

# Media Release

**The Hon Gayle Tierney MP**  
Minister for Skills and TAFE  
Minister for Water



Friday, 4 April 2025

## **BOOSTING MELBOURNE'S WATER STORAGES**

The Allan Labor Government is making sure there is enough drinking water for Melbourne and Geelong while supporting the state during dry conditions.

Minister for Water Gayle Tierney placed an order for 50 gigalitres of water from the Victorian Desalination Plant – based on independent advice from Victorian water corporations, which takes into account water storages levels, future demands and forecast climate conditions.

This decision follows Geelong storages hitting a six year low of 42.2 percent and the first double digit annual decline in Melbourne's water storage levels since the Millenium Drought.

Melbourne's water storages are 78.1 percent compared with 91.5 percent at the same time last year – a difference of 230 billion litres. This decline is due to below average rainfall in Victoria over the past 12 months.

Melbourne's population grew by 140,000 last year, putting pressure on water supplies. Melbourne uses 50 to 70 gigalitres more water than what is captured in reservoirs from rainfall each year.

The decision to order desalinated water is made each year based on yearly weather changes and expert advice from our water authorities.

Regular desalinated water orders are a normal part of Melbourne's drinking water supply, helping to top up storages and provide a buffer in the event of severe drought. They also support surrounding regions including South Gippsland and Geelong.

The recent hot and dry conditions, including Victoria's driest summer in more than a decade, are expected to continue through autumn increasing our reliance on stored and desalinated water.

The Victorian Desalination Plant can provide up to one-third of the Melbourne's annual water demand, underpinning supply not just for Melbourne but also surrounding areas including Geelong and parts of Gippsland.

To date, the Victorian Desalination Plant has produced 455 billion litres of fresh drinking water for Greater Melbourne and regional areas.

Even with the desalination order, Melbourne's household water bills will remain among the cheapest in Australia.

Desalinated water, along with recycled water, stormwater harvesting and water efficiency programs, are part of the Labor Government's work to ensure secure water supplies and put downward pressure on water bills.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Gayle Tierney**

*"We're making sure that families in Geelong and Melbourne have access to an affordable, safe and secure drinking water supply and the Desalination Plant is critical to delivering this."*

*"We know that in a severe drought storage levels can drop by 20 per cent in as little as a year, which is why we're acting now to avoid water restrictions and put us in a strong position for the long term."*