



ABN 93 066 902 501

# PRICING HANDBOOK

## 2011/12

2011/12 Edition 2 – March 2012

**CONTENTS**

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- About This Handbook* ..... - 3 -
  - Intended audience ..... - 3 -
  - Definitions, acronyms and abbreviations ..... - 3 -
  - References..... - 4 -
- 1. Introduction** ..... - 5 -
  - 1.1 Price regulation**..... - 5 -
  - 1.2 Price Determination**..... - 5 -
  - 1.3 Business Characteristics**..... - 5 -
- 2. Regulated Services: Principal Charges** ..... - 8 -
  - 2.1 Water supply** ..... - 8 -
    - 2.1.1 Unchlorinated Water ..... - 8 -
  - 2.2 Sewerage** ..... - 9 -
    - 2.2.1 Residential & Non-Residential Sewage Disposal Charge (SDC)..... - 9 -
  - 2.3 Recycled Water (supplied via a third pipe)** ..... - 11 -
  - 2.4 Trade Waste** ..... - 11 -
    - 2.4.1 Application fee for a trade waste agreement..... - 12 -
    - 2.4.2 Trade Waste Contract Fees ..... - 12 -
    - 2.4.3 Trade Waste Discharge Fees ..... - 12 -
    - 2.4.4 Trade Waste Time and Material based charges ..... - 13 -
    - 2.4.5 Food Waste Disposal Charges..... - 14 -
    - 2.4.6 Retention of Access to Trade Waste Services ..... - 15 -
    - 2.4.7 Asset Protection Charge ..... - 15 -
  - 2.5 New Customer Contributions (NCC)**..... - 15 -
    - 2.5.1 Financing costs associated with bringing forward the provision of shared infrastructure assets for non-incremental development..... - 16 -
- 3. Miscellaneous Services**..... - 17 -
  - 3.1 Price Methodology** ..... - 17 -
  - 3.2 Applications and Information**..... - 17 -
  - 3.3 Potable and Recycled Water - Meters**..... - 19 -
  - 3.4 Potable and Recycled Water - Tee and Valve Insertion**..... - 21 -
  - 3.5 Potable and Recycled Water – Fire Service Products** ..... - 21 -
  - 3.6 Potable and Recycled Water – Other Products** ..... - 21 -
  - 3.7 Other Products and Services** ..... - 22 -
  - 3.8 Chargeable Works** ..... - 24 -
  - 3.9 Freedom of Information (FOI) Charges** ..... - 24 -
  - 3.10 Restricting or Restoring a Water Supply (for non-payment)**..... - 25 -
  - 3.11 Customer Requested Tests of Water Supply**..... - 25 -
- 4. Hardship schemes and Concessions** ..... - 27 -
  - 4.1 Hardship Policy**..... - 27 -

<b>4.2</b>	<b>Customer Support.....</b>	<b>- 27 -</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Hardship Programs .....</b>	<b>- 27 -</b>
4.3.1	Early Intervention .....	- 27 -
4.3.2	Payment arrangements based on affordability .....	- 28 -
4.3.3	Kildonan United Care relationship – foundation of the programme .....	- 28 -
4.3.4	Innovation payment schemes to assist customers.....	- 28 -
4.3.7	Face-to-face support.....	- 28 -
4.3.8	Continuous Improvements.....	- 28 -
4.3.9	External assessment.....	- 29 -
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Government assistance schemes and rebates .....</b>	<b>- 29 -</b>
4.4.1	Government assistance schemes.....	- 29 -
4.4.2	Current Government Concessions and Rebates .....	- 29 -
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Pensioner/Concession Cardholder .....</b>	<b>- 30 -</b>

## About This Handbook

This Handbook provides a complete list of Yarra Valley Water's products, services and prices.

Section 1 of this Handbook provides a brief overview of pricing specifically focusing on Yarra Valley Water's function as a water and sewerage service provider and the roles of the Essential Services Commission (ESC) and the Victorian Government.

Section 2 outlines the charges for Yarra Valley Water's principal regulated services. Regulated services are those prescribed and declared services listed in the Water Industry Regulatory Order 2003 where the Essential Services Commission has the power to regulate price, different standards and conditions of service and supply. For Yarra Valley Water, these services include potable and recycled water supply, sewerage services and developer charges.

Section 3 outlines the charges for Yarra Valley Water's miscellaneous services.

Section 4 provides information on Yarra Valley Water's Hardship Schemes and Concessions.

We have endeavoured to ensure that all information presented is current and accurate. New products and services may be introduced at any time during the year. It is therefore advisable to check the currency of information with Yarra Valley Water by visiting the web site at [www.yarravalleywater.com.au](http://www.yarravalleywater.com.au) or by calling 131 721.

### Intended audience

This Handbook has been compiled for the use of Yarra Valley Water's customers, staff and contractors/partners.

### Definitions, acronyms and abbreviations

The following terms and acronyms are referred to in this handbook:

BOE	Build Over Easement
CSA	Complete Serving Advice
DHS	Department of Human Services
DTF	Department of Treasury and Finance
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
ESC	Essential Services Commission
MW	Melbourne Water
NAV	Net Annual Value
NCC	New Customer Contributions
RRP	Recommended Retail Price
SDC	Sewage Disposal Charge
SoO	Statement of Obligations
ITDS	Inorganic Total Dissolved Solids
TKN	Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen
YVW	Yarra Valley Water
WIRO	Water Industry Regulatory Order 2003

## References

The following documents have been referred to in this Handbook:

- Essential Services Commission Act 2001
- Essential Services Commission – Yarra Valley Water Determination 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2013
- Freedom of Information Act 1982
- State Owned Enterprises Act 1992
- Victorian Government White Paper, Securing our Water Future Together, Our Water Our Future
- Water Industry Act 1994
- Water Industry Regulations 2006
- Water Industry Regulatory Order 2003
- Yarra Valley Water, Hardship Policy
- Yarra Valley Water, Customer Charter

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Price regulation

Yarra Valley Water commenced operations on 1 January 1995 and has an exclusive Operating Licence to provide water and sewerage services within a defined geographic area covering over 4,000 square kilometres across Melbourne's northern and eastern suburbs. Yarra Valley Water is owned by the State Government of Victoria and operates commercially under a Board of Directors appointed by our shareholder.

As a State Owned Company under the State Owned Enterprises Act 1992, the Company is subject to Corporations Law. The Company's Operating Licence is issued by the Minister for Water under the Water Industry Act 1994.

The metropolitan water industry is a regulated industry and is subject to the Essential Services Commission Act 2001 for pricing, customer service and comparative competition

### 1.2 Price Determination

On 26 June 2009, the ESC made its determination on pricing for principle services for a four year period commencing on 1 July 2009.

