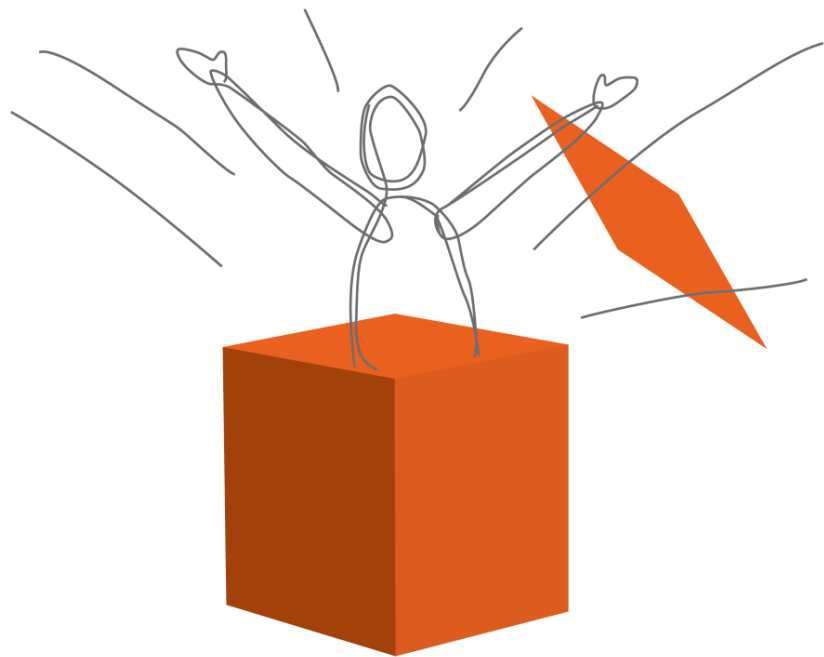


Review of Water Performance Report Indicators: Water Customer Research

A report submitted to the Essential Services
Commission by Hall & Partners | Open Mind

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Qualitative research with Victorian water customers was undertaken on behalf of the Essential Services Commission (Commission). The objectives of the research were to explore customer perceptions of and ideas regarding water business performance indicators, and to understand how best to communicate reporting of such measures to customers. Six discussion groups were conducted in metropolitan Melbourne between 1st and 3rd May 2012.

KEY FINDINGS

Most, if not all, of the water customers in our qualitative sample don't think about the business that supplies their water very often. Indeed, if everything is working as it should (i.e. clean water is coming out of the tap/s and there are no complications with the bill), for a consumer, contact with their water business is typically limited to receiving and paying the bill. And this to them, is how it should be. Where there are *problems* with the water supply, water quality or the billing process, contact beyond this transaction is required. For nearly everyone we spoke with, such problems rarely arise, and so consumers have little contact with their water business and it essentially remains invisible.

Given that water companies are typically not top-of-mind, it is not surprising that for the water customers we spoke with there is little, if any, awareness of the Commission, its broad role as a regulator of utilities including water, and its specific role in overseeing a performance monitoring framework for water businesses in Victoria. Further, given the lack of emotional connection between most water consumers and their water business, understanding how their water business is performing relative to their counterparts is not something that is pertinent or particularly relevant to the consumer, at a broad level, in the context of their day-to-day lives.

When prompted to nominate what they see as the most important measures to them that should be included in a performance monitoring framework for water businesses, consumers nominated measures pertaining to the following key areas: Usage patterns, price trends, customer service measures, communications between water businesses and their customers, reliability of water supply, water business spend and investment (including investment in environment and sustainability) and quality of water supply. Notably, these themes closely map the categories of indicators currently included in the Commission's framework, plus the financial measures that were explored in the prompted discussion.

Although consumers generally appear to be less interested in understanding the 'nitty gritty' of the data, what does appear to be most important to them is knowing that water businesses, as providers of an essential service and product such as water, are being monitored, audited and made accountable. What is important to consumers is to know that they are being treated fairly and that in the context of rising water prices, that the money businesses are charging them is being well spent.

What this means is that there appears to be a role for communications to raise awareness amongst 'everyday' water consumers about the Commission and its role, including its specific role in overseeing Victoria's water business performance monitoring framework. Most water customers we spoke with aren't seeking too much detail beyond this, although a small minority may seek more detailed information about the measures and the data.

