

# Media Release



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## Summer turns up heat on water services

While summer is still deciding its thermostat setting, Christmas is nigh.

This is the season for bursts and leaks in the water industry ... and the annual quest to keep pipe and pump infrastructure at peak performance is cranking up the heat on Western Water's standby crews.

"Pipeline breaks and leaks happen more often in summer, mainly due to the extremes between hot and cold we experience in Victoria," Western Water managing director John Wilkinson said today.

"The earth contracts quickly when the hot weather sets in, or, as we saw last month, one week it's 40 degrees plus and the next it struggles to make 20 degrees."

Mr Wilkinson said during the 2008-09 year, Western Water crews attended almost 3000 customer service requests for issues involving either drinking water or wastewater supply services, and almost 30 per cent of these happened outside working hours.

"Crews are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to ensure customers are affected by these incidents as little as possible," he said.

"With more than 1700km of drinking water pipe networks and more than 1000km of sewer pipes, there are literally millions of potential locations where small leaks can occur."

He said while Western Water deals with fewer than 20 pipeline bursts or leaks a month in the cooler seasons, this figure often doubles over the summer period.

"These breaks are mostly caused by a combination of hot weather conditions and reactive soils in our area, which tend to expand significantly in summer.

"To cope with the anticipated increase in bursts and leaks activity over summer, Western Water has several response crews based around the region who are trained to manage such incidents," Mr Wilkinson said.

"But while crews undertake regular water patrols and maintenance inspections, everyone needs to stay alert and let Western Water know if they spot a leak or unexplained water in their area."

He urged people to call Western Water as soon as they saw any signs of leaks in their water or wastewater systems on 1300 650 425.

"It's very important to conserve the scarce water resources we have left after the unprecedented years of drought and climate change we have experienced," Mr Wilkinson said.

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### About Western Water

Western Water is one of Victoria's 13 regional urban water corporations. We provide water, recycled water and sewerage services to over 53,000 properties and 134,810 people in an area of 3,000 square kilometres. Our region extends from Lancefield in the north to Melton and Rockbank in the south and from Myrning in the west to Bulla in the east. We incorporate parts of Hume City Council and Melton, Moorabool and Macedon Ranges Shire Councils.

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