In addition to its principal services, Yarra Valley Water provides a range of other services that are associated with prescribed services. Prices for some of these products have been approved by the ESC while the prices of other products were set by Yarra Valley Water using the ESC's pricing principles.

### 1.3 Business Characteristics

Yarra Valley Water is the largest of Melbourne's three retail water companies and provides water and sewerage services to more than 1.6 million people. The total customer base is expected to grow at an average of 1.3% per annum.

***As at June 2011 the customer base comprised:***

	Domestic	Non Domestic	Total
<b>Water</b>	649,000	49,000	<b>698,000</b>
<b>Sewerage</b>	590,000	42,000	<b>632,000</b>

Within our licensed area, Yarra Valley Water provides, constructs, operates, manages and maintains systems and services for:

- supply of water
- collection and transfer of sewage
- collection and transfer of Trade Waste
- treatment and disposal of sewage
- supply of recycled water

Yarra Valley Water has major contracts with Melbourne Water Corporation (MW) for the supply of water and the treatment and disposal of sewage. We also have strong operating relationships with key suppliers and contractors including those providing:

- maintenance of water supply and sewerage systems
- mechanical and electrical services
- information technology services
- bill production and mail out
- meter reading services
- design and construct services
- tapplings (water connections EasyAccess outlets)
- plumbing stores

Our key stakeholders include:	
Victorian Government	Our sole shareholder
Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF)	DTF monitors and reviews our financial performance on behalf of the Victorian Government
Department of Health (DH)	We work with DH to ensure we meet drinking water quality standards and also consult with the Department on our financial hardship programs.
Essential Services Commission (ESC)	The ESC is the Victorian water industry regulator. The Commission sets our prices and develops and monitors performance standards for the industry.
Environment Protection Authority (EPA)	We work with the EPA to ensure that we comply with environmental standards.
Yarra Valley Water Board of Directors	Our Board steers the direction of our Company and provides advice and assistance on key business decisions.
Employees	Our employees are the backbone of our business. They come from a wide range of disciplines and work together to achieve our business objectives.
Unions	Our union groups aim to protect the working rights of their members
Melbourne Water	Our wholesale water supply and sewerage collection services supplier
Customers	Our customers comprise of residential, commercial and industry individuals and groups
Welfare agencies and financial counsellors	People and organisations who provide important financial advice and support to our customers.
Community Advisory Group	The group represents a broad section of our community. It provides feedback on business issues and customer concerns.
Community and environmental groups and representatives	We work with a number of community representatives to ensure that the community is involved in the decision making process.

<b>Our key stakeholders include:</b>	
Local Government	We have 15 local government municipalities in our area. We work with local government to develop strategies for servicing growth and sustainability.
Suppliers and Contractors	We have several key business partners
Property and land developers	We work with property and land developers to develop sustainable water supply and sewerage service solutions in our service area.
Other water retailers	We work together with other water retailers on joint water initiatives for the benefit of Melbourne
Savewater!™	The alliance helps us to deliver water conservation initiatives to the community.

## **2. Regulated Services: Principal Charges**

For both residential and non residential customers a two-part tariff structure is used for water, recycled water and sewerage charges. The total charge for each service comprises of a fixed service charge and a variable usage/disposal charge.

Trade waste charges are structured in a similar manner to water supply and sewerage charges. They comprise of a fixed trade waste contract fee which is based on the annual discharge volume and charges based on the strength and volume of trade waste being discharged.

Yarra Valley Water bills and collects Waterways and Drainage charges and the Parks charges on behalf of Melbourne Water Corporation and the Parks Victoria respectively. Both the charges are based on a property's Net Annual Value (NAV) at 1990 levels of valuation and are payable by the property owner.

### **2.1 Water supply**

Since October 2004, a residential pricing structure has been in place to promote water conservation. The structure comprises of a three step block tariff to ensure water efficient customers are rewarded with lower bills.

Block tariffs are based on a user pays system. For water use above a specific level of consumption, a higher price will be paid. Block tariffs are widely regarded as the fairest and most effective way to price water to encourage conservation. They also recognise the need to provide water for essential domestic use at an affordable price.

There are three block tariffs that increase as water usage increases. In each quarter, residential customers will pay \$1.7756 per 1,000 litres for water use up to an amount equal to 440 litres times the number of days in the meter reading period. Any use in excess of this will be charged at \$2.0832 per 1,000 litres up to 880 litres times the number of days in the period. Water in excess of this will be charged at \$3.0778 per 1,000 litres. The number of days in the meter reading period can vary between 85 and 95 days.

#### **2.1.1 Unchlorinated Water**

Some of our customers are remote from water reticulation mains and are provided with a water supply direct from Melbourne Water aqueducts. This water is untreated and is intended for non-potable purposes.

**Water Service and Usage Charge for 2011/12 are as follows:**

	<b>Charge (\$)</b>
Residential Water Service Charge (\$/annum)	120.26
Residential Water Usage - Block 1 (0-440 litres/day) (\$/kilolitre) Up to approximately 40 kilolitres per quarter	1.7756
Residential Water Usage - Block 2 (441-880 litres/day) (\$/kilolitre) Between approximately 40 kilolitres and 80 kilolitres per quarter	2.0832
Residential Water Usage - Block 3 (881 + litres/day) (\$/kilolitre) More than approximately 80 kilolitres per quarter	3.0778
Non-residential Water Service Charge (\$/annum)	195.21
Non-residential Water Usage (\$/kilolitre)	1.9134
Unchlorinated Water (\$/kilolitre)	1.6602

## **2.2 Sewerage**

For both residential and non-residential customers, the sewage disposal charge is based on a sewage volume that is calculated rather than directly measured.

### **2.2.1 Residential & Non-Residential Sewage Disposal Charge (SDC)**

The Sewage Disposal Charge contributes to the cost of the transfer, treatment and disposal of sewage discharged into the sewerage system. This includes wastewater discharged from the toilet, bathroom, kitchen and laundry fixtures into the sewerage system.

The SDC is a volumetric charge applied to the estimated sewage discharge from a property. The estimation is based on the volume of water entering a property and avoids the impracticality of individually metering sewage flows.

A formula is used to calculate the volume of sewage being discharged to the sewer for an average customer in Yarra Valley Water's licensed area. In relation to residential customers, the formula recognises that the proportion of water discharged to the sewer varies from month to month and with the level of water restrictions, attributable primarily to the amount of water being used outdoors. So in summer months less of the water entering a property is discharged to the sewer as this is the peak usage time for watering gardens.