Therefore, a single direct communications piece is likely to address the needs of each of these audiences. For instance a direct mail piece (possibly included with the bill) setting out the following key messages:

- The Essential Services Commission is Victoria's independent water industry regulator.
- The Commission oversees a performance monitoring framework for Victoria's water businesses, and it publishes these findings.
- If you are interested, here is where you can access further information via the Commission's website at www.esc.vic.gov.au.

BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

The Essential Services Commission (Commission) is Victoria's independent economic regulator of essential services. Subsuming the Office of the Regulator-General, the Commission was established by, and operates in accordance with, the *Essential Services Commission Act 2001* and other relevant industry-specific legislation. Its primary objective is to promote the long-term interests of Victorian consumers, seeking to achieve this with regard to the price, quality and reliability of essential services¹.

As Victoria's independent economic regulator, the Commission regulates various industries, including water utilities, energy retail services, ports and rail infrastructure services. The Commission also has investigation, monitoring and/or reporting responsibilities in relation to the fees and charges of parts of the insurance industry, taxis, hire-cars and tow trucks as they relate to Victoria.

THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING FRAMEWORK FOR METROPOLITAN AND REGIONAL WATER BUSINESSES

The Commission has an explicit function to monitor, report and audit the performance of the regulated water industry. In 2004, following an extensive consultation program with industry and other stakeholders, a performance monitoring framework that applies to metropolitan and regional water businesses in Victoria was established. This was published as *Performance Reporting Framework – Metropolitan and Regional Businesses: Discussion Paper* in July 2004.

The performance monitoring framework for Victorian water businesses was established on the basis of six core principles. These principles are that performance indicators applied under the framework:

- be relevant to the nature of the services provided by each business
- be meaningful and relate to key issue of concern to both businesses and their customers
- be defined and collected on a consistent basis to provide a valid measure of actual performance and to aid reasonable comparisons
- be based on information that is accurate, reliable and verifiable
- be collected on the basis that the costs and benefits associated with information collection are balanced
- facilitate national assessment of relative performance.

It is now coming up to eight years since the release of the 2004 Decision Paper, and five years since Victorian water businesses have been reporting to the Commission on the full performance

¹ Essential Services Commission (2009). Annual Financial Report 2009-10.

monitoring data set. Over that period, both the water sector and the environment in which it sits have developed and changed. Further, with a broader economy-wide focus on increasing productivity and innovation, as well as a price review process soon to be underway, it is now considered timely to undertake a review of the indicator set that underpins the performance monitoring framework.

To inform this review, the Commission is seeking research to understand customers' views of how the performance of water businesses is measured, which measures would be of most relevance and value to customers, and how best to communicate the reporting of performance measures to customers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research aims to explore their perceptions of their water business and the services their water business provides. In this context, the research objectives are:

- To explore customer perceptions of and ideas regarding water business performance indicators,
- To understand how best to communicate reporting of such measures to customers.

RESEARCH METHOD

Given the exploratory nature of the research, a qualitative approach to this study was adopted. Six standard group discussions were conducted in Melbourne, with fieldwork taking place between 1st and 3rd May 2012.

The following design was achieved:

	SINKs / DINKs* (Aged 18-35)	Families with children at home (Aged 30-50)	Empty Nesters (Aged 50+)
Males	1 x group	1 x group	1 x group
Females	1 x group	1 x group	1 x group

*Single Income No Kids / Double Income No Kids

The sample for this study focused on 'general' water customers (i.e. customers not experiencing hardship), who are living in metropolitan Melbourne and who are customers across the three retail water businesses. All respondents had sole or joint responsibility for paying the water bill in their household.

LINES OF ENQUIRY AND THE MODERATING APPROACH

In close collaboration with the Commission, the research team developed a discussion guide for these groups. The moderating approach adopted was largely non-directional, where the aim is to encourage respondents to 'own' the discussion. The approach encourages conversation, rather than simply obtaining answers to a set of questions. Our focus was on creating a comfortable and relaxed setting in which our respondents felt able to express themselves freely and without constraint.

