



March 2016 Water Main Burst Event

Review of SA Water's performance

June 2016

Enquiries concerning this report should be addressed to:

Essential Services Commission
GPO Box 2605
Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone: (08) 8463 4444
Freecall: 1800 633 592 (SA and mobiles only)
E-mail: escosa@escosa.sa.gov.au
Web: www.escosa.sa.gov.au

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Glossary of terms

Code	Water Retail Code for Major Retailers
Commission	Essential Services Commission established under the Essential Services Commission Act 2002
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
IMS	Incident Management System
SA Water	South Australian Water Corporation established under the South Australian Water Corporation Act 1994
SAPN	SA Power Networks
SES	State Emergency Service

Executive summary

The Essential Services Commission (**Commission**) monitors and reports on the South Australian Water Corporation's (**SA Water**) performance against annual service standards targets and regulatory obligations, with public reporting occurring through the annual Regulatory Performance Report. At times, however, events may occur during the year that warrant special ad hoc reporting outside of that standard framework. Those events are determined, and reviews are conducted, in accordance with the Commission's Significant Performance Event Reporting Framework for Water.

On 7 March 2016, there were a series of bursts on SA Water's water distribution network in Campbelltown, Paradise and Newton. These bursts resulted in flooding to surrounding properties. No customer water supply interruptions occurred as a result of the bursts, as they occurred on a trunk main that distributes water across networks and does not directly supply customers.

The Commission determined that this event met the criteria of being a significant performance event as

- ▶ it needed to undertake a review to be confident that SA Water has complied with its obligations under the Water Retail Code – Major Retailers, and
- ▶ there is strong stakeholder interest in the performance of SA Water in responding to the bursts.

Accordingly, a review of the event commenced on 8 March. The review focused on SA Water's systems, processes, controls and responses in relation to the main bursts – with particular emphasis on telephone call responsiveness, attendance at the bursts and restoration of supply. The Commission sought to understand the course of events, SA Water's response and actions and to identify opportunities for improvements in resident outcomes. Community views and the views of affected residents were sought and have informed the review.

The information available suggests that there are opportunities for improvement in SA Water's operational response to significant and emergency situations.

The Commission acknowledges the actions taken by SA Water to support residents in response to the bursts. However, it is of the view that if this incident had been declared in accordance with SA Water's emergency management framework, the response may have been better coordinated and may have resulted in better resident outcomes. The Commission considers that SA Water should:

- ▶ review its policies and procedures to formalise notification and other procedures for residents being impacted by property damage as a result of a burst (even if that resident's water supplies have not been affected)
- ▶ give consideration to the role contact centre staff play in identifying and escalating events which may be considered an emergency, including whether current procedures allow jobs to be escalated where multiple reports have been made alerting SA Water to an emergency situation, and
- ▶ consider the implementation of a more integrated communications strategy, as there would be benefit in SA Water maintaining reliable, accurate and timely information on its website to inform affected parties and stakeholders following significant or emergency events.

The Commission notes that SA Water has initiated its own review of the response processes in relation to major incidents, with a view to improving its processes. Further, an internal investigation is underway to determine why an emergency incident was not declared as intended by SA Water's emergency response framework.

The Commission will continue to liaise with SA Water on these matters and will publish a follow up report if there is a material change to the facts or observations contained in this report. In all other cases, finalised observations and conclusions regarding the significant performance event beginning 7 March 2016 will be addressed in the Commission's Regulatory Performance Report for SA Water, due to be released in late 2016.

1 Introduction

On 7 March 2016, there were a series of bursts on SA Water's water distribution network in Campbelltown, Paradise and Newton. These bursts resulted in flooding to surrounding properties and constitute a significant performance event in accordance with the Commission's Significant Performance Event Reporting Framework for Water.¹

Accordingly, a review of the event commenced on 8 March 2016. The review focused on SA Water's systems, processes, controls and responses in relation to its response to the mains bursts – with particular emphasis on telephone call responsiveness, attendance at the bursts and restoration of supply. It did not cover issues relating to the cause of the bursts and associated technical, safety, maintenance and reliability considerations, as those fall within the remit of the Technical Regulator.

