Water Prices in Australia

Water is a limited resource. In Australia, our cities rely on water from diverse sources: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra rely on surface water catchments and reservoirs; Perth uses surface and groundwater reservoirs; Adelaide is dependent on the Murray River.

Growing urban populations and the potential impacts of climate change have driven the need for our governments to ensure water distribution is managed efficiently and to preserve our resource in the long term. The cost for developing the necessary infrastructure and managing the water distribution has pushed water prices upwards over recent years – and prices are considered to only go higher.

Who Determines Water Prices?

The National Water Initiative (NWI) pricing principles guides the pricing of water in Australia. The principles were developed jointly by the Australian Government and state and territory governments to assist states implement water pricing in a consistent way.
Bulk water prices are then set by the State Governments and water is then distributed and billed in each region by either the local council or water authority.

**Understanding Your Water Bill**

Your water bill is generally made up of two charges:

- a fixed-fee service use charge – that covers the supply of water to your home and connection to sewerage systems, and
- a variable water use charge – calculated on the actual amount of water used.

Water use is priced per kilolitre (1,000 litres). To encourage more efficient water usage, some states use “tiered pricing” for water use – meaning the more water you use, the higher the rates your water will be charged at.

**e.g. South Australia water usage charges as at January 2016.**

![Urban Water Prices in South Australia](image)


While many states vary water prices depending on the location of the property (city or a rural area), other states, such as South Australia and Northern Territory, apply the same water usage rates to all residents. From mid-2017, Tasmanian residents will also pay the same rate for their water usage no matter the region.
## Water Prices per Capital City

Water prices per Australian Capital City (as at January 2016) are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Price Per Kilolitre</th>
<th>State Water Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide, SA</td>
<td>$2.35 – $3.63</td>
<td>SA Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane, Qld</td>
<td>$2.658</td>
<td>Queensland Department of Energy and Water Supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra, ACT</td>
<td>$2.60 – $5.22</td>
<td>Icon Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darwin, NT</td>
<td>$1.907</td>
<td>Power Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobart, Tas</td>
<td>$0.9711</td>
<td>TasWater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne, Vic</td>
<td>$2.5877 – $3.7494</td>
<td>South East Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>$2.276</td>
<td>Sydney Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth, WA</td>
<td>$1.518</td>
<td>Water Corporation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) [Water Account, Australia, 2013-14: Main Findings](https://www.abs.gov.au), South Australian households pay the highest price for urban distributed water (once you account for the service fee costs), followed by Tasmanian households, Victorian households and then Queensland.

Water prices are almost certain to continue rise so installing rainwater tanks could help protect you from these further price increases. For more information, see our article: [Save with Rainwater Tanks and Beat Future Water Price Hikes](https://www.teampoly.com.au/knowledge-base/water-prices-in-australia/).

---

If you have found this article helpful, contact us today to discuss your needs:

**Phone:** 1300 658 961   **Website:** www.teampoly.com.au

**Web version (current):**

**Visit our Knowledge Base for more articles:**
Team Poly is an Australian owned company which has been manufacturing water tanks and associated polyethylene products since 1991 and is part of the National Poly Industries Group, Australia’s largest supplier of water tanks.

1300 658 961
www.teampoly.com.au

Team Poly Tanks Pty Ltd
27 Heath Street
Lonsdale, SA 5160
ABN 79 162 065 778