

Parks Charge

The Melbourne Metropolitan Parks Charge has increased from about \$55 to just over \$62 for most household bills. This includes the annual CPI rise and will be shown on the July-September quarter bill.

The Melbourne Metropolitan Parks Charge is used to support parks, trails and public facilities across Melbourne, as well as Melbourne's zoos, the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Shrine of Remembrance, ensuring that our world class network of large urban parks and trails is maintained and staffed for the enjoyment of future generations of Victorian families.

What is the Parks Charge?

The Metropolitan Parks Charge, levied once per year on water bills, has been in place since the 1950s and that parks and facilities are maintained and staffed for conservation, recreation, leisure and tourism activities.

The charge is used to maintain and improve Melbourne's world class network of large urban parks and trails. It also supports facilities such as Melbourne's zoos, the Royal Botanic Gardens and Cranbourne Botanic Gardens and the Shrine of Remembrance.

These parks are often linked by the trail network, maintained by the parks charge, such as the Yarra Main Trail, the Dandenong Creek Trail or the Maribyrnong River Trail. The charge also supports jetties, piers and harbours around Port Phillip Bay such as the popular St Kilda Pier.

How much will the charge increase?

The Metropolitan Parks Charge will increase from around \$55 to just over \$62 for most households (95% of households). High value properties pay an amount based on a percentage of their property value rather than the set amount. High value properties will see an equivalent increase in their charge (around 10%).

How much money will be raised?

The increase in the charge is expected to raise around \$11 million (\$10.8 million) per year. The charge will also be increased by CPI each year, as is the case for all fees and charges. Overall the Parks Charge currently raises around \$112 million, and with this increase will raise around \$122 million in 2009-10.

What will the increase in revenue be used for?

Parks Victoria uses funds from the Parks Charge for the maintenance, operation and development of regional parks and their facilities around Melbourne.

Some of the funds are distributed to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Shrine of Remembrance and Zoos Victoria (Melbourne Zoo, Werribee Open Range Zoo and Healesville Sanctuary). In the western side of Melbourne, parks include Brimbank Park and Horseshoe Bend Farm, Woodlands Historical Park, Westgate Park, Point Cook Coastal Park, Pipemakers Park and Greenvale Reservoir Park. Major assets such as the Melbourne Zoo, Royal Botanic Gardens, the Werribee Open Range Zoo and Healesville Sanctuary benefit all Melbournians.

Why should businesses pay?

Like residential properties, businesses benefit from environmental improvements in the Melbourne region. Melbourne parks are tourist attractions which ultimately benefit many businesses.

How is the charge different to the Melbourne Water Waterways Charge?

The Waterways Charge is collected by water authorities on behalf of Melbourne Water. Melbourne Water uses these funds to provide services to directly manage the health of waterways, streamside (riparian) vegetation, flood protection, and drainage services across the whole of the Port Phillip Bay Catchment. The Parks Charge is collected by City West Water (Melton area) or Yarra Valley Water (Sunbury area) on behalf of Parks Victoria.

How is the charge determined?

The Parks Charge is levied under Section 139 of the Water Industry Act 1994. The charge is determined using the Net Annual Valuation of the applicable property as determined by your local council. The majority of customers pay the minimum applicable charge.

What if I don't pay the Parks Charge?

The water retailer that sends your bill will implement their debt recovery procedure in accordance with their policies. On the sale of the property any outstanding debt will be deducted as part of the settlement process.