Qualitative statement: In reading this report it must be borne in mind that this research is qualitative and must be interpreted as such. Qualitative research is not intended to be a precise and definitive index of what happens in the population of interest. As noted above, the approach adopted in the study was interpretive and relied upon a relatively free and unprompted conversation between the researcher and the participants, directed by a discussion guide. Verbatim comments from respondents have been included in this report to illustrate ideas and experiences.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. CONSUMERS AND THEIR WATER BUSINESS

Most, if not all, of the water customers in our qualitative sample rarely think about their water business. They consider that this is as it should be. Indeed, if everything is working as it should (i.e. clean water is coming out of the tap/s and there are no complications with the bill), consumer contact with their water business is typically limited to receiving and paying the bill. Where there are problems with the water supply, water quality or the billing process that contact beyond that transaction is required.

“I pay my bill when it comes, and that’s it.” (Female, Families)

“Water’s a generic product. Unless you have a problem, you don’t deal with the company.” (Male, Empty Nester)

“You don’t notice water unless there’s a problem. It’s only if you need something fixed, like if there’s a leak then you’d make a phone call.” (Female, SINKs/DINKs)

Since almost all of these respondents had never experienced problems with either the water supply nor the bill, they had had little contact with their water business: they consider that it essentially remains invisible with little if any real engagement or perceived connection. Because what is most important to customers is that the “water comes out of the tap”, they have quite a piecemeal type of understanding about services provided by water businesses beyond this.

“What do I think about my water company? Well... water comes out of the tap!” (Female, SINKs/DINKs)

“I don’t really know what water companies do.” (Male, Empty Nester)

“I don’t give heaps of thought to it really.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

With more considered discussion, the following ‘roles’ of their water business can be identified:

- **A ‘deliverer’:** First and foremost, the primary role of their water business is to supply a clean and reliable water supply to their household. There were a few mentions of supplying water to parks and gardens, as people had noticed the parks and gardens charge on their bill).
- **A ‘removalist’:** Although not top of mind for most, removing sewage was the next most commonly mentioned service provided.
- **A ‘repairer’:** Some respondents noted that their water business has a role fixing problems with their water supply, such as repairing leaks or burst water mains.
- **An ‘educator’:** In the context of rigid water restrictions over the last few years, respondents see their water business as an educator, through the provision of information about water restrictions and hints and tips about saving water.

- **An ‘environmentalist’:** Related to the above, water businesses can be seen as somewhat of a ‘crusader’ for the environment, through advocating for and providing water saving devices, such as water-efficient shower heads.
- **A business:** When it comes down to it, for customers, water businesses are just that – a business. Ultimately, they charge customers for the services they deliver and a financial transaction has to take place.

“They give you water – when you turn the tap on, it’s there.” (Male, Empty Nester)

“The water comes out of the tap.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“They teach you about the ways you can save water.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“They take away your sewage, and the stormwater.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“There’s often useful information provided with the bill. Other bills I dread, but the water bill often contains some helpful information.” (Female, Families)

“They’re telling us about ways we can save water.” (Female, Families)

There appeared to be mixed levels of understanding regarding whether water business are government or privately owned. Some clearly understood water businesses are “government owned but run like a company”, others spoke adamantly about water businesses as privately owned companies. The consensus however, is that they are locally run and staffed (comparisons were made with telco providers with call centres overseas).

“I’m not really sure where state responsibility ends, and where private companies begin... is water all private owned?” (Female, SINKs/DINKs)

“I’d expect it to be a government provided service. People who are not making a profit. Because water is a right, everyone needs water.” (Female, SINKs/DINKs)

“I’m not sure how it works now since Melbourne Water was decentralised... are all the water companies charging the same rates? Is the quality of the water the same everywhere?” (Male, Families)

Further, most in our sample understood that unlike energy providers (who are understood to compete in an open retail market) they recognise that there is no choice with regard to their water retailer.

2. WHAT DOES A ‘GOOD JOB’ LOOK LIKE FOR A WATER BUSINESS?

For water customers, their top-of-mind picture of satisfaction with their water business is one where there is water is “coming out of the tap”, that water is of good quality, and water bills are easy to understand and pay. (Of note, “good quality” is a vague concept, but something all agree is important; one applied definition across these discussions was water that is **clean and drinkable**). **Essentially, the less people have to think about or have contact with their water company, the better the job their water company is seen to be doing:**

“You know they’re doing a good job when you don’t have any contact with them.” (Male, Empty Nester)

“A water company is like a footy umpire. If they’re doing a good job, no one notices, no one knows who they are. But if they make one bad call... that’s when people are going to know about it!” (Male, Families)

