot showers and baths, but don't seem to notice a large difference in cost.”

“

For now I feel that we need to do everything we can to ensure that there is always water available in the future. Hands down! It's so important to invest into the future to ensure the best outcome for all generations. Imagine a future where we're recycling, and saving water, and we never have to worry again! This would mean so much for the future generations, which is really important to me.”

“

After funding the annual budget it is just as important to support environmental issues. We have a duty of care to maintain the health of the environment for future generations....I would hope part of this budget would include education to this effect, demonstrating our actions contribute to the larger picture.”



The Basics

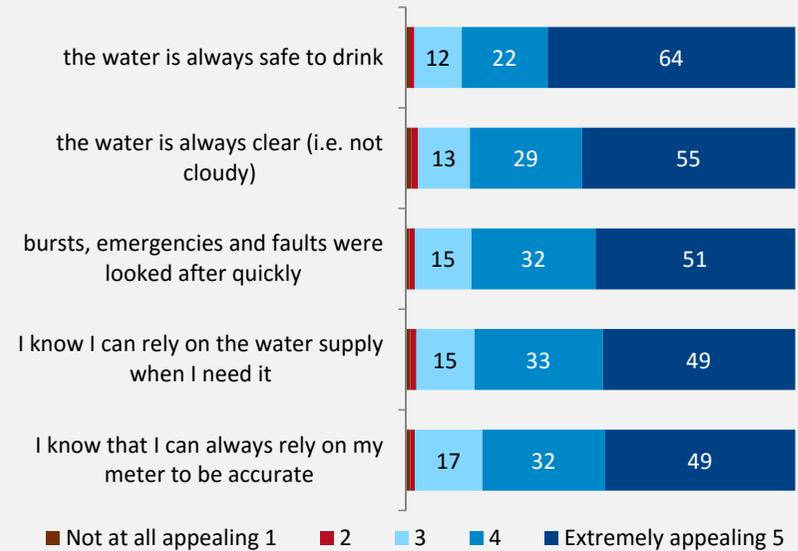
And some of the results... Safe and clear water customers can rely on

Victorians are extremely proud of their water quality

They expect our water to be safe and clean to drink

Quick management of supply disruptions is a key driver of satisfaction

Water is considered the most reliable utility.





The Basics

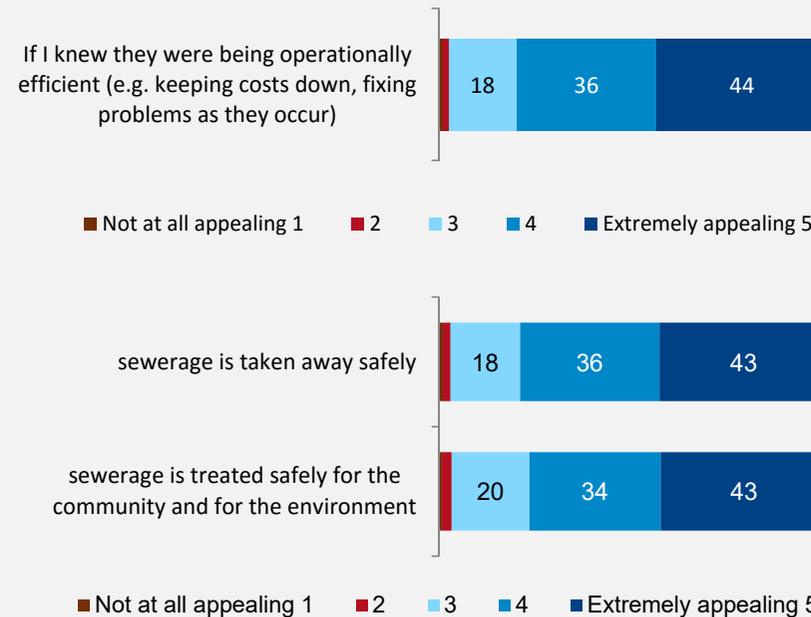
Focus on operational **efficiency** and ensure that sewage is taken away and **treated safely**

Priority is to keep costs down and fix problems

Expectation of making the network stronger and more secure

Sewerage services are seen as a base requirement

Sewerage is an invisible service





Environment & Community

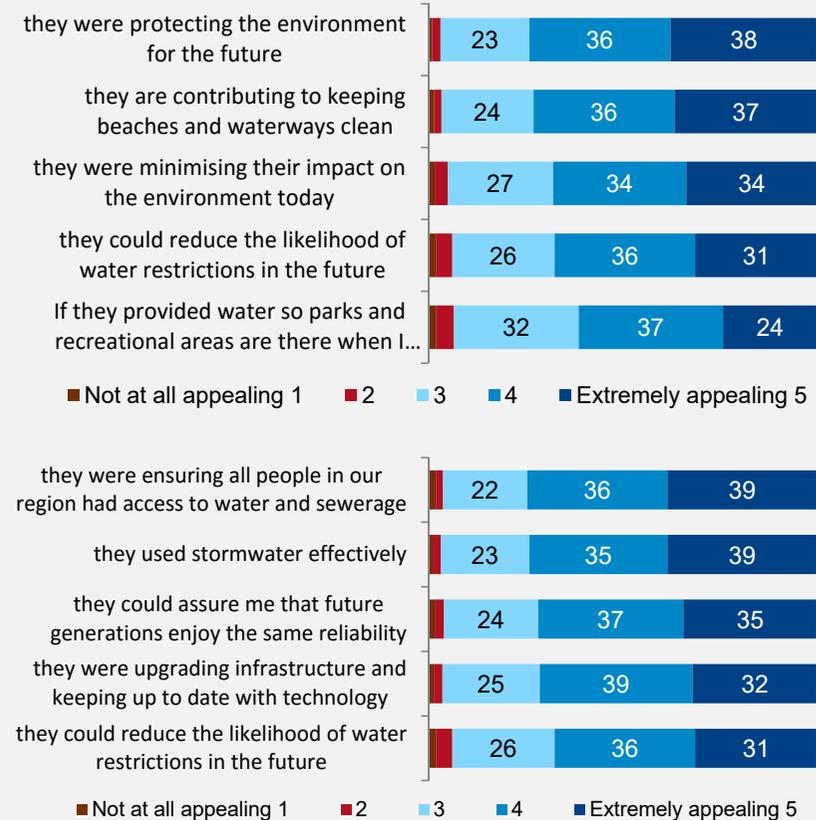
Caring for the environment; and always there, now and in the future

