



Water utility customer satisfaction survey results

6 December 2023


1 What is the customer satisfaction survey?

IPART conducts a customer satisfaction survey (Survey) 4 times a year to understand how satisfied customers are with their water providers. We are surveying the customers of one water provider, Central Coast Council Water, this financial year. From 2019 until May 2023, we also surveyed Sydney Water and Hunter Water's customers.

We have set out the results of the September 2023 Survey in Figure 1 of this fact sheet. We compare Central Coast Council Water's results with 3 Victorian utilities which are similar in function and customer base: Barwon Water, Goulburn Valley Water and Central Highlands Water. The Essential Services Commission (ESC) surveys the Victorian water utilities' customers with the same 4 focus questions. The most recent results can be found on its [website](#).

We expect our next Survey to be published by February 2024.

2 Why are we conducting the survey?

 We conduct the customer satisfaction survey to assess customers' perceptions of the level of service that Central Coast Council Water provides. Central Coast Council Water has historically had lower customer satisfaction ratings compared to Sydney Water and Hunter Water, and it is not required to consult customers to understand their preferences.

3 How have we chosen the comparators?

We have taken a different approach with our customer survey this year. We have not surveyed customers of Sydney Water and Hunter Water in this year's Survey. Their results have largely remained stable since we began the Survey, and they are both required to engage with their customers to understand their needs and preferences in preparation for their 2024 pricing reviews under the IPART pricing framework. Central Coast Council Water does not have the same requirements until it is preparing for its next pricing review in 2026. The Tribunal may, in future, decide to return to surveying Sydney Water and Hunter Water's customers to benchmark their satisfaction results.

We continue to survey Central Coast Council Water's customers to understand their perspectives on the utility because its past performance has not been as stable as that of Sydney Water and Hunter Water.

We have compared the Survey results for Central Coast Council Water with Barwon Water, Goulburn Valley Water and Central Highlands Water. These are Victorian water utilities, which are similar in customer size and function to Central Coast Council Water.

4 How did Central Coast Council Water perform?

Central Coast Council Water's results have increased over the past year

Survey results indicate that Central Coast Council Water's value for money, trust and reputation have gradually been increasing over the past year.

Customers' overall satisfaction with Central Coast Council Water dipped between June 2022 and May 2023 but is beginning to return to April 2021 levels.

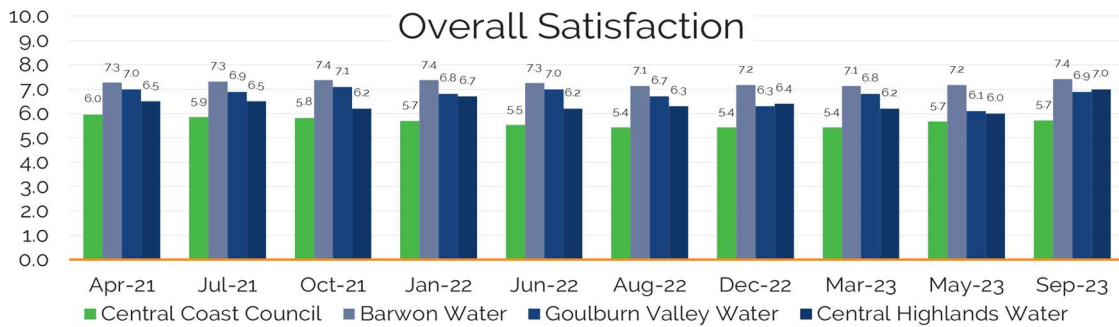
We ask customers 4 questions in the Survey. The Survey results have been summarised in Figure 1.

1. How would you rate your water/wastewater provider on delivering value for money?
2. How would you rate your trust for your water/wastewater provider?
3. How would you rate your water/wastewater provider's reputation in the community?
4. How would you rate your satisfaction with your water/wastewater provider as a service provider overall?