Under water restrictions, there is much less garden watering and thus a higher proportion of water entering a property is returned to the sewerage system. In 2009/10, we amended the seasonal indices to reflect each stage of water restrictions that will take effect as restriction levels are changed. Where customers are supplied with recycled water via a third pipe, they are not restricted in their outdoor use and thus the proportion of total water (potable plus recycled) entering a property and discharged into the sewerage system is less than other properties in times of restrictions. Separate seasonal indices apply to these properties.

The formula for calculating the volume of sewage from residential properties is:

$$VS_R = VW \times SF \times DF$$

Where:

**VW** is the volume of water supplied to the property (total of potable and recycled);

**SF** is the seasonal factor derived by dividing the number of days in a meter reading period by the sum of the number of days which fall within each particular month within the meter reading period multiplied by the relevant seasonal index

**DF** is the discharge factor

#### Seasonal Indices – Residential Properties

Month	House						Unit		
	Recycled Water Property	Restriction Level				Recycled Water Property	Restriction Level		
		PWSR*	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3a		Stage 4	PWSR* to Stage 3a	Stage 4
January	1.7	1.575	1.45	1.325	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.0
February	1.7	1.575	1.45	1.325	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.0
March	1.5	1.425	1.35	1.275	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.0
April	1.2	1.175	1.15	1.125	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0
May	1.1	1.075	1.05	1.025	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
June	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
July	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
August	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
September	1.1	1.075	1.05	1.025	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
October	1.2	1.175	1.15	1.125	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0
November	1.4	1.325	1.25	1.175	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0
December	1.5	1.425	1.35	1.275	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.0

\* Permanent Water Saving Rules

#### Discharge Factor – Residential Properties

Quarterly Equivalent Volume of Water	Discharge Factor
Less than or equal to 125 kilolitres	0.9
More than 125 kilolitres and less than or equal to 250 kilolitres	0.9 less 0.0036 per kilolitre in excess of 125 kilolitres
More than 250 kilolitres	0.45

The formula for calculating the volume of sewage from non-residential properties is:

$$VS_{NR} = (VW - VTW) \times DF$$

Where:

**VW** is the volume of water supplied to the property (total of potable and recycled);

**VTW** is the volume of Trade Waste discharge from the property

**DF** is the discharge factor

Non-residential customers that are not required to have a trade waste agreement have their SDC calculated using the following formula:

$$VS_{NR} = VW \times DF$$

Where:

**VW** is the volume of water supplied to the property (total of potable and recycled);

**DF** is the discharge factor predetermined on the type of business (in most cases, 90%)

***Sewerage Service and Disposal Charges for 2011/12 are as follows:***

	Charge (\$)
Residential Sewerage Service Charge (\$/annum)	321.50
Residential Sewage Disposal Charge SDC (\$/kilolitre)	1.9546
Non-residential Sewerage Service Charge (\$/annum)	500.34
Non-residential Sewerage Disposal Charge SDC (\$/kilolitre)	1.8978

### 2.3 Recycled Water (supplied via a third pipe)

Yarra Valley Water is committed to providing alternatives to potable water where practically and economically feasible and where the alternative is fit for purpose. In some areas, customers are supplied with class A recycled water for outdoor use and some indoor use (e.g. toilet flushing)

***Recycled Water Service and Usage Charges for 2011/12 are as follows:***

	Charge (\$)
Residential Recycled Water Service Charge (\$/annum)	21.78
Residential Recycled Water Usage (\$/kilolitre)	1.7756
Non-residential Recycled Water Service Charge (\$/annum)	21.78
Non-residential Recycled Water Usage (\$/kilolitre)	1.7756

Other recycled water miscellaneous services are described in section 3 of this handbook.

### 2.4 Trade Waste

Trade waste is wastewater produced from the operations of industry and commercial businesses and is usually more contaminated than normal domestic sewage. It may contain chemicals, metals, high organic loads, fats, greases or detergents. The presence of large amounts of these substances in the sewerage system increases the risk of environmental damage and increases the cost and risk associated with sewage treatment. Trade waste must be extensively treated at a sewage treatment plant before it can be safely recycled or disposed to the environment. Managing trade waste risk is a significant issue involving continual monitoring of discharges, education and assistance to customers.

Trade waste charges are structured in a similar manner to water, recycled water and sewerage charges. They comprise of a fixed trade waste contract fee which is based on the annual estimated trade waste volume and trade waste discharge fees, based on the strength and volume of trade waste being discharged.

#### 2.4.1 Application fee for a trade waste agreement

New trade waste customers and existing customers wishing to vary their agreement, pay an application fee that contributes to the cost of assessing the impact of the trade waste discharge on the sewerage transfer and treatment systems.

***Application fee for trade waste agreements for 2011/12 are as follows:***

<b>Maximum daily discharge specified in application</b>	<b>Charge (\$)</b>
Less than or equal to 0.5kilolitre/day	0.00
More than 0.5kilolitre/day and less than or equal to 4 kilolitres/day	59.27
More than 4 kilolitres/day and less than or equal to 20 kilolitres/day	144.94
More than 20 kilolitres/day and less than or equal to 50 kilolitres/day	335.56
More than 50 kilolitres/day and less than or equal to 100 kilolitres/day	369.73
More than 100 kilolitres/day and less than or equal to 1000 kilolitres/day	1,456.11
More than 1,000 kilolitres/day	2,912.86

#### 2.4.2 Trade Waste Contract Fees

All trade waste customers pay an annual fee to cover the operational costs incurred in the regulation, maintenance and consultation of trade waste customers. Customers are subject to a stepped fee based on the annual estimated trade waste volume, with high volume customers paying the highest fees.

***Trade Waste Contract Fees for 2010/11 are as follows:***

<b>Trade waste contract fee</b>	<b>Charge (\$)</b>
Trade Waste Contract Charge < 2,500 kilolitres/year (\$/annum)	529.46
Trade Waste Contract Charge 2,500.1 – 25,000 kilolitres/year (\$/annum)	1,589.81
Trade Waste Contract Charge 25,000.1 – 100,000 kilolitres/year (\$/annum)	5,301.42
Trade Waste Contract Charge > 100, 000 kilolitres/year (\$/annum)	15,905.41

#### 2.4.3 Trade Waste Discharge Fees

Discharge fees for trade waste are related to the cost of treating the discharge and depend on the volume of trade waste (measured in kilolitres) and the load of the pollutants contained within the waste, (measured in kilograms).

Category B trade waste customers are not subject to volumetric and load based trade waste charges.

