



**Unitywater**

Serving you today, investing in tomorrow.

**Annual Report**

2018 – 2019

# Welcome

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## ABOUT THIS REPORT

Unitywater is pleased to present our Annual Report 2018-2019. This report is available on our website at [unitywater.com/annualreport](http://unitywater.com/annualreport)

A limited number of copies of this report have also been printed and are available at our Customer Service Centres at 33 King Street, Caboolture and 6-10 Maud Street, Maroochydore, between the hours of 8.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

For further information or assistance with this Annual Report please contact:

Phone: 1300 086 489

Email: [communications@unitywater.com](mailto:communications@unitywater.com)



## INTERPRETER SERVICE

We are committed to providing accessible services to Queensland residents from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this Annual Report and require an interpreter, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) by telephoning 131 450.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Unitywater respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we operate and recognises their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



## OUR CONTACT DETAILS

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Unitywater Annual Report 2018-19

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# Message from the Chairman

Throughout our ninth year of operations, Unitywater continued to be one of the best water utilities in Australia. We deliver great results for our customers and our stakeholders.

Our strategic focus has always been to keep our prices low, without compromising the quality of service we provide. For the fifth consecutive year we were able to announce a price freeze on Unitywater's water and sewerage usage charges.

We achieved this while delivering a profit of \$151.8 million. After excluding developer contributions of cash and gifted assets, our loss was \$0.2 million.

The people living in our service area now comprise 17% of Queensland's population. As their needs change and our communities grow, we are making decisions to ensure we continue to serve them well, maintain our compliance with water quality and sewage treatment regulations and work hard to shrink our environmental footprint.

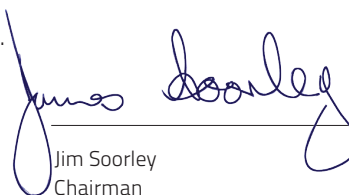
Our investment in capital works during the year included starting construction on an anaerobic digester that will produce biogas for energy generation at our Kawana Sewage Treatment Plant. These works will reduce the plant's carbon footprint and are part of an ongoing \$74 million upgrade of this plant that is shouldering the increasing treatment demands of a growing population. Over the 2018-19 year, we invested a total of \$111.2 million in water and sewerage infrastructure.

The past year has not been without its operational challenges. The most significant of these was a large water main break in January which threatened to cut off water to over 20,000 residents at the height of summer. Unitywater team members worked hard to respond to this emergency incident and through their expertise in guiding repairs, designing solutions and keeping our community informed, a major water outage was avoided.

Meeting scheduled project completion dates for our key sewage treatment plant upgrades has also been a challenge this year but we are working with our contractors to resolve a number of complex issues that will ensure our plants have the capacity required to service our growing communities.

The returns to our owners, the participating councils of Moreton Bay, Sunshine Coast and Noosa, continue to be fair and we continue to pay them a solid return on their investment. A huge thank you to our participating councils for your ongoing support of the Board and team in building a world class water and sewerage business.

On behalf of the Board, thank you to all the Unitywater team members for their hard work and dedication in what has been an excellent year of operations.



Jim Soorley  
Chairman

4 September 2019

# CEO's foreword

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I'm proud to deliver this 2018-19 Annual Report at the completion of our ninth year of operations. This report describes our performance over the year and measures our success in accordance with our strategic direction.

Our achievements over the last twelve months are underpinned by a resolve to innovate in order to provide beneficial outcomes for our customers, the wider community, the environment, our participating councils and our people.

As the population of our service area grows, so does the size of our customer base, however we are keeping our operating costs down. Accordingly, we were able to announce a price freeze on our water and sewerage usage charges across all our service regions for the fifth consecutive year.

We know that our communities support our efforts to give back to them in places where it's needed most, and we confirmed this direction during the year at a series of customer forums attended by 86 community members. Our community support continues to help the homeless, disadvantaged children and the prevention of domestic and family violence.

We are also doing our bit on the "war on waste" by actively working to prevent single-use plastics from

polluting our environment. Our Back to Tap water refill vans at community events and our growing number of permanent water refill stations have avoided the use of an estimated 175,000 single-use plastic bottles. Over the last nine years Unitywater has handed out approximately 98,000 reusable water bottles.

The year saw us extend our green credentials with the installation of solar panels and floating wetlands at our Kenilworth Sewage Treatment Plant. While the panels bring the plant to energy self-sufficiency, the wetlands use the power of nature to further improve the quality of treated effluent.

We continue to look for ways to improve the customer experience by adopting artificial intelligence to help with our operations. We are working on a tool that can predict which sewer pump stations will overflow under extreme weather conditions, potentially allowing us to mitigate the problem before it happens. We are also exploring the use of 'natural language processing' to better understand and respond to feedback received through our customer experience surveys. Use of this artificial intelligence is showing potential for greater efficiency in dealing with our customers.

Of course, the services, innovations and achievements mentioned in this report are thanks to the dedication

and hard work of our people. We continue in our never-ending efforts to keep both our customers and our people safe from our operations.

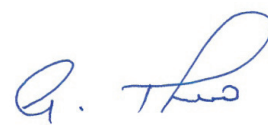
We will continue to invest in creating a safe, healthy and constructive culture while we work to uplift the capabilities of our people in responding to an ever changing and challenging environment.

I am also proud of having announced during the year an industry-leading gender-balanced parental leave program that sets the standard for others to follow.