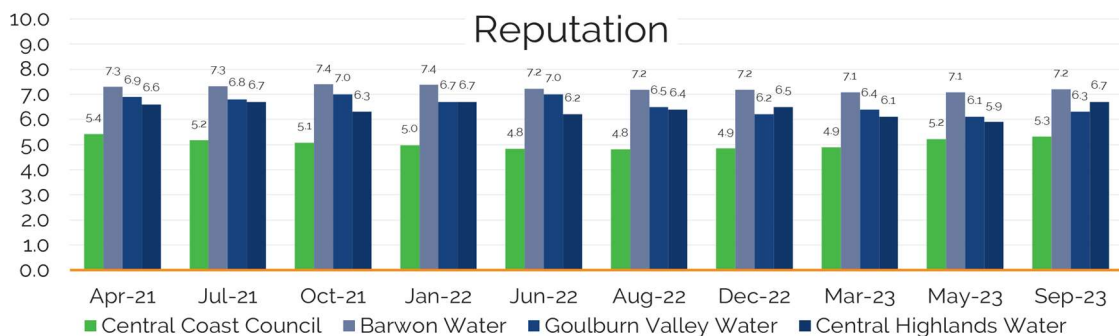
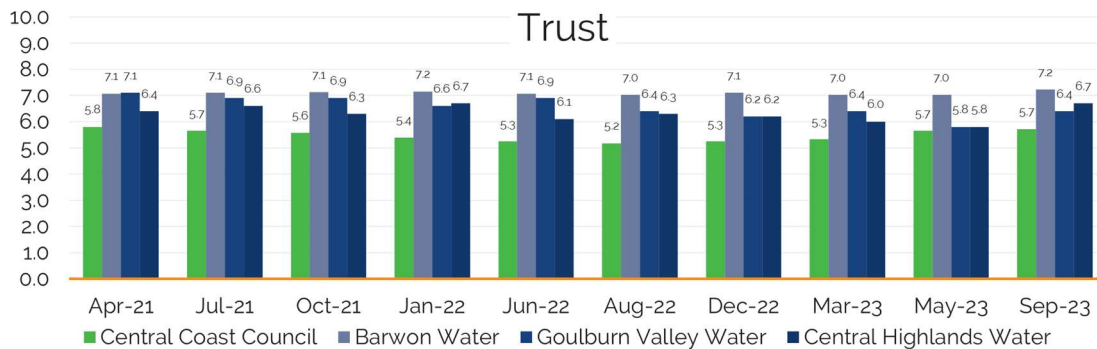
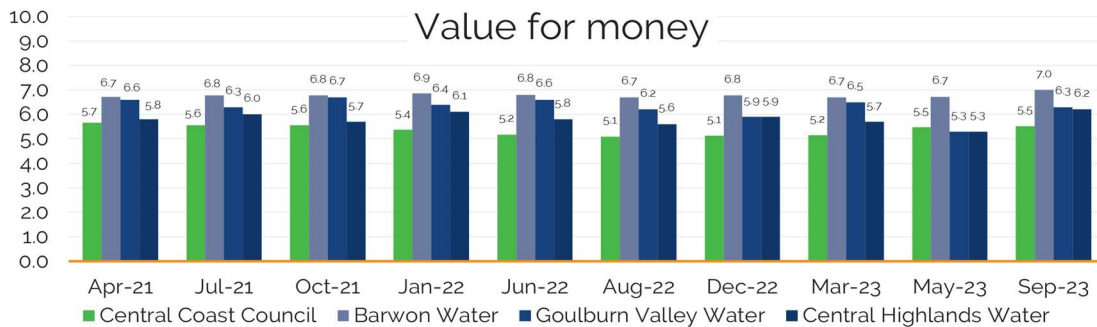
Each graph corresponds to one of the 4 questions asked and shows the average result for each survey conducted since 2020. The graphs include the rolling annual averages of the Survey results that we have collected over the past 4 rounds of the Survey. For example, the September 2023 results are the averages of the Survey results collected in December 2022, and March, May and September 2023.

We are not surveying Hunter Water or Sydney Waters customer satisfaction this financial year, but for information, we have noted those utilities' historical average results at the bottom of the graph for "overall satisfaction" in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Customer satisfaction results for Central Coast Council Water and comparators in Victoria



Note: We have compared Central Coast Council's results to utilities in Victoria which have similar functions and are of a similar size: Barwon Water, Goulburn Valley Water and Central Highlands Water. Over the 3-year period (June 2020-May 2023) that we surveyed Hunter Water's customers its 'overall satisfaction' score averaged 6.9. During that same period, Sydney Water had an 'overall satisfaction' average of 7.1.



5 How do we conduct the Survey?

We have conducted this Survey with Central Coast Council Water's customers since the 2020-21 financial year. We survey a sample of customers on their views of their water utility 4 times a year. We present the results as a rolling 12-month average.

In each round of the Survey, we aim to survey 100 customers of Central Coast Council Water's services, totalling around 400 customers each year.

We use the same Survey as the ESC uses in Victoria. This allows us to compare Central Coast Council Water's performance with Barwon Water, Goulburn Valley Water and Central Highlands Water.

6 Who can I contact if I have questions?

We expect to publish the next round of Survey results by February 2024. Please direct any enquiries to Mamata Titus, Principal Analyst, on (02) 9113 7750 or at mamata.titus@ipart.nsw.gov.au