**Trade Waste Discharge Fees for 2011/12 are as follows:**

<b>Trade waste discharge fees</b>	<b>Charge (\$)</b>
Volume (\$/kilolitre)	0.9768
Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) (\$/kg)	0.7631
Suspended Solids (SS) (\$/kg)	0.4442
Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN) (\$/kg)	2.0628
Inorganic Total Dissolved Solids (ITDS) (\$/kg)	0.0318

#### **2.4.4 Trade Waste Time and Material based charges**

Trade Waste charges on a time and material basis will apply to non-standard trade waste management and can include, but not be limited to, instances such as:

1. Trade Waste Locked Batch discharge management;
2. Trade Waste Variation processing; and
3. Trade Waste Non-Compliance Management

##### **2.4.4.1 Trade Waste Locked Batch discharge management**

Site visits by Yarra Valley Water's trade waste officers can be required to check locked batch compliance prior to discharge.

Please note that a minimum of two hours will be charged for each visit on any day. If visits are conducted on a public holiday, Sunday rates will apply.

##### **2.4.4.2 Trade Waste Variation processing**

Trade Waste Variations from the Trade Waste Standard may be requested by trade waste customers from time to time. To recover the cost to process these variations requested Yarra Valley Water shall reserve the right to charge the customer on a time and material basis. The payment of the variation processing charge is independent of the outcome of the variation request.

Please note that a minimum of two hours will be charged for each request if the charge is applied.

##### **2.4.4.3 Trade Waste Non-Compliance Management**

The Trade Waste non-compliance process is implemented in instances where Trade Waste Dischargers do not comply with their legal requirements either under the relevant legislation (Water Industry Act 1994 and Water Industry Regulations 2006) or the requirements contained within their Trade Waste Agreement or Consent. This may range from (but not be limited to) sample non-compliance, where the Trade Waste discharge is adjudged not to comply with the conditions stipulated in the Agreement or Consent, to a customer not providing meter readings, sample results or maintenance or calibration certificates at the required frequency.

The Trade Waste Stage 2 Non-Compliance Management process is implemented in instances where Trade Waste customers continue to have reoccurring non-compliance events after initial notice and warnings have been issued. This stage of non-compliance involves that the customer being requested to attend a meeting with Yarra Valley Water to discuss reasons for the breach and actions taken or proposed to prevent recurrence.

Please note that a minimum of two hours will be charged for any such meeting.

Yarra Valley Water's Officers will continue to take and analyse samples of waste during this period to ensure the non-compliance event is adequately managed both from the OH&S and from the Asset and Environmental perspective.

Yarra Valley Water will charge the non-compliance customer a fee based on a time and material basis to cover its costs in negotiating and managing the non-compliance. Laboratory analysis costs may be charged on an actual cost basis in addition to time and material charges.

***Time based charges for trade waste batch discharge, variations and non-compliance management for 2011/12 are as follows:***

<b>Day</b>	<b>Charge (\$)</b>
Monday – Friday (\$/hour)	196.89
Saturday (\$/hour)	266.89
Sunday (\$/hour)	298.92

## **2.4.5 Food Waste Disposal Charges**

Food Waste charges apply in respect of the discharge of food waste not attracting other trade waste charges. Food waste includes any matter, whether water borne or not, consisting solely or partly of food, food particles or food scraps, which had constituted part of or had been generated during production of a meal other than on residential premises or residential property.

***Food Waste Charges for 2011/12 are as follows:***

<b>Food Waste Charges</b>	<b>Charge (\$)</b>
<b>Health Care Institutions (per bed per annum)</b>	
Charge per bed	48.64
<b>Accommodation Premises and Restaurants – Rating of food waste unit (per unit per annum)</b>	
Greater than or equal to 180 watts and less than 400 watts	1,383.22
Greater than or equal to 400 watts and less than 700 watts	7,083.45
Greater than or equal to 700 watts and less than 1,500 watts	14,270.31
<b>Potato Peelers – Rating of food waste unit (per unit per annum)</b>	
Greater than or equal to 180 watts and less than 400 watts	0.00
Greater than or equal to 400 watts and less than 700 watts	793.70
Greater than or equal to 700 watts and less than 1,500 watts	1,627.51

## 2.4.6 Retention of Access to Trade Waste Services

Disused trade waste treatment systems are a potential risk to Yarra Valley Water's assets, systems and people if left unattended. Currently we permit property owners retain unused trade waste treatment systems rather than disconnect them from the sewerage system upon payment of a Retention of Access to Trade Waste Services Fee.

Property owners may transfer liability for the treatment systems to any future tenant by requesting them to complete a Trade Waste Application form and submit it to Yarra Valley Water. When the tenant possesses a Trade Waste Agreement with Yarra Valley Water, the Retention of Access to Trade Waste Services Fee charged to the property owner will cease.

When the tenant vacates the site, the property owner is again presented with the choice to retain the treatment system and pay the fee, or disconnect the treatment system from the sewerage system.

### ***Retention of Access to Trade Waste Services Charge for 2011/12 is as follows:***

	Charge (\$)
Retention of Access to Trade Waste Service	529.46

## 2.4.7 Asset Protection Charge

Occupiers of commercial and industrial premises must enter into a trade waste agreement or obtain a trade waste permit before discharging trade waste into the sewerage system. A condition of discharging trade waste for certain customers is an appropriate pre-treatment device installed in accordance with Yarra Valley Water requirements.

Where it is impractical to install a pre-treatment device in an existing building, the customer has the option to discharge untreated trade waste rather than install a pre-treatment device.

### ***Asset Protection Charge for 2011/12 is as follows:***

	Charge (\$)
Asset Protection Charge (per annum)	505.16

## 2.5 New Customer Contributions (NCC)

Water businesses are responsible for providing shared infrastructure assets (including headworks, treatment plants, pumping stations, trunk mains and sewers) with sufficient capacity in accordance with a predetermined development plan.

Developers are responsible for providing reticulation assets and the financing costs associated with bringing forward the provision of shared infrastructure assets if they are required ahead of the incremental development sequence with respect to Yarra Valley Water assets.

Costs that are the responsibility of Yarra Valley Water are in part recovered through NCCs by:

- Applying a scheduled charge on any connection of a new customer that is separately titled or is, or can be, individually metered (these charges are outlined in the table below), or

- Calculating the financing cost of providing assets where development is non incremental with respect to Yarra Valley Water assets.