This year Unitywater made a loss of \$0.2 million, after excluding developer contributions. This compares to a profit of \$7.9 million in 2017-18.

Total returns to participating councils, comprising tax equivalents, participation returns and interest on loans, were \$133 million, the same as for the previous five consecutive years.

I sincerely thank the Board for their ongoing support, the Executive and all our people for their support as we strive to build a world class water utility.



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George Theo  
Chief Executive Officer  
2 September 2019

# About us

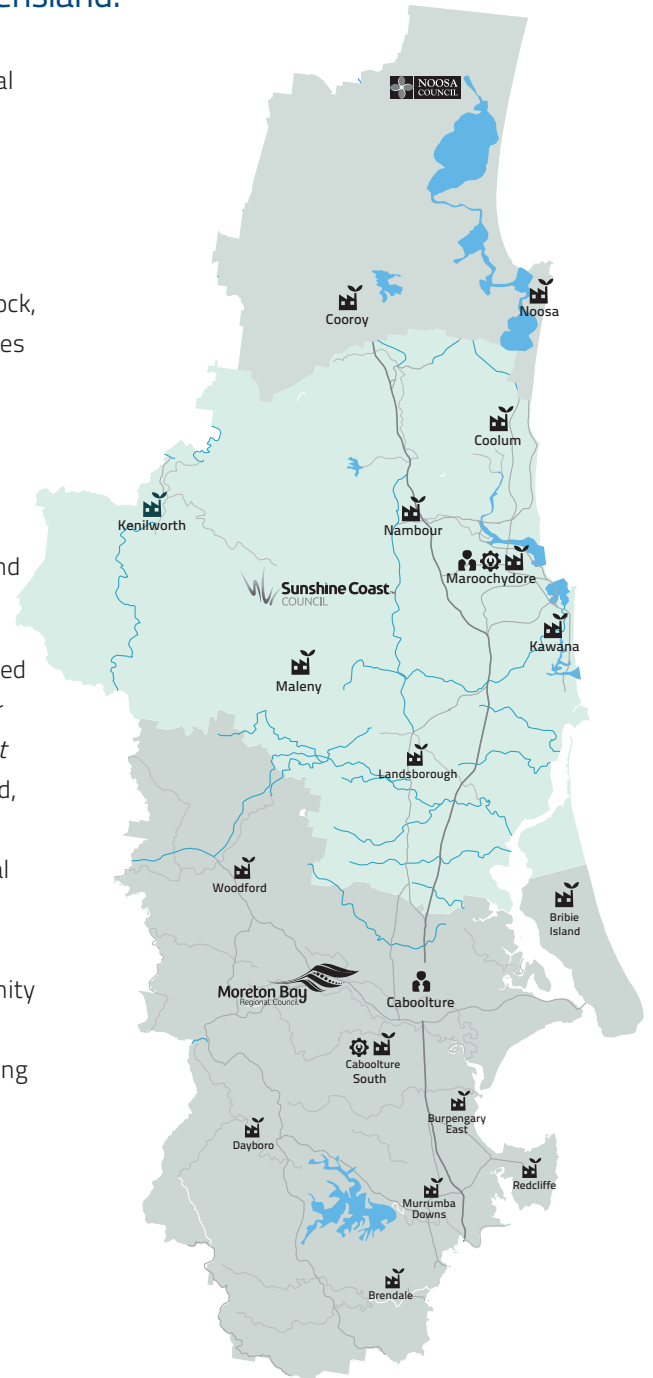
24/7, Unitywater delivers high quality water and sewerage services to the communities of Moreton Bay, Noosa and Sunshine Coast areas within South East Queensland.





We take pride in providing these essential services and ensure that they are safe, reliable, economically sustainable and sensitive to our natural environment.

Our customers and our communities are always a priority. We work around the clock, every day of the year, knowing our services are important to the quality of life in our region.

We look after our communities now and into the future by planning, building, operating and maintaining their water and sewerage infrastructure.

Unitywater is a statutory authority, formed under the *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009*. Governed by an independent Board, we have a Participation Agreement with our shareholders – Moreton Bay Regional Council, Noosa Council and Sunshine Coast Council. We align with the State Government’s objectives for the community through protecting the environment, delivering new infrastructure and providing quality services.



-  Unitywater's service area
-  Corporate Offices
-  Service Centres
-  Sewage Treatment Plants

# About our strategy

Our business operations, goals and ambitions are guided by a clear purpose, vision and a set of shared values.

## OUR PURPOSE

Keeping our communities healthy.

## OUR VISION

To be a sustainable water and sewerage service provider that creates value for its customers and returns value to its stakeholders.

## OUR VALUES



RELIABILITY



ONE TEAM



EFFICIENCY



HONESTY  
AND INTEGRITY



SAFETY



INNOVATION

## Our strategic focus

Unitywater is proudly a forward-thinking organisation and we have developed a corporate strategic plan which enables us to focus on our day-to-day activities and our strategic priorities. This plan ensures we remain on track to achieve our purpose and our vision for customers and our people.

Because we understand the importance of keeping prices as low as possible for customers, our corporate strategy drives our aspirations to be affordable, to be hassle-free, to improve productivity and to be innovative.

These goals are collectively incorporated in our strategic themes of:

- › Intelligent Operations
- › Self-sustaining Sewage Treatment Plants
- › Growing New Business
- › Better Business.

The *Unitywater Annual Report 2018-19* describes our progress throughout the year towards achieving the goals set out in our *Corporate Strategic Plan 2018-19 to 2022-23*.