The Commission sought to understand the course of events, SA Water's response and actions and to identify opportunities for improvements in resident outcomes. Community views and the views of affected residents were sought by the Commission and have informed this review.

1.1 Significant Event Reporting Framework

While the Commission assesses some aspects of a water retailer's performance against annual service standards and regulatory obligations, events may occur during the year that warrant special ad hoc reporting.

For example, an event that may result in large numbers of customers being without a retail service for an extended period, posing questions as to the water retailer's ability to meet an annual service standard and whether the retailer has used best endeavours in its effort to restore supply.

These are significant performance events. The Commission has regard to the following criteria when determining whether or not an event constitutes a significant performance event:

- ▶ A significant number of customers are affected for a lengthy duration, or there is reason to believe that a significant number of customers may have been affected for a lengthy duration.
- ▶ The event is likely to seriously impact on the licensed entity's ability to meet one of more of its annual service standard(s).
- ▶ The Commission needs to undertake a review to be confident that the licensed entity has complied with its obligations under the relevant industry code(s).
- ▶ There is strong stakeholder interest, or there is anticipated to be strong stakeholder interest.

The criteria recognise that a balance needs to be struck between reporting on every event and the resources it entails, and meeting stakeholder expectations on the provision of information in such situations.

¹ Refer: <http://www.escosa.sa.gov.au/water-overview/reporting-and-compliance/significant-performance-event-reporting-framework.aspx>.

The Commission determined that the March 2016 event met the criteria of being a significant performance event as

- ▶ it needed to undertake a review to be confident that SA Water has complied with its obligations under the Water Retail Code – Major Retailers² (**Code**), and
- ▶ there is strong stakeholder interest in the performance of SA Water in responding to the bursts.

It is important to reiterate that all significant events will be reviewed and reported in the annual Regulatory Performance Report³. The purpose of designating a significant performance event is to determine that an immediate review and reporting on an event should occur.

1.2 Water Retail Code

The SA Water regulatory framework has two aspects: a regulatory determination which sets the maximum amount of revenue that SA Water can recover from its customers for the delivery of water and sewerage retail services; and a consumer protection framework, setting out the consumer protections and service standard performance targets with which SA Water must comply.

The Code, which is part of the consumer protection framework, sets out minimum requirements to be complied with by SA Water when dealing with its customers and includes obligations relating to the quality, safety and reliability of the water and sewerage supply.

This includes the obligation for SA Water to have in place, and comply with, policies, practices and procedures to deal with a burst, leak, blockage or spill in respect of its sewerage infrastructure or water infrastructure (clause 16.10). Further, SA Water must provide those records to the Commission for inspection and review on request (clause 16.10.3(b)).

1.3 Service Standards

SA Water also has an annual obligation to use its best endeavours to achieve service standards relating to retail service reliability performance. The Commission monitors SA Water's performance to assess whether the standards are being met.

The Commission has set service standards relating to SA Water's attendance to the site of a break, burst and leak within specified timeframes (refer Table 1). Recognising that not all such incidents are of the same scale or impact, and that not all bursts lead to a loss of supply, the service standards distinguish between different priority classes:

- ▶ **Priority 1** – high-priority events where a leak or burst may result in total loss of supply to a customer, major loss of water or damage to property, or may pose immediate danger to people or the environment.
- ▶ **Priority 2** – all other bursts or system failures.

² Refer: <http://www.escosa.sa.gov.au/water-overview/codes-guidelines/water-codes.aspx>.

³ Refer: <http://www.escosa.sa.gov.au/water-overview/reporting-and-compliance/regulatory-performance-reports.aspx>.

Table 1: Timeliness of attendance at water breaks, bursts & leaks annual service standards

Service standard	Metropolitan target	Regional target
Priority 1 event attended within 1 hour	95%	95%
Priority 1 event attended within 2 hours	99%	99%
Priority 2 event attended within 5 hours	95%	95%
Priority 2 event attended within 12 hours	99%	99%

The standards have two elements. First, SA Water is set an annual target. Second, SA Water is required to use best endeavours to meet that target.

