

# Waterways and Drainage Charge

## Frequently asked questions

### What does Melbourne Water do?

At Melbourne Water, we are water and so much more. By managing all parts of the water cycle; from providing clean drinking water, treating sewage so we can recover and re-use our valued resources, planning to manage flooding, and keeping all 25,000km of Melbourne's rivers, creeks and catchments healthy, we are essential to our way of life today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

### What is the Waterways and Drainage Charge?

More than two million property owners pay the Waterways and Drainage Charge throughout the Port Phillip and Westernport Region each year. It works out to be only around 30 cents per day for residents within the Urban Growth Boundary, and less than 20 cents per day for residents outside the Urban Growth Boundary.

By paying the Charge, you are enabling us to enhance life and liveability across Greater Melbourne and the surrounding region, from Macedon Ranges down to Phillip Island.

The Waterways and Drainage Charge funds services and programs that support healthy rivers and creeks and a safe and reliable drainage system as a public service. Everyone benefits either directly or indirectly from the services and programs funded by the Waterways and Drainage Charge.

Your water bill lists this charge under 'other authorities' charges'.

### What is the Urban Growth Boundary?

The Urban Growth Boundary is a government tool used to manage the expansion of Melbourne. The boundary defines where development can and cannot occur, protecting Melbourne's highly valued open spaces, farming, and conservation and recreation areas.

Greater Melbourne is the area within the Urban Growth Boundary. Example council areas outside the UGB are Macedon Ranges, Greater Geelong and Bass Coast.

## Who benefits from the Charge?

Works are prioritised on a whole-of-region approach for the greater good of the region. Works delivered upstream will deliver positive outcomes to river health in other places.

Spreading the costs across the whole region is the fairest possible approach as everyone benefits from healthy waterways and a safe and reliable drainage system.

Each year, we carry out works across each of the following 38 Local Government Areas:

- Banyule
- Bass Coast
- Baw Baw
- Bayside
- Boroondara
- Brimbank
- Cardinia
- Casey
- Dandenong
- Darebin
- Frankston
- Geelong
- Glen Eira
- Hobsons Bay
- Hume
- Kingston
- Knox
- Macedon Ranges
- Manningham
- Maribyrnong
- Maroondah
- Melbourne
- Melton
- Mitchell
- Monash
- Moonee Valley
- Moorabool
- Moreland
- Mornington Peninsula
- Nillumbik
- Port Philip
- South Gippsland
- Stonnington
- Whitehorse
- Whittlesea
- Wyndham
- Yarra Ranges
- Yarra

## What's happening in my area?

To find out what activity Melbourne Water is undertaking in your area, including waterways and drainage works, please visit [www.melbournewater.com.au/nearme](http://www.melbournewater.com.au/nearme)

## I don't live in metropolitan Melbourne. Why should I pay?

The waterways and drainage boundary extends from high up in the Yarra Ranges across to Ballan in the west, right across to Tarago in the east, and includes Phillip Island and the Mornington Peninsula in the south.

Everyone in Greater Melbourne benefits from a well-managed drainage network and healthy waterways. The Waterways and Drainage Charge is the fairest way of funding these services and is approved by the independent pricing regulator: the Essential Services Commission.

## **I have a water/septic tank. Why should I pay?**

The Waterways and Drainage Charge is not related to water and sewerage charges. The charge is a separate charge collected by the local water utilities on Melbourne Water's behalf.

## **How much is the Waterways and Drainage Charge?**

The price you'll pay will depend on whether you are a residential customer, a rural customer or a non-residential customer.

To view our current prices, please visit our website:

[melbournewater.com.au/about/prices-and-charges/waterways-and-drainage-charge/waterways-and-drainage-prices](http://melbournewater.com.au/about/prices-and-charges/waterways-and-drainage-charge/waterways-and-drainage-prices)

## **Has my charge gone up since last year and if it has, why?**

As a provider of an essential service, our revenue is set by the Essential Services Commission – Victoria's independent regulator. Any price increases are in line with Essential Services Commission approved price movements plus inflation.

## **What is an occupancy?**

Charges are to be applied to the rateable land in respect of each separate occupancy for both residential and non-residential properties.

Retail water businesses rely on council classifications as to what constitutes a 'separate occupancy' for the purposes of applying charges.

## **How is the Net Annual Value (NAV) of each property produced?**

The current NAV value of your property as determined by council, is converted to its value in 1990 using Victorian Valuer-General indices. This 1990 value is multiplied by the rate determined by Melbourne Water and approved by the Essential Services Commission each year to establish your annual charge rate.

## What can I do if I can't afford the Charge?

Your retail water company will be able to assist you with ways to manage your bill, including to set up a payment plan.

## What's my legislative requirement?

Section 259 of the *Water Act 1989* (Part 13) permits Melbourne Water to levy waterways and drainage charges on properties within its "Waterway Management District".

All properties deemed rateable under the meaning of *the Local Government Act 1989* are liable for the Waterways and Drainage Charge. So, if you pay council rates, the charge will apply.

*Water Act 1989*, Section 259, parts 9 and 10 state:

(9) An Authority may in respect of a property, separately impose fees under a tariff or development tariff in respect of each separate occupancy on that Property.

(10) In determining what constitutes a separate occupancy, the Authority must use the relevant principles set out in the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*.

NB: A separate occupancy is a dwelling, either occupied or vacant, on each council rated property.

### Keep up to date with what's happening

For more information, visit  
[www.melbournewater.com/wwdc](http://www.melbournewater.com/wwdc)



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