

Head 194 — WATER SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT

Controlling officer: the Director of Water Supplies will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2025–26 **\$10,357.8m**

Establishment ceiling 2025–26 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 4 631 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2025 reducing by 36 posts to 4 595 posts as at 31 March 2026..... **\$2,040.7m**

In addition, there will be an estimated 23 directorate posts as at 31 March 2025 and as at 31 March 2026.

Commitment balance..... **\$384.5m**

Controlling Officer’s Report

Programmes

Programme (1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution

Programme (2) Water Quality Control

Programme (3) Customer Services

These programmes contribute to Policy Area 24: Water Supply, Drainage and Slope Safety (Secretary for Development).

Detail

Programme (1): Water Supply: Planning and Distribution

	2023–24 (Actual)	2024–25 (Original)	2024–25 (Revised)	2025–26 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	8,810.9	8,997.8	9,050.7 (+0.6%)	9,176.3 (+1.4%)
				(or +2.0% on 2024–25 Original)

Aim

2 The aim is to develop water resources and to plan, design, construct, operate and maintain water supply systems in order to provide round-the-clock supplies throughout the year to meet the demands of the territory.

Brief Description

3 The Department is responsible for providing adequate supplies of water to the territory. This work involves:

Fresh water

- assessing fresh water supply requirements on the basis of providing round-the-clock supply of water throughout the year to meet the demand of the territory;
- developing fresh water resources to cope with such requirements;
- implementing the Dongjiang water supply agreement;
- planning, designing and constructing reliable and efficient fresh water supply and distribution systems to meet such requirements in good time; and
- operating and maintaining fresh water supply and distribution systems.

Flushing water

- assessing flushing water (comprising salt water and recycled water) supply requirements;
- developing flushing water resources to cope with such requirements;
- planning, designing and constructing reliable and efficient flushing water supply and distribution systems to meet such requirements in good time; and
- operating and maintaining flushing water supply and distribution systems.

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4 In 2024, the Department reviewed the total water management strategy and continued to plan, design and construct new projects for the development of water resources and extension of water supplies to new developments and to operate and maintain water supply and distribution systems to provide adequate and uninterrupted supplies of water throughout the year. In particular, the Department commissioned the first reclaimed water plant at Sheung Shui to start supplying recycled water to the north-eastern part of the New Territories in phases for non-potable uses to save fresh water resources. The Department commenced the construction of the risk-based improvement of large diameter water mains to maintain the water supply networks in good conditions. Besides, the Department commenced the improvement works of fresh water supply to low-level area in Central to ensure the reliability of water supply in the area.

5 The key performance measures in respect of water supply are:

Targets

	Target	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Plan)
supply pressure				
fresh water supply—maintaining normally a minimum residual head of between 15 and 30 metres in the distribution systems except at their extremities (%).....	100	100	100	100
flushing water supply—maintaining normally a minimum residual head of 15 metres in the distribution systems except at their extremities (%)	100	100	100	100

Indicators

	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Estimate)
projects under planning	24	21	19
value of projects under planning (\$m)	14,693.2	13,515.8	12,690.8
projects under design.....	30	26	20
value of projects under design (\$m).....	65,659.2	61,972.8	28,810.8
projects under construction	45	42	38
expenditure of works under construction (\$m)	5,748.1	4,836.5	5,499.4
fresh water supplied (m ³)	1 067 900 000	1 059 550 000	1 060 970 000
salt water supplied (m ³).....	322 940 000	308 100 000	310 720 000
days on full supply	365	366#	365
total treatment works capacity (m ³ /day).....	4 648 100	4 648 100	4 648 100
total pumping plant capacity (megawatts)	349	350	351
leakage rate of water mains (%).....	14.0	13.4	12.8
education programmes / promotion campaigns on water conservation.....	7	12	12
schools joining education programmes on water conservation.....	870	896	900

2024 was a leap year.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025–26

6 During 2025–26, the Department will:

- continue with the implementation of the total water management strategy for sustainable use of water resources with focuses on water conservation and water loss management as well as on development of new water resources;
- continue with the implementation and enhancement of the Water Intelligent Network;
- continue with the construction of distribution network for supplying recycled water to the north-eastern part of the New Territories in phases for non-potable uses;
- complete the construction of grey water treatment plant and commence the supply of recycled water to the Anderson Road Quarry Development for non-potable uses;
- continue with the construction of the main works for in-situ reprovisioning of Sha Tin Water Treatment Works (South Works);
- continue with the construction of the main works for the Siu Ho Wan Water Treatment Works extension;