Where a target is not met, SA Water can still meet the standard if it can demonstrate to the Commission's satisfaction that best endeavours were used in attempting to meet the target. Under the Code, best endeavours means *'to act in good faith and use all reasonable efforts, skill and resources to achieve an outcome in the circumstances'*.

Information on SA Water's performance against this service standard, and information on historical rates of bursts generally, can be found on the Commission's website.⁴

⁴ Refer: <http://www.escosa.sa.gov.au/water-overview/reporting-and-compliance/regulatory-performance-reports.aspx>.

2 Review of SA Water's performance

2.1 Summary of event

During the routine draining of a drinking water holding tank at Hope Valley water treatment plant, on 7 March 2016, a series of valves were operated in a sequence that likely caused a pressure surge in the network rupturing a 450 millimetre water trunk main in several locations in Campbelltown, Paradise and Newton.⁵

On the same day, four water main bursts were reported, which caused internal and external flooding at the following locations:

- ▶ Clairville Road, Campbelltown (two reports)
- ▶ Young Street / Gorge Road, Newton, and
- ▶ Willow Drive, Paradise

From 9 March 2016 to 11 March 2016 a further three bursts were identified, following recharge of the main in the following locations:

- ▶ Young Street, Newton
- ▶ Greenwillow Avenue, Paradise, and
- ▶ Gorge Road, Paradise

Approximately 12 megalitres⁶ of drinking water was discharged as a result of the bursts. Refer to Map 1 for the location of the trunk main and bursts.

2.2 Performance assessment

The Commission has reviewed SA Water's performance in context of the current regulatory framework. Specifically, the Commission has assessed SA Water's response to the bursts against the following Code requirements:

- ▶ **Clause 17 – Service standards**

SA Water must use best endeavours to comply with service standards.

- ▶ **Clause 16.10 – Bursts, leaks, blockages and spills**

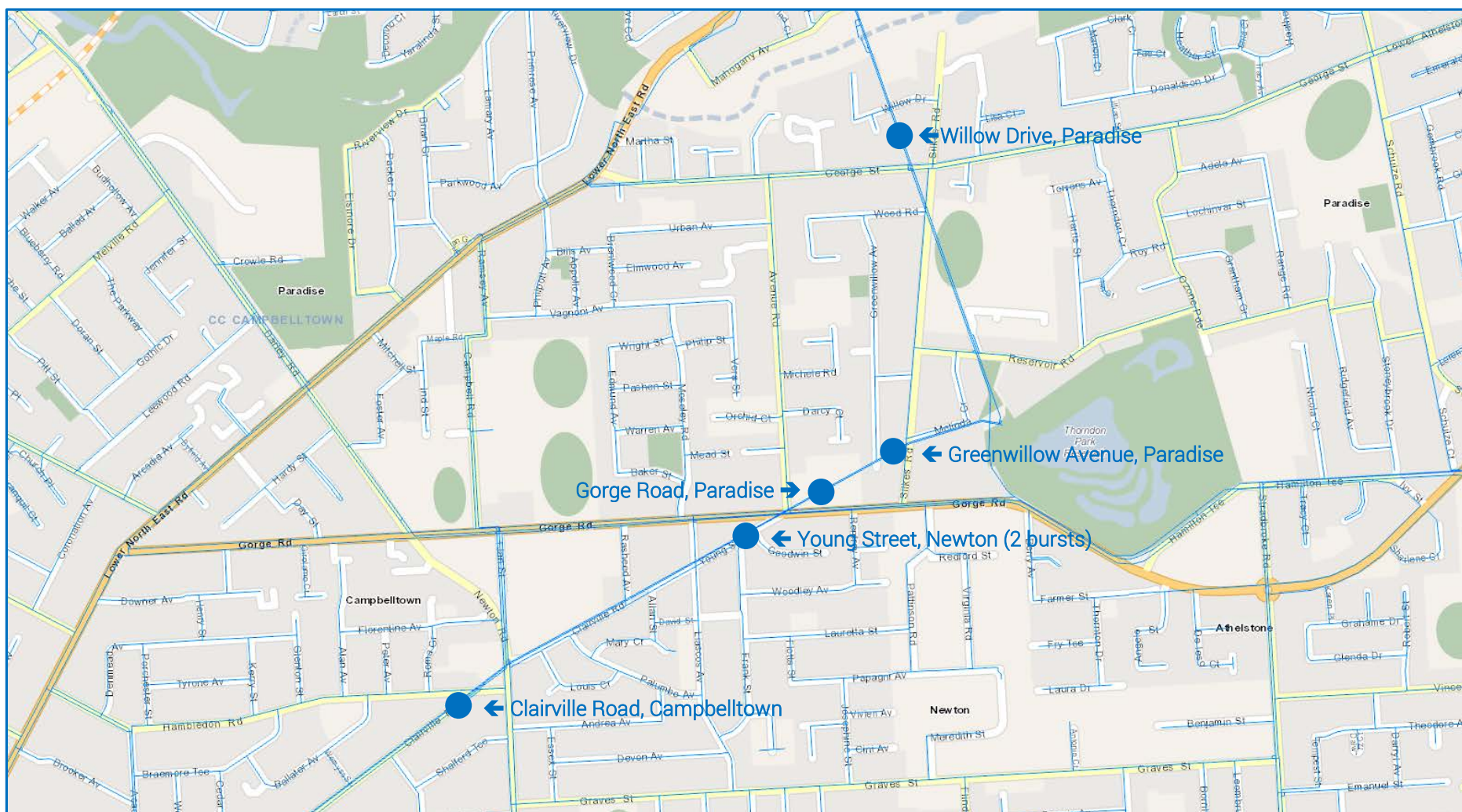
SA Water must have in place, and comply with, policies, practices and procedures (that comply with Code requirements) that deal with water infrastructure bursts.

