

# A health warning

## Blue Water

Blue water may have a cloudy, blue tinged appearance, possibly with blue coloured particles in the water. It can also taste bitter and metallic.

The incidence of blue water is believed to be caused by the corrosion of copper water pipes.

The problem seems to be restricted to cold water pipes and blue water must not be consumed either by drinking or using in food preparation.

Drinking blue water may cause vomiting, diarrhoea and weakness. Exposure to high concentrations of copper for a number of months can cause liver damage in young infants.

While blue water is potentially serious, the solution is often simple. Customers can generally manage the problem by simply running the tap or flushing the toilet until the water is clear again.

Blue water is most likely to appear when the water has been sitting in copper pipes for a prolonged period. This can occur when the property has been vacant or at other times when the tap hasn't been used.

If you experience signs of blue water, please contact Yarra Valley Water immediately on **132 762**.

# The quality of your water



**Yarra Valley  
Water**

*Yarra Valley Water is Melbourne's largest retail water company. Every year, we supply on average 200 gegalitres (200 billion litres) of water to 1.5 million people who live and work in Melbourne's northern and eastern suburbs.*

*Water quality is of the highest priority at Yarra Valley Water and this is reflected in our efforts to bring you the purest, freshest water every day of the year.*

*Our water quality must comply with the strict standards and guidelines set by our Operating Licence and the State Government's Department of Human Services. These standards and guidelines are based on the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines.*

*We test water monthly and results are forwarded to the Government's health experts. These results clearly show that we exceed the water quality targets in our Operating Licence, with key microbiological parameters showing a compliance rate of 99.7 per cent over the last twelve months, well above the required 95 per cent.*

*Our commitment is to deliver the best possible water from the Yarra Valley to our customers.*

# Getting the best water to our customers

Melbourne is one of very few places in the world with water supplied from pristine mountain catchments, protected from the pressures of urban and rural development. The methods of harvesting and storing means that the water needs only a minimal amount of treatment to ensure it is safe for drinking.

We purchase the water in bulk from the wholesaler, Melbourne Water. Supplies for our region are principally harvested from the Upper Yarra and Thomson Reservoirs, with a small amount from the Yan Yean and Winneke Reservoirs. This water, which is extracted from the Yarra River at Yering Gorge, is subjected to a higher level of treatment, to meet World Health Organisation guidelines.

The water travels from the major reservoirs to our customers through a complex network of sealed water mains, covered service reservoirs and smaller reticulation mains.

Yarra Valley Water's supply distribution network is made up of 9,427 kilometres of water pipelines, 62 pumping stations, 52 reservoirs and tanks and 34 pressure reducing stations.

We have ongoing programs to clean, flush and replace water mains to ensure we have the best possible system of transporting fresh, pure water to you.



Quality  
Endorsed  
Company

ISO 9001 Lic QEC 4568  
Standards Australia

Yarra Valley Water  
Private Bag 1  
Mitcham Victoria 3132  
Service Assistance Centre  
**132 762**

General enquiries  
**131 721**

Website: [www.yvw.com.au](http://www.yvw.com.au)



Certified  
Environmental  
Management

AS/NZS ISO 14001 (Int): 1995  
Lic C0041  
Standards Australia



**Yarra Valley  
Water**

## Monitoring your water day-to-day

We have in place a comprehensive monitoring program, which means you enjoy one of the best drinking water supplies in the world.

Water supplied by Yarra Valley Water is continually tested for microbiological, aesthetic and chemical quality.

- Microbiological parameters are used to gauge possible contamination from human or animal waste.
- Aesthetic parameters monitor the colour, odour, taste and clarity of the water.
- Chemical parameters measure pH (alkaline/acid balance) and levels of substances such as fluoride, chlorine, iron, aluminium and manganese.

We provide the Office of the Regulator-General and the Department of Human Services with monthly results of our water quality monitoring programs.

We also publish an annual Water Quality Report, available by calling **131 721**, which details the results of tests in your individual region or suburb. Our web site located at [www.yvw.com.au](http://www.yvw.com.au) also contains this information.

The quality of your drinking water is of paramount importance to us and it is our major objective to supply customers with safe and pleasant water.

## What is added to your water

Customers are often interested in the processes used to ensure their water is safe, clear, odour-free and pleasant to drink.

Health and safety are the highest priorities with water quality and to make sure your water is safe to drink, small amounts of chlorine are added. Chlorine is added to remove harmful bacteria and keep the water free from waterborne diseases.

For a small amount of water that we supply (about 10 per cent), aluminium sulphate is added to the water to remove sediments and make it clean and clear.

Small amounts of fluoride are added to the water at the direction of the health authorities, for dental health reasons. Lime is also added to the water during the fluoridation process to neutralise pH levels.

## Working with our customers for continuous improvement

While we undertake rigorous testing programs and have a policy of continually improving our service and water quality, we do not have a perfect system.

Consultation with community and customer groups is a fundamental part of our improvement plans and we encourage our customers to notify us of quality shortfalls or concerns.

We have established a comprehensive set of emergency procedures to respond immediately to any incidents of poor water quality.

We regularly receive enquiries from our customers regarding water quality. The majority of these are addressed over the phone or can be rectified by flushing a local water main.

Most of these calls are related to the colour of the water, with the remainder generally concerned with taste and odour.

## Common water quality issues

The following issues are common to water companies around the world and may be experienced occasionally by our customers:

- White water (milky/cloudy appearance) is usually due to tiny air bubbles in the water. This can occur when mains repair work traps air in the water pipes. The problem generally goes away by itself or when the main is flushed. Air in water is harmless and a glass of white water will clear quickly.
- Brown water (tan/muddy appearance) can be due to sediment or particles in the water main or, possibly, to rust from older galvanised-iron plumbing pipes. Sediment can be cleared by Yarra Valley Water flushing the local main. Brown water caused by rusting plumbing pipes can be managed by flushing internal taps or by seeking advice from a plumber.
- Taste and odour in water can occasionally occur, with a chlorine-like or earthy/musty taste and/or odour. While only small amounts of chlorine are added to the water, levels can fluctuate from time to time giving a slight odour. Earthy or musty taste/odours are generally caused by sediment or occasionally by harmless microbes. Taste and odour problems can be rectified by Yarra Valley Water flushing the local main.
- Staining of washing and/or bathroom fittings is generally caused by deposits dislodged from domestic plumbing or from the water main. Blue stains are derived from copper pipes. Brown stains occur with galvanised-iron pipes.

If you have any concerns about the quality of your water, please call Yarra Valley Water on **132 762** and we will work with you to find a fast and effective solution.