“The less I have to think about it the better. If right now it takes me one minute to read my water bill, well then if I could get that down to 30 seconds... great!” (Male, Families)

“I get water. That’s it. They’re doing a good job.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“Water needs to be clean, hot when you want it to be, and drinkable.” (Female, Families)

“For me, it’s about being able to have a glass of water that comes straight out of the tap. That tells me our water is good.” (Female, Families)

“We don’t question it, as long as the water is running.” (Female, Families)

When probed further, however, a deeper picture emerged. Beyond quality, reliability of supply and the billing process (which relates to consumers’ top-of-mind understanding of the core role of their water business), there are other aspects of success contributing towards customers perceptions of a ‘job well done’:

- If there is a problem, this is quickly resolved with good quality customer service. Water businesses are staffed by individuals who are well-trained and customer-centric. If there are pre-planned outages, sufficient notice is given in advance.

“For me, a good job is all about customer service.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“Having consistent service, and being able to correct their mistakes when they make them quickly. Making apologies when they stuff up.” (Female, Families)

“If they do maintenance, getting notified in advance.” (Male, Empty Nester)

“They sent us a letter to tell us they were shutting [the water supply] down. But they also sent a guy around just before they were about to do it. That to me is a good personal touch.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“When they give us reminders about interruptions, that’s a good job.” (Female, Families)

“When you talk to them on the phone they have to communicate well. You need well trained staff who know what they’re talking about.” (Female, SINKs/DINKs)

- The water business is doing their bit to look after our environment: Customers are looking to see that their water business is ‘putting back in’ to the environment, including through educating customers about water saving and water-efficient usage.

“I think it’s good to see that companies are socially responsible. Like when there was the drought, Western Water was running programs in school... they have a dolphin mascot and teach the kids about how to save water, give them some egg timers for the shower. I think all that stuff is really great.” (Male, Families)

“I would assume that it’s a government responsibility to look after water catchments and maintain the quality of water.” (Female, SINKs/DINKs)

“Are they putting the money back into maintenance and water initiatives? You want to know that the companies are not making a profit. Shouldn’t a profit mean that our rates come down?” (Male, Families)

- The water business communicates with their customers clearly and effectively, in particular, via bills.

“The fee structure can get a little complicated. There are hidden fees. Sometimes it’s not explained to you.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“Your bill should be informative.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“They make a simple process complicated. I want bills that are clear, easy to read....with usage clearly marked on the front of the bill.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“The graph of your usage, that should all be on the front page.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

- This last aspect is the ‘technical stuff’ (i.e. maintenance of pipes, the detail in the water composition, engineering type information). This is, for most customers, the ‘boring but important’ work their water companies undertake to ensure the core deliverable of a quality and reliable water supply occurs.

“I’m sure if we really wanted to know, there would be a website where you can find out all the details about your water in your area. It would be available if you searched for it.” (Female, Empty Nester)

“I don’t know about the chemicals in the water, would they publish that? I don’t think they’d make that information available to the public.” (Female, Empty Nester)

Across our sample, there was a general perception that water businesses are doing a better job across the board than energy retailers. In an environment of retail competition, energy providers are seen as “hassling”: regularly door-knocking, with a strong advertising presence and presenting what can be seen to be confusing product offerings. In the absence of competition, all of these irritating aspects of dealing with energy suppliers are considered to be welcomingly absent from their dealings with water businesses. Notably, there was little discussion about the benefits of competition in the energy retail market.

“[Water companies] don’t advertise, not like electricity companies, whose ads are everywhere....so they slip under the radar.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“I think it’s a positive thing when there’s a lack of competition, because they’re [water companies] not pestering us. Electricity companies are extremely annoying. With water you’re not getting hassled about switching. There’s no junk mail, no door knocking.” (Female, SINKs/DINKs)

3. MEASURING WATER BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

UNPROMPTED DISCUSSION

Respondents were asked to nominate what they see as the most important measures *to them* that should be included in a framework to measure the performance of water businesses. No information about the current performance reporting framework was provided at this point. The following areas emerged across the sample from this unprompted discussion, noting that these themes closely reflect the different aspects of ‘success’ articulated above (these are not presented in any order of importance):

- **Quality of water supply:** As noted earlier, what makes water “good quality” is somewhat of a vague concept to these water customers, but it is something they all agree is important. Knowing that businesses are being made accountable for ensuring the water they deliver is clean and drinkable drives the view that this is a key indicator which should be measured. The ‘nitty gritty’ chemical composition is not necessarily something water customers appear particularly interested in; they just want to know that the quality of the water they receive through their water business meets the required standards.