The local environment is more important than the global environment.

Focus investment into protecting and cleaning Victoria's Waterways and Bays

There is **clear demand** for water to never stop coming out of the tap

Continued investment into water saving and recycling desirable



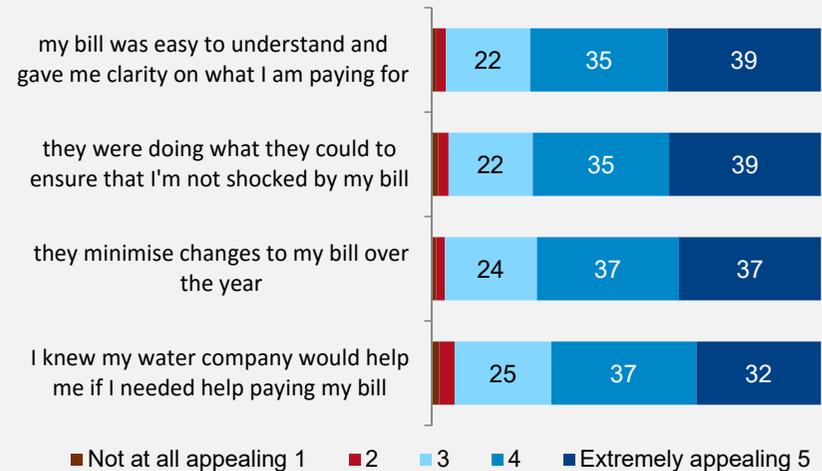


Customer

Clearer bills and avoid **bill shock**

A clearer unambiguous bill would:

- Give confidence – because they understand it
- Empower – because they can act on this understanding
- Enhances SE Water brand – because they made things simple for me





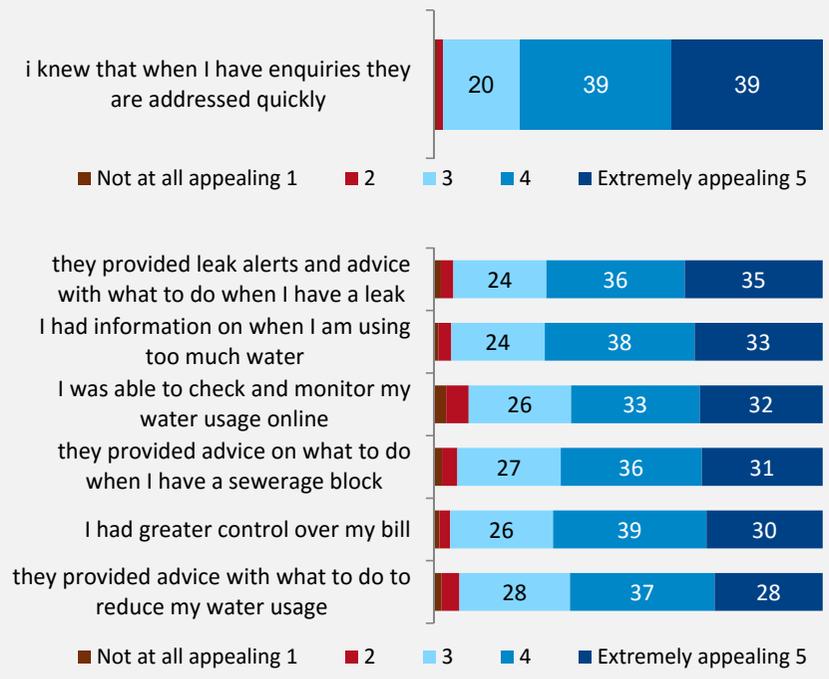
Responsive to customers; give customers information and control

The number one driver of satisfaction is quick resolution.

There are very strong calls for **bill simplification**

Ability to **monitor** usage desirable

Knowledge is power



What we did next...

Grouping nine expectations into four

We unpacked how customers ranked their priorities, through online forums with customers and workshops with employees. We were able to group these nine priority areas into four key areas that customers want us to focus on:

- Safe and reliable water and sewerage services
- A positive customer experience
- Supporting a sustainable community
- Efficient and affordable services

Under these areas sit a number of services we currently provide. To understand to what extent customers want us to keep, enhance or reduce these services, we developed a bill simulator for our customers. *Refer to report on outcomes of bill simulator for more details.*

The results of our customer research will be used to inform the services and prices we propose to deliver in our price submission for 2018-23

More research reports available at
yoursay.southeastwater.com.au