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- continue with the construction works related to the relocation of Diamond Hill Fresh Water and Salt Water Service Reservoirs to caverns;
- continue with the construction of the risk-based improvement of large diameter water mains, stage 1A;
- continue with the construction works related to the improvement of fresh water supply to low-level area in Central;
- commence the construction of main works (package 1) for the Ngau Tam Mei Water Treatment Works extension;
- commence the construction works for the improvement of water supply to the northern New Territories;
- continue with the planning, design and construction of fresh and flushing water supply to meet the demands arising from housing developments;
- continue with the investigation and design for supplying reclaimed water for non-potable uses in Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long Town and Tuen Mun – Yuen Long Corridor areas;
- continue with the feasibility study for the relocation of Tuen Mun Water Treatment Works to caverns; and
- continue with the investigation and design for the in-situ reprovisioning of Tsuen Wan Water Treatment Works.

Programme (2): Water Quality Control

	2023–24 (Actual)	2024–25 (Original)	2024–25 (Revised)	2025–26 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	368.7	453.3	443.2 (–2.2%)	461.5 (+4.1%)
				(or +1.8% on 2024–25 Original)

Aim

7 The aim is to control the quality of water supplied to customers in accordance with the Hong Kong Drinking Water Standards (HKDWS) and the Department’s standards for flushing water.

Brief Description

8 The Department is responsible for ensuring the purity, wholesomeness and safety of treated fresh water supplied to customers conforming to the HKDWS in all respects and at all times. The Department is also responsible for ensuring the quality of flushing water supplied to customers conforming to the Department’s standards. This work involves:

Fresh water

- water treatment—ensuring that treated fresh water conforms chemically, radiologically and bacteriologically to the HKDWS; and
- water quality control—ensuring that the drinking water at treatment works, desalination plant, service reservoirs, water tanks, connection points and consumers’ taps conforms to the HKDWS.

Flushing water

- water treatment—ensuring that the flushing water conforms chemically and bacteriologically to the Department’s standards; and
- water quality control—ensuring that the flushing water at customer ends conforms to the Department’s standards.

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9 In 2024, the Department achieved the performance targets for both drinking water and flushing water through effective control of the quality of water supplied to customers. The Department continued to maintain an effective drinking water quality monitoring regime for parameters in the HKDWS, surveillance list, watch list and aesthetic guidelines. The Department continued the baseline radiological monitoring for the desalination plant at Tseung Kwan O. The Department also continued to take forward the Action Plan for Enhancing Drinking Water Safety in Hong Kong including:

- the implementation of the Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring Programme covering six metals, residual chlorine and *Escherichia coli*;
- the promotion of the implementation of Water Safety Plans (WSP) in private buildings and processing of applications under the Water Safety Plan Subsidy Scheme (WSPSS); and
- the preparation for proposed legislative amendments to the Waterworks Ordinance (Cap. 102) (WWO) and Waterworks Regulations (Cap. 102A) (WWR), to enhance the regulatory control of plumbing works and materials.

10 The key performance measures in respect of water quality control are:

Targets

	Target	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Plan)
fresh water quality—water supplied to customers complies with the HKDWS(%)	100	100	100	100
flushing water quality—flushing water supplied to customers complies with the Department’s standards (%)^.....	97.0	99.1	99.4	97.0

^ Revised description of the previous target “flushing water quality—salt water supplied to customers complies with Water Quality Objectives set by Water Supplies Department” as from 2024. Flushing water includes salt water, and as from 2024, recycled water. Salt water and recycled water supplied to customers for flushing comply with the Water Quality Objectives for Salt Water and the Water Quality Standards for Recycled Water respectively.

Indicators

	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Estimate)
<i>Treated fresh water</i>			
sampling visits at treatment works, service reservoirs, water tanks, connection points and consumers’ taps	29 340	30 384	29 000
chemical quality satisfying standards (%).....	100	100	100
bacteriological quality satisfying standards (%)	100	100	100

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025–26

11 During 2025–26, the Department will carry out the following work to safeguard the drinking water quality:

- continue to encourage private building owners and property management agents to implement WSP in their buildings in order to further safeguard drinking water quality in the community, and process applications under the WSPSS;
- continue to provide necessary assistance to relevant bureaux/departments to implement WSP for their buildings;
- continue to prepare proposed legislative amendments to the WWO and WWR to safeguard the drinking water quality through enhanced regulatory control of plumbing works and materials; and
- continue with the publicity and public education on drinking water safety.

