

What we heard in 2025



In 2025 we held pop-ups in **three small towns**, organised stalls at **two country shows** and ran another pop-up at **Gateway Plaza** (for one day a week over four weeks) as part of our annual Community Roadshow. We have one more town to visit before the end of the year.



What we heard

We've had face-to-face discussions with thousands of customers over the past three years.

They have consistently told us that the things they most want to see from Wannon Water are:

- Fair pricing for all.
- A focus on sustainability
- Reliable services.

As we get closer to the next price submission to the Essential Services Commission, we've been drilling a little deeper into these areas to really understand what it is that our customers need from us.

Fair pricing

Our customers continue to say that our bills feel less affordable. A number of them highlighted the relatively high fixed costs for water supply and sewerage services.

Our engagement program provides an opportunity for us to let customers know about the range of financial support measures we can offer. They are grateful for the non-judgemental assistance they receive when they need it.

It also allows us to explain why our bills are structured the way they are and what is actually covered by the fixed portion of their bills.

Sustainability

Our communities are interested in what we're doing to ensure we have enough water for the future and they want to know more about our sustainability projects and environmental impacts.

With drought conditions affecting much of South West Victoria over recent years, our customers have been questioning whether or not we should be introducing water restrictions.

We've had lots of discussion around how our customers would prioritise water use. Their top four are:

- Household use.
- Water to support natural eco-systems.
- Water for farming and agricultural production.
- Water for cultural flows.

Most people were prepared to let their home gardens go if water became scarce.



Feel free to contact us with any further feedback

engagement@wannonwater.com.au | 1300 926 666

wannonwater.com.au



Reliability

Reliable service means different things to different people. For some, it simply means knowing that they can turn a tap on or flush the toilet and everything just works without having to think about it. For others it's recognition of our outstanding customer service and prompt response to call-outs.

For customers in our groundwater towns, reliability means having water they're happy to drink and that doesn't damage household appliances.

Customers in Port Fairy, Portland and Heywood have been very interested in learning more about Quality Water for Wannon, particularly the timing, how reverse osmosis works, and what they can expect the water to taste like afterwards.

Overall insights

Our engagement reach in 2025 was slightly higher than in 2024, even though our focus was on quality over quantity, and on par with previous years. This suggests we are on track for comparable or higher levels of engagement by the end of the 2023-28 pricing period compared to the previous pricing period.

Overall, and despite some differences between data sets (likely due to differences in timing and engagement methodology), customer perception results remained relatively stable. Wannon Water is generally seen as a reliable and affordable organisation, with most customers accessing our services with little or no concerns. Our reputation across the region continues to be strong, and our efforts to lead innovation in sustainability are deemed important and appreciated.

What we heard in 2025

What we're planning to do in 2026/27

Water quality

- The key area for improvement continues to be water quality, with increased concerns about taste and smell, but also water pressure. Portland, Heywood and Port Fairy leads the way in this, but also all other areas reporting dissatisfaction with the quality of our water.**

There has also been an increase in water pressure concerns from our customers.
- Continue the work on the multi-year Quality Water for Wannon Program to improve the taste of water in all three towns.
 - Consider an approach for appropriately managing our requirements and resources for water quality improvements in identified communities.
 - Consider an approach for appropriately managing expectations for customers with water quality issues in other towns.
 - We will build an understanding of how to approach water pressure challenges across our communities.
 - We will consider an approach to work more closely with Councils to build understanding about water pressure in planning for future developments.

Billing affordability

- Our customers continue to say that our bills feel less affordable.**

There was an increase in our customers expressing dissatisfaction with our fixed charges vs our variable charges.
- Implement year four of our 2023-28 Customer Experience Strategy and improve our support for customers experiencing vulnerability, including:
 - Partner with community organisations to better understand our customers and to be able to provide support and further expand engagement and education with all vulnerable cohorts.
 - Develop customer journey maps to understand the customers' experience of paying bills to ensure our support measures are accessible to all.
 - Implement insights derived from greater understanding on how to support customers with utility relief grants (URGs).

What we heard in 2025

What we're planning to do in 2026/27

- Develop and maintain regional and sector networks to enhance customer support for those experiencing vulnerability, and expand on our water literacy initiatives.
- Review and consider our approach including potential adjustments relating to customers' control over their bills.
- Build greater awareness of current charges and understand customers' expectations including sewage, water charges and water use.
- Commence a long-term conversation with our customers about the financial challenges we face.

Sustainability and reliability

Our communities are interested in what we are doing to ensure we have enough water for the future and want to know more about our sustainability projects and environmental impacts.

- Develop a 5-year roadmap to include NetZero and climate adaptation initiatives.
- Continue the "Every Drop Counts" campaign and evaluate the outcomes of the water smart town.
- Expand our water literacy education, including alternative water sources, Permanent Water Saving Rules, and water security initiatives.
- Promote the benefits of the SWEP program and water loggers for schools and businesses.
Advance the Gellibrand River Restoration and Supply resilience project and promote its environmental and water security benefits.
- Maintain relationships with regional interest groups to continue and expand our education and engagement regarding environmental impacts.