



Waterways and drainage charge

Frequently asked questions

Melbourne Water's Waterways and Drainage Charge funds a range of programs to protect and improve the health of our rivers and creeks, and provide regional drainage services, flood protection and flood warning systems throughout the Port Phillip and Westernport region. The charge applies to all serviced properties located within our waterway management district and is collected by your local water corporation on our behalf.

1. What does the Waterways and Drainage Charge pay for?

Melbourne Water is the caretaker of river health throughout the Port Phillip and Westernport region. We are responsible for managing over 8,400 kilometres of rivers and creeks, floodplains and the regional drainage system. A key source of funds for this work is the Waterways and Drainage Charge, which is collected by the retail water businesses on Melbourne Water's behalf, from around 1.8 million property owners across the region.

Everyone benefits either directly or indirectly from healthy waterways and a safe, reliable drainage system.

2. What about rural areas?

The rural Waterways Charge is billed to customers living within our Waterways Management District, but outside the current Urban Growth Boundary. Rural areas mostly benefit from our waterway services and some aspects of flood protection. Because of this, a lower charge is billed to rural customers to reflect the lower level of drainage and flood protection services compared to urban customers

3. How much is the Waterways and Drainage Charge?

There will be an increase in waterways and drainage charges of 2.2% plus inflation in 2013-14 and 1.4% plus inflation for the following two years.

Waterways and Drainage Charge (annual)

PROPERTY TYPE	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16*
Residential	\$85.08	\$89.12	\$93.00	\$96.69
Non-residential (min. charge)	\$97.84	\$102.48	\$106.96	\$111.17
Non-residential (rate in dollar)	1.0417	1.0904	1.1380	1.1700
Rural	\$46.75	\$48.96	\$51.12	\$53.13

*Includes forecast CPI 2.5% for illustrative purpose (CPI is subject to change)

4. Why is the Waterways and Drainage Charge going up?

The increases will ensure Melbourne Water can continue to deliver a high level of service in the protection and improvement of waterway health, well-managed drainage networks and flood protection and mitigation.

It also accounts for the projected impacts of population growth and associated increases in demand, particularly in Melbourne's growth areas.

5. I don't receive any benefit to my property. Why should I pay?

The works that we do provide broad benefits to waterways across the catchment. Approximately 1.8 million property owners are levied the Waterways and Drainage Charge, which has existed since 1927. Spreading the costs across the whole region is the fairest possible approach as everyone benefits from healthy waterways and a safe and reliable drainage system.

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

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

The Waterways and Drainage Charge is not related to water and sewerage charges.

The charge is a separate charge collected by the local water retailers on Melbourne Water's behalf.

7. Why do I have to pay?

The Waterways and Drainage Charge has existed since the 1920s and is now paid by over 1.8 million people within our Waterway Management District boundary. Every Melburnian benefits from a well-managed drainage network and healthy waterways. The Waterways and Drainage Charge is the fairest way of funding these services and is approved by the independent pricing regulator – the Essential Services Commission.

8. What's my legislative requirement?

Section 259 of the Water Act 1989 (Part 13) permits Melbourne Water to levy waterways and drainage charges on properties within its "Waterway Management District". All properties deemed rateable under the meaning of the Local Government Act 1989 are liable for the Waterways and Drainage Charge. So, if you pay council rates, the charge will apply.