“I want to know that there is clean, clear, nice tasting water.” (Female, Empty Nester)

“You’re paying for something, so you want to know the quality of it.” (Female, Families)

- **Reliability of water supply:** Respondents feel it is important to include measures that address reliability and continuity of water supply. This includes indicators addressing water supply interruptions, such as those measuring frequency of interruptions and time of outage.

“Quality, supply and reliability. That’s the crux of it.” (Female, Families)

- **Usage patterns:** Water customers’ desire to see measures of water usage is driven by their need to compare themselves to others and benchmark their own personal water saving/usage performance. Our sample appeared keen to understand how their own water usage patterns compare with other households of similar composition, and how their usage compares across surrounding local areas and across Victoria and Australia more broadly.
- **Price:** Similar to the above, water customers are keen to know how their bill compares with those of other households of similar composition, households in the area, as well as in other areas of Victoria and Australia.
- **Customer service:** Although our respondents did not nominate precise indicators for inclusion, a key theme emerging from these unprompted discussions is that they want their water business’s customer service performance to be measured and reported in some capacity. This is not necessarily about speed of customer service, but more about the quality of and satisfaction with the service being provided.
- **Communications:** How well water businesses communicate with their customers is another area our respondents felt is important to measure. This was about communications in two respects. Firstly, respondents want water businesses to be evaluated against a measure

addressing open and transparent communication at a general level. However, respondents were vague with respect to what open and transparent communications might mean to them. Secondly, they are seeking assessment of bills as simple, easy to understand and accurate.

“Making water bills simpler...clear, accurate and simple bills are important.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“Clear information on the bill. It shows that they’re honest and transparent, if there’s nothing hidden in the fine print.” (Female, Empty Nester)

- **Water business spend and investment:** Consumers are keen to understand how water businesses spend the money they collect from their customers; particularly when they understand that these are government-owned businesses. There is an expectation of reinvestment of any profit made into projects or areas that work towards water and environmental conservation and sustainability for future generations.

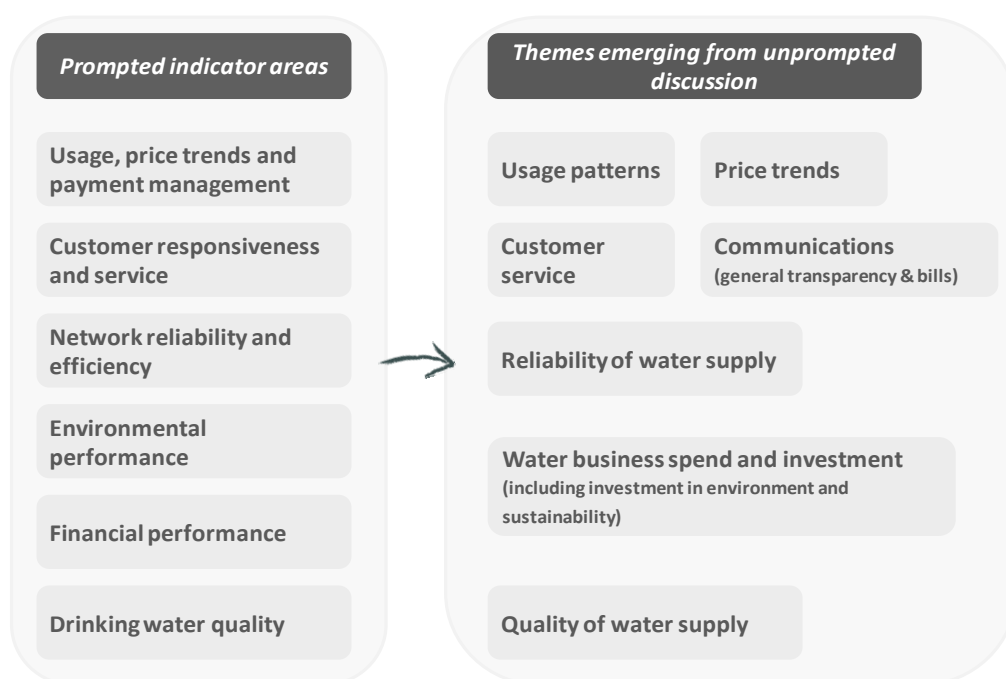
“Why are we still spending more every year? If they have any expenditure I want to know that it’s in a responsible manner. Is it going into water initiatives?” (Male, Families)

