

Q&As – Government Water Rebate

What is the \$100 Government Water Rebate?

This is a discount provided by South East Water on behalf of the state government on water bills of residential water customers who receive water usage charges. It is issued once a year on the first quarter bill (July, August, September); it was first issued in 2014–15, and is due to be provided each year until 2017–18.

Who receives the \$100 Government Water Rebate?

Melbourne residential water customers who receive a bill from a water corporation that includes water usage charges receive a \$100 bill reduction. This means most owner occupiers and tenants will receive the \$100 saving.

How will I know if I've received the \$100 Government Water Rebate?

If you're eligible for the \$100 rebate, it will appear as a line item on the front page of your July, August or September bill showing *Government Water Rebate* and that a \$100 credit has been applied.

I'm on a payment plan. Have you accounted for my \$100 Government Water Rebate?

Yes, your payment plan does account for the \$100 rebate.

My account is in credit. Can I have the money returned to me?

If you're on a payment plan, we encourage you to keep your account in credit until you renew your payment plan and we recalculate your payments. If you'd prefer your payment plan takes into account the \$100 rebate, we'll need to cancel your current plan and start a new one.

If you pay your bill quarterly, the credit on this bill will continue to carry forward until your costs are more than your total credit.

I'm moving house before I'm due to receive my next bill, which will have the Government Water Rebate. Does this mean I will miss out?

Assuming you let us know you're moving out, you'll receive a closing account for the remaining charges incurred at your property. If you're eligible for the rebate, you haven't received it yet and it falls within the first quarter of the financial year, your closing account will include the \$100 rebate.

If you move out before you receive your July, August or September bill, you will not be eligible for the rebate.

Who is exempt from receiving the \$100 Government Water Rebate?

As the \$100 rebate is for residential customers who receive water usage charges, it means landlords, customers who only receive a bill for waterways and drainage or Parks Charge, and customers with a non-residential /business account will not receive the Government Water Rebate.

If my property shares a water meter with other properties, do we all receive the \$100 rebate?

Melbourne residential water customers who receive a bill from a water corporation that includes water usage charges will get the \$100 rebate. This will be included in their first bill for 2016–17.

I'm a landlord. Do I get the \$100 rebate at my investment property and at the property I live in?

Melbourne residential water customers who receive a bill from a water corporation that includes water usage charges will get the \$100 rebate. Assuming your investment property is in Melbourne, the \$100 rebate will be applied to the bill that includes a water usage charge for that property (this is typically the tenant's bill). The same applies to the property that you live in.

I use less than \$100 of water each year. Can I get a refund of the balance? Can I have that now or do I have to wait until the end of the financial year?

If your total bill is less than \$100, then your account would go into credit when the rebate is applied.

I'm buying a property in the second billing period of the financial year. The previous owner would have got the \$100 rebate. Will I get one too?

The rebate is passed to households in the first billing period of the financial year so you will not receive the rebate for the 2016–17 financial year. You will however, receive the rebate in the first billing period of the next financial year when the rebate is expected to be applied again, provided you continue to receive water usage bills for the property.

What happens if I move interstate?

The rebate will be delivered from July 2016. If you move interstate before you receive your first water bill for the 2016–17 year, you will not receive the savings.

What happens for deceased estates?

The savings will be delivered from July 2016 and will be delivered to deceased estates which continue to be charged water usage charges.

Why is the rebate being confined to residential customers only?

The Government Water Rebate was implemented to relieve cost-of-living pressures on Victorian households.

Will hardship protections for vulnerable customers be maintained?

Yes. Each of the water corporations has a program in place to help vulnerable customers and these programs will continue. There is also the Victorian water and sewerage concession which provides a 50 percent discount off water and sewerage charges up to an annual maximum. For 2016–17, this maximum is \$305.50 (for water and sewer) should you have an eligible concession card. Water corporations also have hardship policies as part of their customer service charters.

The reduction in water bills delivered by Government Water Rebate will further help those who are experiencing financial hardship.

Why has the name changed from Fairer Water Bills to Government Water Rebate?

The name change is intended to provide a simple description about the rebate provided.

Where does the money come from for Government Water Rebate?

The rebate is able to be provided through initiatives, including:

- lower interest costs of debt
- innovative use of technology like using of SMS technology to send customer bill reminders, saving printing and postage costs
- the use of more in-house staff training programs rather than using external training providers
- more efficient scheduling of maintenance and capital works
- greater efficiency in processes within the water corporations