Programme (3): Customer Services

	2023–24 (Actual)	2024–25 (Original)	2024–25 (Revised)	2025–26 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	676.3	695.4	706.4 (+1.6%)	720.0 (+1.9%)

(or +3.5% on
2024–25 Original)

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Aim

12 The aim is to provide customer services and to enforce the WWO and WWR.

Brief Description

13 The Department is responsible for the provision of efficient and effective services to customers and for enforcing the WWO and WWR. This work involves:

- ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in dealing with customer enquiries and complaints and in processing applications for water supplies;
- enforcing the WWO and WWR;
- ensuring timeliness of billing and promptness in updating customer accounts;
- monitoring closely the level of arrears of water charges; and
- coping with the growth in the number of customer accounts.

14 In 2024, the Department continued to provide efficient and effective services to customers and enforce the WWO and WWR. The Department continued to administer the provisions of WWO, including the Waterworks (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 taken effect on 19 April 2024, to protect tenants of sub-divided units (SDU) from being overcharged for water. The Department continued with the preparation of proposed legislative amendments to the WWO and WWR, with major items including the regulation of plumbing works, control of plumbing materials, safeguarding drinking water safety at consumers' taps and supply of recycled water. The Department continued to pursue various digitalisation initiatives with a view to optimising waterworks infrastructure and customer services, and providing higher quality and more environmentally friendly water supply services.

15 The key performance measures in respect of customer services are:

Targets

	Target	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Plan)
processing application for taking up of consumership				
by post within seven working days (%).....	100	100	100	100
in person at Customer Enquiry Centres (all-purpose counter) within 15 minutes (%)	100	100	100	100
issue of final bill upon closure of account within three working days (%)	100	100	98.6	100
refund of water deposit within nine working days (%).....	100	95.1 ^Ψ	100	100
processing application for meter test within eight working days (%)	100	100	100	100
processing application for autopay service (upon receipt of notification from banks) within three working days (%).....	100	100	100	100
proportion of accurate water meters (inaccuracy not exceeding +/- 3%)(%)...	98.0	98.6	98.7	98.0
response time for attendance to fault complaints				
within half a day for fresh water supply fault (%).....	100	100	100	100
within 24 hours for others (%)	100	100	100	100
notice for planned suspension of water supply issued not less than four working days in advance (%).....	100	100	100	100
conducting publicity campaigns and seminars for promotion of combatting unauthorised water consumption	70	75	75	75
initiating an investigation after receiving a complaint on suspected unauthorised water consumption within one working day (%)	92	97	98	93

^Ψ The performance of refund of deposit in 2023 was affected as there was a system error in the Customer Care and Billing System (CCBS) in April 2023.

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Indicators

	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Estimate)
no. of customer accounts.....	3 220 000	3 270 000	3 330 000
fees, water charges and deposits demanded (\$m).....	2,370	2,810	2,820
arrears of water charges at year end in terms of no. of days of water charges demanded	1.3	1.3	1.3
prosecutions.....	135	176	200
finer imposed (\$).....	225,100	191,829	220,000
house service inspections due to irregular consumption.....	5 637	5 833	5 900
public enquiries and requests for services.....	1 215 160	1 210 755	1 167 474
disputes and complaints handled.....	13 182	12 394	12 300

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025–26

16 During 2025–26, the Department will:

- continue to streamline and enhance the efficiency of the approval process of applications for water supplies by developing the proposed Digital Water Supply Application Management System;
- continue to strengthen regulatory control on inside service leakage to minimise water loss in inside services;
- continue to implement smart water meters for suitable new developments;
- continue to proceed with the remaining legislative amendments to the WWO and WWR;
- continue to step up prosecution and inspections against overcharging for water in SDU with strengthened law enforcement power pursuant to the Waterworks (Amendment) Ordinance 2024;
- continue to provide necessary technical advice and support to building owners and property management agents and render assistance to the market in developing capacity to deal with inside service leakage;
- continue to support and maintain the information technology (IT) systems and pursue innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence and smart data analytics to enhance the customer service experience of the public;
- continue the technical study on CCBS to transform its current functions to new IT systems with a view to meeting the needs of digitalisation of customer services; and
- continue to drive the digital transformation of water supply services for providing higher quality, efficient and effective services to customers.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

	2023–24 (Actual) (\$m)	2024–25 (Original) (\$m)	2024–25 (Revised) (\$m)	2025–26 (Estimate) (\$m)
Programme				
(1) Water Supply: Planning and Distribution	8,810.9	8,997.8	9,050.7	9,176.3
(2) Water Quality Control	368.7	453.3	443.2	461.5
(3) Customer Services	676.3	695.4	706.4	720.0
	9,855.9	10,146.5	10,200.3 (+0.5%)	10,357.8 (+1.5%)
				(or +2.1% on 2024–25 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Programme (1)

Provision for 2025–26 is \$125.6 million (1.4%) higher than the revised estimate for 2024–25. This is mainly due to the increased provisions for purchase of water, salary increments and light and power, partly offset by the decreased provision for contract maintenance. There will be a net decrease of 20 posts in 2025–26.