“It should be about what they’re giving back.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“Where is all the money going?” (Female, Families)

“What can they show us that they are doing, to ensure we will still have the same quality of water in the future? I’d like to know how they are working to conserve water for the future.” (Female, Empty Nester)

Notably, the themes identified above very closely map the categories of indicators explored in the prompted discussion (where all apart from profit / financial measures form part of the current performance monitoring framework). This suggests the categories of indicators currently addressed by the Commission largely touch upon issues of importance for consumers.



Water customers' responses to specific indicators, as set out in the subsection below, give us greater insight into which kinds of indicators are more likely to be relevant to and engage consumers.

PROMPTED DISCUSSION

There was very little, if any, prompted awareness of the Essential Services Commission and/or its performance reporting framework:

"I've never heard of them." (Male, Families)

"I heard of the name Essential Services Commission, but I don't know anything about them." (Female, Empty Nester)

Once told about the Commission and its performance monitoring role, respondents are left feeling reassured that a performance monitoring framework is in place. However, while they feel reassured, most cannot see the rationale for measuring the performance of water businesses against nominated criteria (hence explanation of the rationale in communications would assist). Others were able to conclude that this kind of framework influences water companies' performance through comparison:

"It puts pressure on water companies to perform." (Male, Empty Nester)

Respondents were provided with a selection of current and a few potential performance indicators (refer Appendix A) and asked to comment on which they feel are of most interest and importance to them as consumers.

The key point to note is that water customers are more likely to be interested and engaged with indicators which are relevant through a personal connection with customers' daily lives (are proximal) and which are described or explained in language that is consumer-centric and not too technical or vague (are understandable). Conversely, less engaging indicators are those with limited personal connection or relevance (distal), and/or which use technical language that is unfamiliar or unclear to the consumer.



More specifically, the following kinds of indicators are *more* engaging to consumers:

- **Indicators which allow customers to reference their own usage or spend with peers:** e.g. average household water consumption per 1 person or 5 person household, usage per 5 person household in specific local government area
- **Indicators referencing time / duration:** e.g. Duration of interruptions, average customer minutes off water supply, number of complaints resolved at first contact
- **Indicators measuring the quality of customer experience:** e.g. such as customer service evaluative-type indicators measured by Customer Service Benchmarking Australia (noting these were not included as stimulus material).
- **Indicators about investment and /or sustainability:** e.g. Water business spend, Profit (and where this is going), greenhouse gas emissions

“What’s relevant is what’s relevant to your household.” (Female, Families)

“We have five in our family. It would be good to be able to compare usage with similar households in our area.” (Female, Families)

“Profit is relevant. Where is the profit they make going?” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“It’s nice to know that greenhouse gas emissions are being measured.” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

The kinds of indicators which are *less* engaging are:

- **Indicators referencing totals:** e.g. total number of complaints received, number of water supply interruptions. These kinds of measure are seen to have little meaning.

- **Indicators referencing unlikely events:** e.g. Number of sewer spills to a property or house
- **Indicators with ‘technical’ or vague language:** e.g. Biosolids re-used, microbiological water quality (safety) compliance (percent) – technical; quality of information available on the website – vague.

*“The number of complaints, that’s not relevant. It’s not really relevant to anything in my life.”
(Female, Families)*

“Quality of information on the website – what does that mean? Is it referring to level of detail? And is anyone really going to go on the website anyway?” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“Water bursts and leaks don’t happen that often, so is it really important?” (Male, SINKs/DINKs)

“I don’t really want to know about biosolids.” (Female, Families)

“Findings are published publicly... that sounds like an incomprehensible government report! I’m not going to read all of the technical details.” (Female, SINKs/DINKs)

Given that water companies are typically not top-of-mind, it is not surprising that for the water customers we spoke with there is little if any awareness of the Commission, its broad role as a regulator of utilities including water, and its specific role in overseeing a performance monitoring framework for water businesses in Victoria. Although, once prompted we did gain insight into which indicators are more likely to engage with consumers more than others, given the overall lack of emotional connection between most water consumers and their water business, understanding how their water business is performing relative to others, is not something that customers are likely to truly engage with or seek out. This is because the performance monitoring framework, at a broad level, is not pertinent or particularly relevant to the consumer in the context of their day-to-day lives.