The Commission requested, and SA Water provided, a copy of the policies, procedures and records relevant to the bursts under review.

⁵ Refer <https://www.sawater.com.au/news/report-into-probable-cause-of-burst-mains>.

⁶ One megalitre is equal to one million litres.

Map 1: Location of bursts



Refer Location SA map viewer: <http://location.sa.gov.au/viewer/?map=roads&x=138.68227&y=-34.87464&z=16&uids=84>

2.3 Timeliness of attendance – Clause 17

The Commission reviewed the following records relating to SA Water’s timeliness of attendance at the bursts:

- ▶ an extract from MAXIMO (SA Water’s works management system)
- ▶ a review of voice recordings taken for the seven reports, and
- ▶ SA Water Paradise / Campbelltown Main Burst Report.

The burst location, description of the incident as recorded in SA Water’s works management system (MAXIMO), priority category assigned to the incident, time the report was made to SA Water and the time of attendance are displayed in Table 2 below.

In terms of attendance, the response time indicates when an Allwater network technician (SA Water’s maintenance contractor) first attended a location. Generally, this will be a single technician who will turn off supply (where possible) and organise for the appropriate repair crew and equipment to attend the site. Repair of any damage and re-establishment of supply occurs after the noted response time.

Table 2: Timeliness of attendance

#	Location	Description	Priority category	Reported time	Response time	Minutes to respond
1	Clairville Road, Campbelltown	Leak on Footpath - Flowing	Priority 2 – 5 hours	7/03/2016 2:23 pm	Escalated to Priority 1 – 1 hour (refer job #2)	
2	Clairville Road, Campbelltown	Burst on Road Water Damage Occurring	Priority 1 – 1 hour	7/03/2016 2:24 pm	7/03/2016 2:36 pm	12 minutes
3	Young Street / Gorge Road, Newton	Leak on road - Flooding Occurring	Priority 1 – 1 hour	7/03/2016 2:26 pm	7/03/2016 2:43 pm	17 minutes
4	Willow Drive, Paradise	Water Meter Leak - Flooding Occurring	Priority 2 – 5 hours	7/03/2016 2:29 pm	7/03/2016 3:15 pm	46 minutes
5	Young Street, Newton	Leak on Footpath - Flowing	Priority 2 – 5 hours	9/03/2016 5:30 am	9/03/2016 6:13 am	43 minutes
6	Greenwillow Avenue, Paradise	Leak on Footpath - Flowing	Priority 2 – 5 hours*	9/03/2016 6:53 am	9/03/2016 7:04 am	11 minutes
7	Gorge Road, Paradise	Leak on road - Flowing	Priority 2 – 5 hours	11/03/2016 7:30 pm	11/03/2016 10:05 pm	155 minutes

* Note: Operator escalated job with dispatch by telephone to prioritise response, given previous bursts.