**Scheduled NCCs for 2011/12 are as follows:**

<b>Lot Size</b>	<b>Charge (\$) per service per lot</b>
Less than 450 m <sup>2</sup>	599.15
Between 450 m <sup>2</sup> and 1350 m <sup>2</sup>	1,198.32
Greater than 1350 m <sup>2</sup>	2,396.66

*Developers may be charged for up to 3 services – water, recycled water and sewerage. Where a development is connecting to recycled water, there will be a 50% reduction in the applicable scheduled charge for water.*

### **2.5.1 Financing costs associated with bringing forward the provision of shared infrastructure assets for non-incremental development**

At any time during the regulatory period, Yarra Valley Water may levy a charge greater than the scheduled charge that will cover the costs associated with bringing forward the provision of shared distribution assets. The charge is calculated on the basis of:

- the development-specific capital costs associated with connecting a customer or group of customers
- the financing costs that may be attributable to bringing forward the timing of the provision of shared assets required to connect to the existing network.

The brought forward financing costs associated with developments requiring the construction of shared network assets are calculated on the basis of the extent to which the assets being constructed form part of a logical extension to Yarra Valley Water's existing water and sewerage networks:

- Where the shared assets could be reasonably considered to form part of a logically sequenced network expansion or could reasonably be expected to be required by Yarra Valley Water within a short to medium term planning horizon, no bring forward developer charge will apply (scheduled charge applies).
- Where the shared assets do not form part of a logically sequenced network expansion, but could reasonably be expected to have been required by Yarra Valley Water in respect of a long term planning horizon, then a non-scheduled developer charge equivalent to 40 per cent of the as constructed cost of the shared assets will apply.
- Where the shared assets do not form part of a logically sequenced network expansion, and could not reasonably be expected to have been required by Yarra Valley Water in respect of a long term planning horizon, then a non-scheduled developer charge equivalent to 70 per cent of the as constructed cost of the shared assets will apply.

### **3. Miscellaneous Services**

Yarra Valley Water offers miscellaneous services which are products associated with prescribed services. These miscellaneous services are provided by Yarra Valley Water or its EasyAccess agency outlets.

#### **3.1 Price Methodology**

Prices for miscellaneous services are set according to actual cost calculated on the basis of the aggregate of:

- direct third party or contractor invoice cost;
- direct marginal internal costs, including labour, materials and transport costs; and
- a fair contribution to overheads.

#### **3.2 Applications and Information**

##### **Land Development Applications**

A land development application results in an development deed that sets out the terms and conditions under which development can proceed. The deed will also include conditions relating to:

- extending Yarra Valley Water's services to a property or subdivision (a consultant is usually engaged by the owner to undertake the design, construction and survey of the services).
- the construction of minor works such as tapings to water mains, construction of house connection branches to sewers,
- build over easement and sewer approval.

##### **Standard Sewer Applications**

An application for approval to carry out sanitary plumbing and/or drainage work. Approval details conditions that apply and contains a Plumbing Industry Commission consent number.

##### **Industrial / Commercial Small (sewer)**

A processing fee applies for the connection to the sewer of a small industrial or commercial development.

##### **New Sewer Branch (Non Standard)**

A processing fee applies if a new sewer branch is required for the development.

##### **Property Service Plan**

A Property Service Plan is a plan showing internal property sewerage drains. When changes are made to the internal sewerage pipes a new plan must be provided to Yarra Valley Water.

### **Service Plan**

A plan showing the location of Yarra Valley Water assets.

### **Sewer Depth & Offset**

A plan showing the size, location and calculated depth of the sewer mains.

### **Water and Fire Service Application**

For services larger than 20mm special approval is required.

A fire service is a privately owned and maintained water service for the sole purpose of fire fighting. Fire services typically include facilities such as hydrants, hose reels and sprinkler systems.

### **Trunk Water Service Application**

A private trunk water service may be approved where an existing property does not abut a water main. The supply to the customer is in accordance with the terms and conditions of a Temporary Supply by Agreement.

### **Build Over Easement Application**

An approval is required to build any structure or carry out earthwork over an easement and/or within 1 metre of a Yarra Valley Water asset.

### **Pressure and flow information**

Water pressure and flow information is used in the design of large general, fire hydrant and fire sprinkler service installations. This type of information is often required to be provided to councils by consultants.

### **Information statements**

Vendors of property in Yarra Valley Water's Licence area are required to provide potential purchasers with an information statement from Yarra Valley Water prior to contract signing under the Sale of Land Act 1962 (section 32 (2)(b)). This statement is to detail any encumbrance affecting the land (excluding those shown on land titles), works required to be carried out, matters outstanding and any relevant rate or charge.

The only charges included are drainage and parks charges as water and sewerage charges are not charges on the land and therefore are not relevant for the purpose of the information statement.

**Charges for application and information products in 2011/12 are as follows**

	Charge (\$)
Simple Land Development Applications - 0 to 9 lots	787.63
Complex Land Development Applications more than 9 lots	1,760.16
2 Lot Vacant Development Application	600.35
Standard Sewer Application	# 68.30
Industrial / Commercial (sewer)	# 98.53
New Sewer Branch (Non Standard)	# 98.53
Property Service Plan	# 29.14
Service Plan	# 29.14
Sewer Depth and Offset	34.76
Water and Fire Service Application	# 258.12
Trunk Water Service Application	# 248.30
Build Over Easement Application	# 80.30
Pressure and flow information	421.75
Pressure and flow information (Alternative Supply)	527.11
Information statements – standard application (3 business days)	25.88
Information statements – urgent application (1 hour)	38.90

**Note:** Prices marked # are the recommended retail price an Easy Access agency outlet (plumbing store) may charge a customer for a product or service. The amount Yarra Valley Water charges the agency outlet (plumbing store) is set in accordance with the pricing principles contained in the Yarra Valley Water Determination 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2013 or is the price shown in the Essential Services Commission – Yarra Valley Water Tariff Schedule.

### 3.3 Potable and Recycled Water - Meters

A meter supplied by Yarra Valley Water must be installed to measure the volume of water or recycled water supplied to a property. Meter connection fees are charged to meet the initial and ongoing costs of providing metering services. Fees for meter connection are as follows and include any installation or delivery fee.

#### Locating dry tap termination point (lost point)

Properties in new subdivisions are often provided with a dry tap termination point. Where the plumber is unable to locate the termination point, the plumber may request Yarra Valley Water locate it. A fee is charged for this service and is refunded if the point is not found or found to be incorrectly located.