Despite the above, what does appear to be of most interest to them is knowing that water businesses, as providers of an essential service and product such as water, **are being monitored, audited and made accountable**. What is important to consumers is to know that they are being treated fairly and that in the context of rising water prices, the money businesses are charging is being well spent.

“It’s good to know that the detail is there, but for me I just need a snapshot.” (Female, SINKs/DINKs)

4. COMMUNICATING WITH WATER CUSTOMERS

This suggests a role for communications to raise awareness of the Commission and its specific role in overseeing Victoria's water business performance monitoring framework, amongst 'everyday' water customers. Most customers we spoke with aren't seeking too much detail beyond this. However, a small minority may seek more detailed information about the performance measures and the data. Thus, we see two main audiences:

1. **The typical consumer:** The majority of water customers fit here: they are generally content with the service they are receiving and would constitute a passive audience and would be unlikely actively seek out information.
2. **The interested minority:** These are the (apparently) very small minority of consumers who would seek out detailed data in the form of either a fact sheet or the full performance report. While these consumers are more likely to know about the Commission, this is not true of all. They require direction as to where to find more detailed information about the performance measures and outcomes. To engage with consumers on a meaningful level, the fact sheets and reports will require clear and consumer relevant explanation to explain the statistics.

A single direct communications piece is likely to address the needs of both of these audiences. For instance a direct mail piece setting out the following key messages:

- The Essential Services Commission is Victoria's independent water industry regulator.
- The Commission oversees a performance monitoring framework for Victoria's water businesses, and it publishes these findings.
- If you are interested, here is where you can access further information via the Commission's website at www.esc.vic.gov.au.

A brochure or flyer (not too detailed) delivered with a customer's water bill, or an item in a newsletter that is enclosed with the bill, is a direct form of communication that does not rely on consumers actively seeking out information (which this research tells us most will not do). This kind of communications piece will leave water customers feeling informed and reassured that there is 'someone' overseeing water business performance, and that water businesses are being held accountable so that they treat customers fairly.

*"A précis, something smaller. Each water company could provide a very short overview."
(Male, Empty Nester)*

*"The water company could give us a web link to where we could find further information."
(Male, SINKs/DINKs)*

This research also tells us that there is still a lot that consumers feel they don't know about their water business and how the water industry works. Some things, such as technical engineering matters they describe as 'housekeeping issues', they are content to leave to the experts. However they are particularly keen to understand how their own household's water usage and charges

compare to others in similar circumstances, how a water business invests the money they collect (particularly in the context of rising water prices) and to how well water companies are communicating with their customer base.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF INDICATORS

The following indicators were used as stimulus materials during the discussion groups:

A. Usage, price trends and payment management:

1. Typical household bill (\$) – broken down into owner occupier & tenants
2. Average household water consumption (kL per household)
3. Legal action for non-payment (domestic per 100 customers)
4. Restrictions for non-payment (domestic per 100 customers)
5. Assistance provided to customer with payment difficulties (for example, grants or waiving debt)

B. Customer responsiveness and service:

1. Average time to connect to an operator (account line and fault line)
2. Number of calls answered within 30 seconds
3. Total complaints received
4. Quality of information available on website
5. Number of complaints resolved on first contact

C. Network reliability and efficiency:

1. Number of water supply interruptions (planned and unplanned)
2. Average duration of a water supply interruptions (mins) - (planned and unplanned)
3. Average customer minutes off water supply (mins) - (planned and unplanned)*
4. Number of water main bursts and leaks (per 100km of main)
5. Number of sewer blockages or spills (per 100km of main)
6. Number of sewer spills to a property or house
7. Number of complaints relating to reliability and pressure of water supply

(*The amount of time across the year when water supply is not available due to bursts or repairs)

D. Environmental performance:

1. Water recycling – water re-use (percent of effluent)
2. Biosolids re-used (percent)
3. Greenhouse gas emissions - CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) – total (tonnes)
4. Number of complaints relating to sewer odour

E. Financial performance:

1. Profit
2. Spending trends

F. Drinking water quality:

1. Microbiological water quality (safety) compliance (percent)
2. Turbidity (clarity/cloudiness) compliance (percent)