Two reports were received within one minute in relation to the burst at Clairville Road, Campbelltown. The first caller indicated that there was a leak on the road and the incident was categorised as a Priority 2 event. The second caller advised SA Water that the road had cracked and that the bitumen was rising. Accordingly SA Water cancelled the first job and escalated the incident to a Priority 1 event with a one hour response time. Allwater arrived at the burst in 12 minutes.

The caller who reported the incident at Young Street/Gorge Road, Newton, noted that the road was flooding and that water was pouring out. This incident was categorised as a Priority 1 event and the caller was advised that the response time was one hour. Allwater arrived at the burst in 17 minutes.

The burst at Willow Drive, Paradise was reported to SA Water by a resident who became aware of the burst when leaving the road in their vehicle. The resident advised SA Water that water was 'going everywhere' from an empty block and that this was an emergency. SA Water noted that flooding was occurring but registered this incident as a Priority 2 water meter leak with a five hour response time. Allwater arrived at the burst in 46 minutes.

The second burst at Young Street, Newton was called in by an Allwater technician who was on site recharging the main. This was logged as a separate Priority 2 incident in MAXIMO with a five hour response time. Allwater arrived the burst in 43 minutes.

The caller who reported the burst at Greenwillow Avenue, Paradise, advised that water was leaking on a gravel pathway. The incident was categorised as a Priority 2 with a five hour response time. However, the operator advised that given the recent bursts, they would escalate the job by calling dispatch to ensure a technician attended the site as soon as possible. Allwater arrived at the burst in 11 minutes.

At Gorge Road, Paradise, a burst occurred on empty land at the rear of some residential properties. The caller advised that water was bubbling through the soil and that there was a steady flow. The incident was categorised as a Priority 2 with a five hour response time. Allwater arrived at the burst in 155 minutes.

No customer water supply interruptions occurred as a result of the bursts, as they occurred on a trunk main that distributes water across networks and does not directly supply customers.

Based on the information available to SA Water at the time the bursts were reported, it appears all calls were reasonably classified at Priority 1 or Priority 2, with the exception of the burst at Willow Drive, Paradise. The Commission is of the view that this incident should have been classified at a Priority 1 event. Despite this, the Commission notes that Allwater attended the burst within the Priority 1 timeframe of one hour as a technician arrived on site 46 minutes after the first report. Response to this burst is discussed further in section 3.

2.4 Policies, practices and procedures – Clause 16.10

The Commission reviewed the following policies and procedures which document SA Water's response to bursts and emergency events:

- ▶ Water and Recycled Water Main Repairs Procedure
- ▶ Emergency Management Policy
- ▶ Emergency Management Manual
- ▶ Emergency Response Plan – Contingency Plans for Water Network Emergencies, and
- ▶ Procedure for Claims against SA Water.

For normal business activity, the procedure to be followed by SA Water (and its contractor Allwater) in altering, replacing or repairing water mains, and clean-up requirements following a burst main is contained in the Water and Recycled Water Main Repairs Procedure. This procedure sets out the technical and notification requirements that network technicians must adhere to when responding to a burst.

Network technicians are responsible for determining the size of the burst, securing the worksite, reducing the flow of water or shutting down the main, undertaking the repairs and clean-up of work site as required. Where the burst results in an interruption of supply to customers, notification will be made verbally where the shut off block is small, otherwise by way of notice distributed to the customers address.

Events which are considered to be outside normal business activity and have the potential for adverse impact on customers, stakeholders and SA Water are responded to under SA Water's emergency management framework. For bursts specifically, the relevant policies and procedure the Emergency Management Policy, Emergency Management Manual and Emergency Response Plan – Contingency Plans for Water Network Emergencies.