#### Meter product charges for 2011/12 are as follows:

	Charge (\$)
<b>20 mm Potable and Recycled Water Meter Products</b>	
Wet tapping including meter (Customer excavation)	# 350.70
Complete short tapping including meter	# 1,175.07
Complete long tapping including meter	# 1,502.99
Dry tap meter installation	# 313.66

	Charge (\$)
First meter (supply and install)	# 257.60
Each additional meter (supplied and installed at same time as first meter)	# 171.17
First remote meter (supply and install)	# 498.98
Each additional remote meter (supplied and installed at same time as first meter)	# 423.70
Remote meter equipment for 20mm meter	# 202.53
Supply and installation of a 20mm pressure limiting device	# 191.90
<b>25 mm Potable and Recycled Water Meter Products</b>	
Wet tapping excluding meter (Customer excavation)	# 287.00
Complete short tapping excluding meter	# 1,233.45
Complete long tapping excluding meter	# 1,586.84
First meter (supply and install with tapping)	# 220.56
First meter (supply and install without tapping)	# 273.62
Each additional meter (supplied and installed at same time as first meter)	# 220.56
<b>Other Size Potable and Recycled Water Meter Products</b>	
32mm Wet tapping only excluding meter	# 453.41
32mm Meter assembly	# 547.29
32mm Meter assembly - Lilac	# 607.29
40 / 50mm Wet tapping only excluding meter	# 484.46
40mm Meter assembly	# 617.50
40mm Meter assembly - Lilac	# 677.50
50mm Meter assembly	# 1,234.12
50mm Meter assembly - Lilac	# 1,294.12
80mm Meter assembly	# 1,836.28
80mm Meter assembly - Lilac	# 1,896.28
100mm Meter assembly	# 2,199.48
100mm Meter assembly - Lilac	# 2,259.48
150mm Meter assembly	# 4,997.35
150mm Meter assembly - Lilac	# 5,057.35
Supply and install 50mm complete meter assembly - (Magflow)	# 3,780.65
Supply and install 80mm complete meter assembly - (Magflow)	# 4,729.40
Supply and install 100mm complete meter assembly - (Magflow)	# 5,018.15
Supply and install 150mm complete meter assembly - (Magflow)	# 5,980.65
Locating dry tap termination point (lost point)	# 202.90

**Note:** Prices marked # are the recommended retail price an Easy Access agency outlet (plumbing store) may charge a customer for a product or service. The amount Yarra Valley Water charges the agency outlet (plumbing store) is set in accordance with the pricing principles contained in the Yarra Valley Water Determination 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2013 or does not exceed the price shown in the Essential Services Commission – Yarra Valley Water Tariff Schedule.

### 3.4 Potable and Recycled Water - Tee and Valve Insertion

A tee insertion is a water connection from Yarra Valley Water's main to a property. Tee and valve insertions are organised by Yarra Valley Water through our EasyAccess outlets and the work is undertaken by our installation contractor.

**Tee and Valves Insertion Charges for 2011/12 are as follows:**

	Charge (\$)
80mm Tee insertions	# 2,011.37
100mm Tee insertions	# 1,972.41
150mm Tee insertions	# 2,391.42
225mm Tee insertions	# 4,888.44
80mm Valve Insertion	# 1,458.55
100mm Valve Insertion	# 1,458.55
150mm Valve Insertion	# 1,814.73
225mm Valve Insertion	# 3,521.64
250mm Valve Insertion	# 3,899.16

**Note:** Prices marked # are the recommended retail price an Easy Access agency outlet (plumbing store) may charge a customer for a product or service. The amount Yarra Valley Water charges the agency outlet (plumbing store) is set in accordance with the pricing principles contained in the Yarra Valley Water Determination 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2013.

### 3.5 Potable and Recycled Water – Fire Service Products

#### Single Detector Check Valves

A single detector check valve is installed on a fire service to detect any non-fire-related usage. The fee is charged to meet the cost of providing the detector check valve.

**Fire Service Charges for 2011/12 are as follows:**

	Charge (\$)
80mm fire service with 20mm bypass meter Single Detector Check Valve	# 1,653.49
100mm fire service with 25mm bypass meter Single Detector Check Valve	# 1,804.76
150mm fire service with 25mm bypass meter Single Detector Check Valve	# 2,788.10

**Note:** Prices marked # are the recommended retail price an Easy Access agency outlet (plumbing store) may charge a customer for a product or service. The amount Yarra Valley Water charges the agency outlet (plumbing store) is set in accordance with the pricing principles contained in the Yarra Valley Water Determination 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2013.

### 3.6 Potable and Recycled Water – Other Products

These charges relate to after hours work, cancellation of scheduled work and plugging of existing tappings.

**Other product charges for 2011/12 are as follows:**

	<b>Charge (\$)</b>
Plugging all sizes (Customer excavation)	# 185.49
20-25mm Complete plugging	# 514.69
Tee removal	# 962.98
Tapping cancellation fee	# 250.06
Tee cancellation on the day	# 710.14
After Hour Tapping / Plugging 20 – 50mm	# 493.71
After Hours Tee Insertion > = 80mm	# 998.94

**Note:** Prices marked # are the recommended retail price an Easy Access agency outlet (plumbing store) may charge a customer for a product or service. The amount Yarra Valley Water charges the agency outlet (plumbing store) is set in accordance with the pricing principles contained in the Yarra Valley Water Determination 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2013.

### **3.7 Other Products and Services**

#### **Fire Service Charge**

An annual charge per fire service applied to non-residential properties provided with a fire service.

#### **Fire Hydrant Usage Permit**

A customer who wishes to draw water from a fire hydrant in Yarra Valley Water's licence area must obtain a Fire Hydrant Usage Permit.

#### **Water Carter Management**

Each time a water carter takes water from the Yarra Valley Water system, they will pay a fixed Administrative Service Fee and a variable Supply Service Fee based on the volume of the water carters truck.

#### **Backlog Connection Contribution**

Backlog Sewerage is a term used to describe a sewerage system that is provided to service properties or areas of Melbourne which are not connected to a traditional reticulation sewerage service. A contribution fee will be charged to connect to a Backlog system and can be paid over a maximum of 5 years.

#### **Recycled Water Administration Fee (non domestic)**

A fee will be charged to administer a contract and ongoing management of a Recycled Water Agreement and an Environmental Improvement Plan.

#### **Recycled Water (non domestic)**

Class B and C recycled water is supplied to some customers for irrigation and manufacturing purposes. The price is set on a case by case basis using following pricing principles prescribed by the Essential Services Commission in their determination:

Recycled water prices are set so as to:

- have regard to the price of any substitutes and customers' willingness to pay;
- cover the full cost of providing the service (with the exception of services related to specified obligations or maintaining balance of supply and demand); and
- include a variable component.

### **Plumbing Industry Commission (PIC) Fee**

A Plumbing Industry Commission fee is for inspection of recycled water plumbing. A PIC fee is payable when the booking for water tapings is made at a plumbing store.

### **Pressure Sewer Installation Contribution**

This is a contribution levied on the developer of land that is to be serviced by pressure sewer pumping units. The contribution is levied at the time of development and reflects the cost of installing pressure sewer pumping units when building on a lot commences.

