Yarra Valley Water delivers higher quality software releases through testing automation with Micro Focus® Silk solutions.

Overview
Yarra Valley Water is Melbourne’s largest water corporation, providing water supply and sanitation services to over 1.7 million people and over 50,000 businesses.

Challenge
Yarra Valley Water uses Oracle Utilities Customer Care and Billing (CC&B) for every aspect of the customer lifecycle. This comprehensive system is integrated with the customer self-service portal where customers can pay their bills online, change their address details etc. A manual software testing process was in place for regression testing on the portal.

Handling 30-40 testing projects, and involving hundreds of test cases, it became clear that something needed to change. Ramki Palaniappan, Test Manager at Yarra Valley Water: “For every software release for the portal project we would need to dedicate five team members to manual testing for three days. Doing this, we were still only able to cover 30% of the features in our testing cycles. Our confidence in the resulting product would be low, as we felt we didn’t have accurate information to base a go/no go decision on. We couldn’t easily track test cases and this often caused significant test case duplication and we kept identifying similar bugs. We felt automation would help us, but this was a daunting task which required not just a technology solution, but also a cultural shift within our company.”

Solution
Determined to win over the sceptics and prove the value of test automation for its customer portal, Palaniappan evaluated various solutions, including testing tools from IBM and HP. Micro Focus Silk Central™ and Silk Test™ stood out because of their ease of use which was very important to Yarra Valley Water as a smooth transition to an automated process was crucial. Palaniappan comments on the decision: “We liked that we could integrate Silk Central and Silk Test with other third party tools we use and we felt the flexible and customizable dashboards would give each team member their own workspace, ensuring they get the information relevant for their part of the testing process. The reporting functionality within Silk Central and the ongoing development of the Silk tools gave us the confidence that this was the right solution for us.”

Silk Central and Silk Test were implemented and the test cases and other test artefacts were transitioned to Silk. The Silk solutions are integrated with the Yarra Valley Water defect tracking system, JIRA Agile, to enable automatic notification of changes and updates.

Results
- Reduced each testing cycle from 15 man-days to 10 hours
- Increased functionality testing coverage from 30% to 70%
- Introduced automated regression testing
- Faster release of higher quality applications

“The Silk reporting is second to none, giving us full control over new releases. We now have all the facts we need to make an informed go/no go decision.”

RAMKI PALANIAPPAN
Test Manager
Yarra Valley Water
“Using Silk to automate our testing processes has given us a faster time to market, and higher quality software releases to our customers. We can now respond to business demands faster than ever and focus our efforts onto developing new functionality.”

RAMKI PALANIAPPAN
Test Manager
Yarra Valley Water

Results
After automating the portal testing process with Silk, the time to test each new release has been reduced from 15 man-days to just 10 hours. The automated testing cycle covers 70% of features, compared to 30% in the manual testing process. Effective regression testing has been introduced, as well as cross-browser testing to ensure that the user experience is consistent. After seeing the great results on this online portal project and the benefits of leveraging test automation we are anticipating more and more usage of automation across many more applications.

Palaniappan: “Using Silk to automate our testing processes has given us a faster time to market, and higher quality software releases. We can now respond to business demands faster than ever and focus our efforts onto developing new functionality. The Silk reporting is second to none, giving us full control over new releases. We now have all the facts we need to make an informed go/no go decision.”

He concludes: “We greatly appreciate the flexibility and open architecture of the Silk solutions as this gives us the confidence to move into any future software delivery direction as we continue to bring IT closer to the business.”