The Emergency Management Manual is the guiding document for the management of emergency situation in SA Water. Activation of an emergency management team or emergency operations centre occurs based on the procedures contained within the Emergency Management Manual. This includes activation based on predefined triggers contained in an emergency response plan being satisfied.

Where an incident occurs on a strategic water main or trunk main, the Contingency Plans for Water Network Emergencies describe the course of action to be followed in the event of an incident which threatens major loss of supply to customers. This includes mobilising resources to repair the damage, provision of temporary services and notification to customers where supply is interrupted (but does not specify notification requirements where a burst causes damage to property but there is no loss of supply to customers).

The failure of a strategic trunk main is one of the predefined customer service emergency triggers in the Contingency Plans for Water Network Emergencies. With this trigger being satisfied, the emergency response framework should be activated, allowing the formation of an Emergency Management Team and Emergency Operation Centre.

An event such as this, which has the potential for significant impact on public health, the environment, property damage or extended loss of service would be classified as a medium emergency in accordance with the Emergency Management Manual. This would activate communications with various SA Water personnel and external organisations such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and State Emergency Service (SES). In addition, the Emergency Operations Centre would consider the need to issue a public warning to bring about an appropriate response to minimise exposure to danger (for example media messages, door knocks and emergency alerts).

SA Water advised that the emergency response framework was not activated in response to the bursts at Campbelltown, Paradise and Newton. Allwater had advised SA Water the situation was being managed and an emergency situation did not need to be declared and escalated. SA Water advised this was due to Allwater lacking visibility of the events occurring on the ground at the time. As a result, an Emergency Management Team and Emergency Operations Centre were not mobilised.

2.5 SA Water actions following the bursts

SA Water advised the Commission that the following actions were taken to support customers affected by the bursts:

- ▶ To provide immediate support for customers, occupants of one property were provided alternative accommodation whilst occupants of five further properties advised they were able to find alternative accommodation with family or friends.
- ▶ On Tuesday 8 March 2016 senior SA Water staff from the Customer Service and Insurance team door knocked along Willow Drive, Silkes Road and Clairville Road to speak with customers and identify support required.

- ▶ On Wednesday 9 March 2016 the Customer Service team again visited residents along Willow Drive, Silkes Road and Clairville Road and provided 22 x \$100 gift cards to customers as a gesture of goodwill to assist with immediate needs.
- ▶ SA Water staff continued to contact affected customers both face to face and by telephone to assist in coordinating clean-up activities and provision of advice in relation to insurance matters.
- ▶ SA Water has agreed to reimburse customers for insurance excess and consider reimbursing other reasonable incidental out of pocket expenses.
- ▶ SA Water will be providing bill relief which will include waiving the entire bill for those customers that experienced internal flooding (seven customers), this may include more than one quarter if they are still in temporary accommodation.
- ▶ For those customers that experienced significant external flooding SA Water will waive the supply charge for the current quarter.
- ▶ Additional time to pay current accounts will also be provided to customers.
- ▶ Affected customers were contacted by phone where possible and letters sent to all affected customers the week starting 21 March 2016. The letter advised that SA Water has completed an investigation into the cause of the bursts and that the most likely cause was related to human error in operating valves on water storage tanks at the Hope Valley Water Treatment Plant.
- ▶ A copy of the investigation report will also be made available for residents.

The Commission notes that while media releases were issued in the days following the event, the first information SA Water published on its website was on 18 March 2016. At that time, SA Water published a news release which stated:

- ▶ it had put in place interim operating procedures to ensure these types of situations are managed effectively, until longer term corrective actions can be put in place
- ▶ it commenced the investigation of the cause of the burst immediately, and collated data from all sources to determine the cause
- ▶ the SA Water Board had also instigated a review of the response processes in relation to major incidents, with a view to improving their processes for compensation for losses, and
- ▶ until the Board announces the result of this review, SA Water will continue to work with impacted customers and insurers to ensure they can return to their homes as soon as possible.⁷

⁷ Refer <https://www.sawater.com.au/news/report-into-probable-cause-of-burst-mains>.