The charges reflect the cost to provide a "standard connection" and where it is determined at the time of connection that a "non standard connection" is required, the owner will be required to contribute the difference between the actual cost and the "standard connection" contribution.

#### ***Charges for 2011/12 are as follows:***

	<b>Charge (\$)</b>
Fire service charge (annual)	60.65
Fire Hydrant usage permit for commercial customers (annual)	224.64
Water Carter Administrative Service Charge (per fill)	7.90
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 1.0 to 1.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	1.91
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 2 to 2.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	3.82
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 3 to 3.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	5.74
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 4 to 4.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	7.65
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 5 to 5.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	9.56
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 6 to 6.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	11.48
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 7 to 7.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	13.39
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 8 to 8.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	15.30
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 9 to 9.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	17.22
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 10 to 10.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	19.13
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 11 to 11.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	21.04
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 12 to 12.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	22.96
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 13 to 13.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	24.87
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 14 to 14.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	26.78
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 15 to 15.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	28.70
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 16 to 16.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	30.61
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 17 to 17.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	32.52

Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 18 to 18.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	34.44
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 19 to 19.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	36.35
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 20 to 20.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	38.26
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 21 to 21.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	40.18
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 22 to 22.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	42.09
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 23 to 23.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	44.00
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 24 to 24.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	45.92
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 25 to 25.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	47.83
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 26 to 26.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	49.74
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 27 to 27.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	51.66
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 28 to 28.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	53.57
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 29 to 29.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	55.48
Water Carter Supply Service Charge – 30 to 30.99 kilolitre vehicle capacity (per fill)	57.40
Backlog Connection Contribution	500.00
Recycled Water Administration Fee (annual)	1,361.71
PIC fee for recycled water (Includes \$29.40 GST)	361.46
Pressure sewer installation contribution – Residential	12,014.56
Pressure sewer installation contribution – Non residential	37,290.92

### 3.8 Chargeable Works

Chargeable works are those works that can only be carried out by Yarra Valley Water's maintenance contractor/partner due to either the specialist skills required or the high risks to Yarra Valley Water's assets associated with the work. The cost of providing the works vary from site to site and the charge will be calculated in accordance with the Essential Services Commission's pricing principles.

The charge is the aggregate of

- direct third party or contractor invoice cost;
- direct marginal internal cost, including labour, materials and transport costs;
- a fair contribution to overheads

### 3.9 Freedom of Information (FOI) Charges

An application fee will be charged to customers requesting access to documents under the Freedom of Information Act 1982. A search fee for the identification of documents will apply on a per hour basis. Photocopying of these documents will be charged per A4 page.

**FOI Charges for 2011/12 are as follows:**

	Charge (\$)
Freedom of Information (FOI) Application Fee	24.40
Freedom of Information (FOI) Search Fee (per hour or part of an hour)	20.00
Photocopy of Documents (per A4 Page)	0.20

**3.10 Restricting or Restoring a Water Supply (for non-payment)**

Under section 85 of the Water Industry Act 1994, Yarra Valley Water can restrict a customer's water supply for non-payment of any money due to Yarra Valley Water. A fee may also be imposed for removing a restriction device.

Water supply is not restricted where customers can demonstrate that they are facing financial hardship and agree to negotiate a payment plan with Yarra Valley Water.

**Restriction and restoration charges for 2011/12 are as follows:**

	Charge (\$)
<b>Restriction or restoration of water supply</b>	
At or near water meter (normal hours)	208.47
At or near a water main in the nature strip (normal hours)	578.00
<b>Additional fees may apply if</b>	
Meter is not accessible	111.41
Dig out of meter is required (per 15 minutes)	27.74

**3.11 Customer Requested Tests of Water Supply**

***Meter test***

If a customer disputes the accuracy of a water meter reading a fee is imposed to test the meter. Meter testing can be carried out by either an onsite comparison test or offsite by an independent NATA accredited laboratory to a nationally approved standard. We will provide you with the results of the test within five working days of its completion.

If the test shows that the meter is not meeting standards specified in Yarra Valley Water's Customer Charter, we will replace the meter and refund any amount you may have been overcharged. If the test shows that the meter was working accurately, you will be required to pay the test fee.

***Flow test***

As a Yarra Valley Water customer, we will ensure that you have a flow of water to your meter equal to or better than the minimum indicated for your size in the table below.

There may be unusual circumstances when we are unable to supply you with a minimum flow. These times may include droughts, emergency interruptions, or planned interruptions, during high demand periods on very hot summer days and during fire emergencies. Where practical we will advise you in advance.

If you believe your flow rate does not meet the minimum standard, you can test your flow rate by timing how long it takes to fill a 10 litre bucket at the tap adjacent to your water meter. The following table indicates how long this should take if your meter is either 20 or 25 mm in diameter. To check the size of your meter, look at the serial number printed near the dials. Each serial number begins with M (metric), followed by a letter A, B, C or D. A=20mm and B=25mm.

Size of your meter (millimetres)	20	25
Minimum flow rate (litres per minute)	20	35
Time to fill a 10 litre bucket	30 secs	17 secs

Alternatively, you can call us on 132 762 and we will send out a Maintenance Officer to test your water service. If the test establishes you are receiving equal to or more than the minimum flow you will be charged the cost for the test.

If the flow rate is below the minimum rate we will take action to rectify the problem where the problem is found to be up to the outlet (customer side) of the water meter. You are responsible for any problems beyond the meter on your property.

If you are supplied from a privately owned "trunk" service, you will have to pay for the full cost of repairs to any service pipes between Yarra Valley Water's water main and the meter.

***Charges for a customer requested tests for 2011/12 are as follows***

	Charge (\$)
Meter test fee (20mm and 25mm meters) – where a comparison test is carried out	92.10
Meter test fee (20mm and 25mm meters) – where customer requests an independent NATA accredited laboratory test	280.60
Meter test fee (greater than or equal to 32mm meters)	603.46
Flow test charge	92.10

## **4. Hardship schemes and Concessions**

Yarra Valley Water offer a number of support programs to customers who are experiencing financial difficulties. These include programs for individuals experiencing short-term financial hardship as well as long term hardship customers on a low or fixed income or pensioner concession customers. Yarra Valley Water can arrange a time to talk to you in more detail about any of these programs or your options on 131 1721.

### **4.1 Hardship Policy**

Yarra Valley Water has in place a Hardship Policy, which defines our approach to supporting customers experiencing either temporary or permanent financial hardship. Our policy ensures all customers requiring additional support will be treated individually, with respect and sensitivity. Where possible we ensure the customers have one contact person at Yarra Valley Water to manage there accounts. They will be shielded from restriction and further recovery action and be informed of all support available to them.