Programme (2)

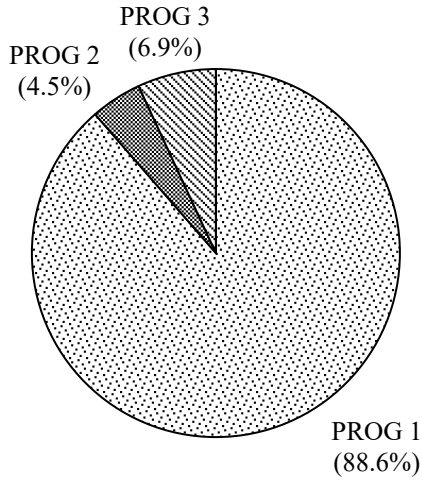
Provision for 2025–26 is \$18.3 million (4.1%) higher than the revised estimate for 2024–25. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for implementation of the WSPSS, partly offset by the decreased provision for hire of services and professional fees. There will be a net decrease of five posts in 2025–26.

Programme (3)

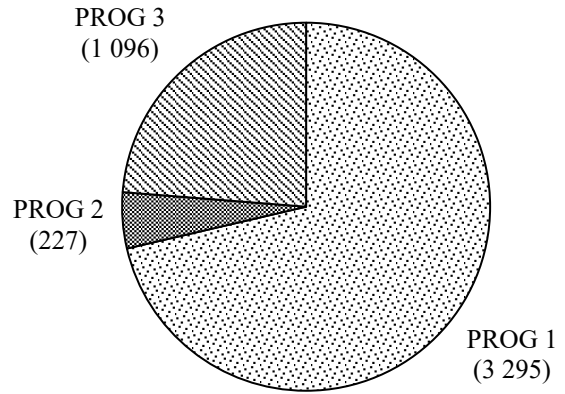
Provision for 2025–26 is \$13.6 million (1.9%) higher than the revised estimate for 2024–25. This is mainly due to the increased provisions for salary increments and other operating expenses. There will be a net decrease of 11 posts in 2025–26.

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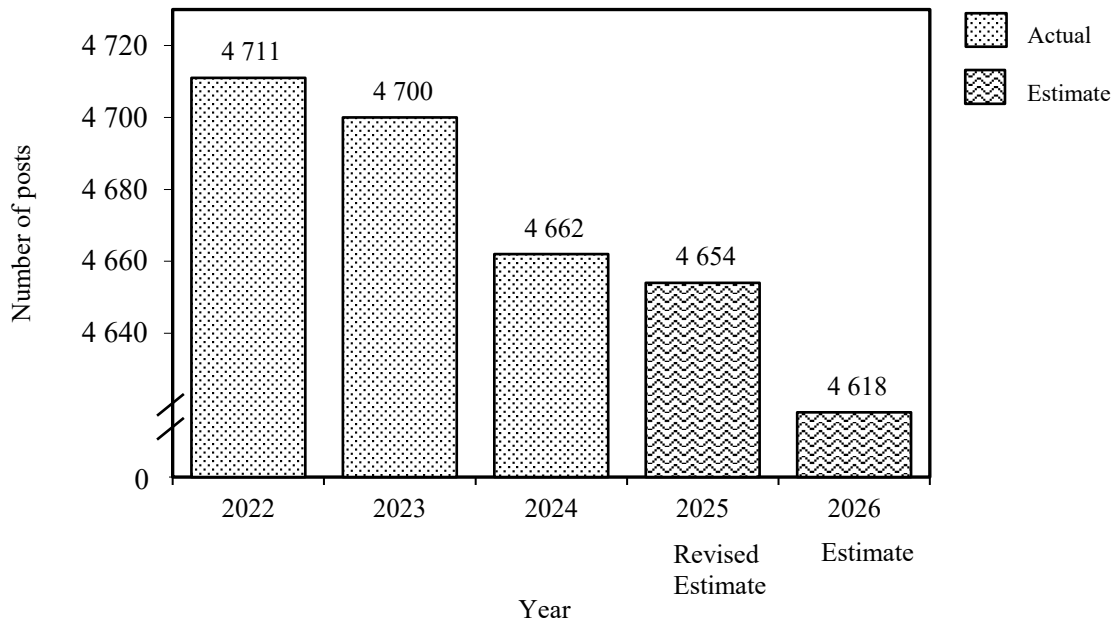
*Allocation of provision
to programmes
(2025-26)*