3 Burst on Willow Drive, Paradise

The burst at Willow Drive, Paradise resulted in the most property damage of all the bursts and caused considerable inconvenience to residents. The burst occurred on a section of main located on an easement (empty land) that runs between George Street and Willow Drive, Paradise. Being close to the Torrens River bank, the site of the burst was elevated compared to properties on Willow Drive. The water travelled north along the easement until it reached Willow Drive. From there the water travelled west along Willow Drive until it reached the end of the cul-de-sac nearest to the Torrens River.

At the end of the cul-de-sac a levee bank had previously been established to protect properties from the threat of flooding from the Torrens River. Stormwater drains in the cul-de-sac drain away standard flows of rain water. The stormwater drains were not able to drain the volume of water discharged. As a result, the water level pooled at the end of the cul-de-sac, flooding properties and vehicles.

The water caused internal flooding to seven properties and external flooding to approximately 40 properties in Willow Drive and nearby Silkes Road and at least 4 vehicles were destroyed.

3.1.1 Timeline of events

The following timeline of events is based on information received from SA Water and from submissions. Please note that in some instances, the stated time is approximate based on the best available information.

- 2.29pm** – Willow Drive burst reported by resident driving past.
- 3.15pm** – Allwater network technician arrived on site.
- 3:24pm** – SES arrived on site to assist with flood control.
- 4:00pm** – Local council broke through the levee bank at the end of Willow Drive to drain flood water to the Torrens River.
- 4:30pm** – SA Power Networks (**SAPN**) de-energised electrical supply in Willow Drive.
- 5:00pm** – All mains water supplies were isolated to the area to reduce any additional risk due to the flooding in the area.
- 5:00pm** – EPA informed of discharge to the Torrens River.
- 5.00pm** – Flood water completed draining to Torrens River.
- 6:00pm** – SA Housing attended the site to assist with door to door visits and to talk to residents with Allwater to establish temporary housing requirements.
- 7:00pm** – Cleaning contractors start on site cleaning operations.
- 7.57pm** – Incident Management System (**IMS**) Type 1 incident reported to EPA.
- 9:00pm** – Overhead power lines were re-energised by SAPN and residents were informed that those on underground supply would not be put back onto power supply until the 8th March 2016 due to safety inspection and works required before re-energisation of the underground services.
- 12:00am** – (8 March) Clean-up of surface water completed with the SES demobilised from site.
- 7:00pm** – (8 March) Water main repairs completed.

3.1.2 Resident experience

The Commission consulted directly with the residents of Willow Drive as part of this review to understand their experience. The Commission thanks residents for their participation in this process. The following information has been provided to the Commission to inform this review.

- ▶ Residents are of the view that SA Water failed to effectively manage the burst that impacted residents of Willow Drive.
- ▶ Following the initial report at 2.29pm, further phone calls were made to SA Water to explain the seriousness of the situation and that homes were within inches of being inundated. Residents were advised that SA Water was on another job and that technicians were on site.
- ▶ Another resident spoke to an SA Water operator who asked what was going on, and advised they had received several reports in the area, but did not ask how severe the issue was.
- ▶ Residents also called triple zero (000) the local council and SES to report the incident and seek assistance.
- ▶ SA Water/Allwater technicians did not door knock to alert residents of the situation.
- ▶ Some residents reported that they only saw technicians in the vicinity of the burst site and not at the river end of the street where water was accumulating up due to the levee bank.
- ▶ Residents consider the burst was not managed in a pro-active way by assessing where the danger spots were, where the water was flowing to/building up, and by identifying ways of diverting the water to mitigate damage to property.
- ▶ Allwater did not provide sandbags or attempt to divert the water back towards Silkes Road, where the water could have drained into the Torrent River via the old ford.
- ▶ A resident noted that a \$100 Coles Myer gift voucher for a family of four was inadequate to provide any meaningful assistance given the significant damage experienced to properties and motor vehicles.
- ▶ Residents received a letter from Mr John Ringham, SA Water Chief Executive, detailing information relating to the water main burst. The letter was dated 24 March 2016.
- ▶ Residents experienced varying levels of customer service when contacting SA Water representatives for assistance in the days following the burst.