### **4.2 Customer Support**

Established in 2000, the Customer Support Team currently individually case manage over 3,500 customers. Customers are referred from a number of areas including the Customer Contact Centre, Debt Management and YVW's external debt collection agency, all of whom have undertaken training to assist in the identification of potential hardship customers. Customers can self refer and/or can be referred directly from external financial counselling and welfare agencies. All customers in financial difficulty can access the team directly on a free call number.

The Customer Support Team has undertaken extensive training on a range of social and community issues including:

- Drug and alcohol addiction
- Gambling addiction
- Depression
- Cultural diversity issues
- Domestic violence
- Hardship awareness
- Issues facing customers with disabilities
- Government assistance schemes and concessions

We understand our residential customers cannot always afford the minimum payment amounts required to manage their account. Accordingly, we will negotiate arrangements based on what our customers can reasonably afford to pay. With our individual case management approach, we will ensure that each customer's needs are appropriately and sensitively addressed.

### **4.3 Hardship Programs**

#### **4.3.1 Early Intervention**

Yarra Valley Water has made a commitment to early identification of customers in financial difficulty and to providing them with access to water, regardless of affordability. Hardship customers are where possible, provided one contact person to help address their issues and are shielded from further

recovery action (i.e. restriction and legal). They are also provided with information on all available support and programmes.

#### **4.3.2 Payment arrangements based on affordability**

Payment arrangements for customers experiencing financial hardship are based on what they can reasonably afford to pay and are tailored to meet the individual's circumstances. This principle stands whether or not the repayment amount is sufficient to cover the customer's current or past water accounts. The customer, or the financial counsellor representing the customer, has the right to nominate the repayment amount based on their capacity to pay.

#### **4.3.3 Kildonan United Care relationship – foundation of the programme**

Yarra Valley Water has a strong relationship with Kildonan United Care, to whom it refers customers requiring further assistance. Referrals are offered at no cost to its customers, and include home visits for customers who require additional support. Kildonan address the customers' holistic issues and provide advice to customers on a range of issues including budgeting, managing all household bills, Government Assistance Schemes, emergency housing, No Interest Loans, legal advice and general counselling. Yarra Valley Water also uses Kildonan to provide advice in the preparation of its hardship strategies and the assessment of the effectiveness of its hardship programmes and practices through direct input and the facilitation of customer focus groups.

#### **4.3.4 Innovation payment schemes to assist customers**

One of Yarra Valley Water's key hardship initiatives is *Arrange & Save*, a loyalty programme aimed at encouraging and supporting customers having difficulty paying their water account. For every five payments made on time, Yarra Valley Water credits the customer's account to the value of one payment. If the customer meets their payment arrangements for a six-month period, some of the long term debt may be written off. The programme is designed to assist customers who cannot afford the required minimum repayment amount to reduce the arrears on their account. 90% of the time, customers on this programme meet their agreed payments on time.

#### **4.3.7 Face-to-face support**

The Customer Support Team undertakes home site visits to customers it's having difficulty contacting, or if a customer finds it difficult to leave their home. Site visits provide the opportunity to help customers complete various assistance forms, explain Yarra Valley Water programmes and discuss affordable payment options, if appropriate. This program is part of our approach to assist our vulnerable customers in an environment that best suits their individual needs.

#### **4.3.8 Continuous Improvements**

The hardship policy commits Yarra Valley Water to continual improvement of its programmes and practices for the hardship customer segment including workshops and forums with financial counselling agencies in its licensed area and other key stakeholders, including the Department of

Human Services, the Essential Services Commission, other utilities, councils, and EWOV. Yarra Valley Water also undertakes customer focus groups within a range of culturally diverse customer segments to receive feedback on its programmes. The hardship policy and associated procedures of Yarra Valley Water are reviewed at least annually to ensure they are adequate to meet customer needs

#### **4.3.9 External assessment**

The approach and program adopted by Yarra Valley Water has received strong external, independent endorsement including:

- Yarra Valley Water and Kildonan United Care relationship was recognised in 2003 and 2005 when it was awarded the “Large Business Award” for Victoria as part of the Prime Minister’s Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships.
- Essential Services Commission in its Final Decision – Review of Electricity and Gas Retail Codes – Energy Retail Code released in May 2004 stated “Best practice hardship policies and procedures will be implemented based on the Yarra Valley Water model.’
- Consumer Law Centre of Victoria (CLCV) released its report in April 2006 on the implementation of residential hardship policies by Victorian water businesses. The Yarra Valley Water policy, program and approach is highlighted as the most comprehensive hardship assistance scheme in place. Yarra Valley Water is also mentioned in the report in a positive light on the extent of our Charter, financial counselor’s feedback received by CLCV, our approach to engage stakeholders in policy development and the use of our Water Wise water conservation program.
- State Government in May 2006 released its report on the outcomes and response to the Committee Inquiry into the Financial Hardship of Energy Consumers. The inquiry was established by the Bracks Government in March 2005. The report included 20 recommendations and was generally very positive of the approach and programs we have implemented in support of customers in financial difficulty. One of the 20 recommendations was “that energy industry stakeholders consider the applicability of the Yarra Valley Water/Kildonan hardship program as a possible basis for future cooperative programs to mitigate hardship.”

#### **4.4 Government assistance schemes and rebates**

##### **4.4.1 Government assistance schemes**

For those customers who meet the criteria, we have information on various Government Assistance Schemes, including the Utility Relief Grant Scheme.

##### **4.4.2 Current Government Concessions and Rebates**

If you hold either a Health Care, Pensioner Concession, Gold Repatriation, TPI or War Widow Card, you may be eligible for concessions on your water bill. For further information or to find out whether you’re eligible for a concession, you can contact the Department of Human Services Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521. The Department of Sustainability and Environment’s customer call centre on 136 186 can tell you about your options for government rebates, and answer your

questions. You can also find information about rebates on the Department of Sustainability and Environment's website: [www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au).

#### **4.5 Pensioner/Concession Cardholder**

Government concessions on water and sewerage charges increased to a maximum of \$270.20 per year from 1 July 2010 or \$130.10 for a property that is billed for a single water or sewerage service. The concession has been extended to include all eligible pensioners and Health Care Card holders, who will now receive 50 percent off their total water and sewerage bill (both fixed service and volume charges), up to \$270.20 per year. If you have recently become an eligible concession card holder please call 131 721 with your details.

The address for which you are claiming concessions must be your sole or principle place of residence and match the address on the concession card. The name on the concession card must be the same as the account name in order to be eligible.