*Staff by programme
(as at 31 March 2026)*



*Changes in the size of the establishment
(as at 31 March)*



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Sub-head (Code)		Actual expenditure 2023–24	Approved estimate 2024–25	Revised estimate 2024–25	Estimate 2025–26
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Operating Account					
Recurrent					
000	Operational expenses	4,795,067	4,893,483	4,960,371	4,969,838
223	Purchase of water	5,038,103	5,158,560	5,158,045	5,281,853
	Total, Recurrent.....	<u>9,833,170</u>	<u>10,052,043</u>	<u>10,118,416</u>	<u>10,251,691</u>
Non-Recurrent					
700	General non-recurrent	11,958	65,700	55,000	87,800
	Total, Non-Recurrent.....	<u>11,958</u>	<u>65,700</u>	<u>55,000</u>	<u>87,800</u>
	Total, Operating Account	<u>9,845,128</u>	<u>10,117,743</u>	<u>10,173,416</u>	<u>10,339,491</u>
Capital Account					
Plant, Equipment and Works					
603	Plant, vehicles and equipment.....	—	1,750	—	3,150
661	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	10,732	27,017	26,931	15,113
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	<u>10,732</u>	<u>28,767</u>	<u>26,931</u>	<u>18,263</u>
	Total, Capital Account.....	<u>10,732</u>	<u>28,767</u>	<u>26,931</u>	<u>18,263</u>
	Total Expenditure	<u><u>9,855,860</u></u>	<u><u>10,146,510</u></u>	<u><u>10,200,347</u></u>	<u><u>10,357,754</u></u>

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2025–26 for the salaries and expenses of the Water Supplies Department is \$10,357,754,000. This represents an increase of \$157,407,000 over the revised estimate for 2024–25 and \$501,894,000 over the actual expenditure in 2023–24.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$4,969,838,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Water Supplies Department.

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2025 will be 4 654 posts. It is expected that there will be a net decrease of 36 posts in 2025–26. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2025–26, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$2,040,702,000.

4 An analysis of the financial provision under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is as follows:

	2023–24 (Actual) (\$'000)	2024–25 (Original) (\$'000)	2024–25 (Revised) (\$'000)	2025–26 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries	1,952,685	2,048,264	2,051,534	2,101,225
- Allowances	183,233	172,313	197,319	199,767
- Job-related allowances.....	16,619	14,712	15,159	15,159
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution	12,291	14,522	12,096	12,471
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution	157,323	187,378	180,740	208,712
Departmental Expenses				
- Light and power.....	1,113,403	1,058,900	995,051	1,006,708
- Hire of services and professional fees.....	207,928	301,984	330,790	323,799
- Fuel and lubricating oil.....	220	382	381	383
- Specialist supplies and equipment.....	125,412	141,942	139,003	136,223
- Maintenance materials.....	60,380	52,295	57,420	60,287
- Contract maintenance	707,698	605,095	671,898	586,892
- General departmental expenses	257,875	295,696	308,980	318,212
	4,795,067	4,893,483	4,960,371	4,969,838

5 Provision of \$5,281,853,000 under *Subhead 223 Purchase of water* is for the purchase of water from Guangdong.

Capital Account

Plant, Equipment and Works

6 Provision of \$15,113,000 under *Subhead 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)* represents a decrease of \$11,818,000 (43.9%) against the revised estimate of 2024–25. This is mainly due to the decreased cashflow requirement for procurement/replacement of plant and equipment in 2025–26.

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Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2024	Revised estimated expenditure for 2024–25	Balance
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<i>Operating Account</i>						
700		<i>General non-recurrent</i>				
	802	Water Safety Plan Subsidy Scheme	440,000	18,027	55,000	366,973
			<u>440,000</u>	<u>18,027</u>	<u>55,000</u>	<u>366,973</u>
<i>Capital Account</i>						
603		<i>Plant, vehicles and equipment</i>				
	803	Replacement of one launch for assisting water quality monitoring and sampling in the High Island Reservoir	17,500	—	—	17,500
			<u>17,500</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>17,500</u>
	Total		<u>457,500</u>	<u>18,027</u>	<u>55,000</u>	<u>384,473</u>