4 Conclusions

It is evident that the main burst event beginning 7 March 2016 was significant and resulted in substantial property damage and disruption to nearby residents. The information available to the Commission suggests that there are opportunities for improvement in SA Water's operational response to significant and emergency situations.

4.1 Policies, practices and procedures – Clause 16.10

The Commission acknowledges the actions taken by SA Water to support residents in response to the bursts. However, the Commission is of the view that if SA Water's emergency management framework had been activated in accordance with the Emergency Management Manual, the response to the incident may have been better coordinated and may have resulted in better resident outcomes.

While SA Water's Contingency Plan for Water Network Emergencies and Water and Recycled Water Main Repairs procedures are comprehensive for incidents where water supplies are disrupted, improvements can be made to cover incidents where a burst occurs but may not result in a customer interruption. This amendment would formalise notification procedures for residents being impacted by property damage as a result of a burst (even if that resident's water supplies have not been affected). Further, this would establish appropriate procedures to deal with any similar events when an emergency is declared by SA Water in accordance with its Emergency Management Manual.

SA Water should also consider the implementation of a more integrated communications strategy. While the Commission acknowledges that SA Water provided regular updates to media outlets following the event, 11 days elapsed before any information was published on SA Water's website and 17 days elapsed before residents were provided with formal written correspondence from SA Water. The Commission considers there would be benefit in SA Water maintaining reliable, accurate and timely information on its website to inform affected parties and stakeholders following significant or emergency events. Further, the issue of public warnings (such as door knocking) as set out in SA Water's Emergency Management Manual would facilitate the provision of timely information about an emergency.

4.2 Timeliness of attendance – Clause 17

Overall, SA Water's timeliness of attendance at the bursts was satisfactory and consistent with its annual service standards. However, SA Water should give further consideration to the role contact centre staff play in identifying and escalating events which may be considered an emergency. It would be prudent for SA Water to review call scripts to ensure that suitable information is sought from callers to determine Priority 1 and emergency situations. Further, SA Water should consider whether current procedures allow jobs to be escalated where multiple reports have been made alerting SA Water to an emergency situation.

4.3 Actions for SA Water

The Commission notes that SA Water has initiated its own review of the response processes in relation to major incidents, with a view to improving their processes. Further, an internal investigation is underway to determine why an emergency incident was not declared as per SA Water's emergency response framework. The Commission has requested SA Water provide it the results of this review and details of any remedial actions taken.

The Commission considers that SA Water should take into account the following when reviewing its response to the significant performance event beginning 7 March 2016.

SA Water should review its:

- ▶ system of classifying telephone reports of incidents to improve classification of bursts, breaks and leaks as either Priority 1 or Priority 2, to allow better prioritisation of emergency situations
- ▶ procedures for escalating emergency situations where multiple reports are made alerting SA Water to an emergency situation
- ▶ emergency management framework to ensure it adequately captures the identification and escalation of water main bursts which may threaten damage to property, even when there is no loss of supply to customers
- ▶ Contingency Plans for Water Network Emergencies to ensure that residents are appropriately informed where they may be impacted by property damage as a result of a burst
- ▶ Emergency Management Manual to ensure better coordination with emergency services and local councils (where relevant) to prevent property damage, and
- ▶ communication strategy to ensure the timely provision of information to residents affected by significant or emergency events.

In addition and following its review, SA Water is to provide the following further information to the Commission:

- ▶ results from its review of response processes in relation to major incidents and why the emergency response framework was not activated, and
- ▶ the actions resulting from and outcome of its review relating to the Commission's recommendations listed above.

4.4 Next steps

The Commission will continue to liaise with SA Water on these matters and will publish a follow up report if there is a material change to the facts or observations contained in this report. In all other cases, finalised observations and conclusions regarding the significant performance event beginning 7 March 2016 will be addressed in the Commission's Regulatory Performance Report for SA Water, due to be released in late 2016.



The Essential Services Commission
Level 1, 151 Pirie Street Adelaide SA 5000
GPO Box 2605 Adelaide SA 5001
T 08 8463 4444

E escosa@escosa.sa.gov.au | W www.escosa.sa.gov.au