

# pipeline

East Gippsland Water News and Events



Issue 30 - Winter 2015

## Taking care of business

"The board and executive management team at East Gippsland Water have been working proactively to maintain what is an invaluable ongoing program of engagement with the local business community. This is very important so that we understand and work effectively with businesses in key areas relating to the local economy, and the delivery of water and wastewater services.

"An awareness of each other's needs also helps on those occasions where a united business voice may be needed to advocate vigorously on behalf of East Gippsland.

"As part of ongoing engagement we joined with the Board of Southern Rural Water recently to meet with Patties Foods and Vegco in Bairnsdale. Water and trade waste services are central to the sustainability of both these businesses and we have been keen to gain a sound appreciation of their requirements, so that we can help support their continued operation and growth.

"In the same vein, earlier in the year we also met with Lindenow-based Bonaccord, one of Eastern Victoria's largest vegetable production and logistics companies, and with community representative for Lakes Entrance, Bruce Hurley.

"In addition, we have a Memorandum of Understanding with East Gippsland Shire that commits us to work together on projects, issues and strategic objectives of common interest. As part of this we recently took the Shire on a fact-finding tour of our water treatment plant at Woodglen and the Glenaladale pumping station. Like similar facilities servicing towns throughout the region, these underpin local economic development and expansion, and are essential for the health and wellbeing of our communities.

"East Gippsland Water is always keen to discuss water and wastewater requirements and related matters with existing business customers, as well as with those looking to set up in the region. In the first instance please contact the office of the Managing Director on 51 50 4415."



Joe Rettino, Chairperson,  
East Gippsland Water



*It's vital we understand the needs of the business community*

## Lara leads the way

East Gippsland Water's Lara Caplygin has undertaken a professional development project in the UK after scooping a prestigious leadership award.

Lara, an engineer and manager with responsibility for water and sewerage treatment services at East Gippsland Water, received the Laurie Gleeson Award from prominent Victorian water industry body, the Institute of Water Administration. Announced annually, this award is designed to support the career development of emerging leaders in the water industry.

Lara received a \$5,000 grant that has enabled her to undertake a study tour in the UK focusing on Scottish Water, to investigate innovative operational and infrastructure programs, with her learnings to be shared with colleagues back here in Australia.



Lara is congratulated by East Gippsland Water's Managing Director Bruce Hammond

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## Be smart 'Choose Tap'

Popular recreation spots in Bairnsdale have become East Gippsland's first locations to receive 'Choose Tap' water refill stations, as part of a region-wide healthy lifestyle initiative involving East Gippsland Water, community groups and East Gippsland Shire.

The refill stations are free to use and come equipped with a bubble tap that is wheelchair accessible, a drink bottle filling point and a dog bowl.

The aim of 'Choose Tap', originally developed by Yarra Valley Water in Melbourne, is to encourage people to drink tap water in preference to bottled water and soft drinks, as part of a healthy lifestyle. This also makes financial and environmental sense.

Three stations have been provided jointly by East Gippsland Water, Riviera Triathlon Club and East Gippsland Shire Council by the Mitchell River in Bairnsdale, along the 'bridge to bridge' walking and jogging circuit.

In addition there is a unit in the town's Howitt Park, close to the sports ovals and pavilion, which is a joint initiative between us and the Howitt Park Management Committee.

Other communities being targeted over coming months with the refill stations include Newlands Arm, Nicholson, Lakes Entrance, Orbost, Mallacoota and Omeo, with others set to follow.

Australians currently spend more than \$500 million a year on bottled water, needlessly bypassing much cheaper water supplied direct from the tap in their own homes. By installing water refill stations in recreational areas we are making tap water even more accessible and encouraging people to reuse and refill their drink bottles. This is much more environmentally friendly than using pre-packaged bottled water, where the plastic used is often unsuitable for recycling, with many bottles ending up at landfill and also left as litter.



Celebrating their new water refill station with East Gippsland Water's Chairperson Joe Rettino are: Howitt Park Management Committee President Tony Claridge (second left) and members of East Gippsland United Football Club

## #SoNotCrap

Earlier this year hundreds of people participated in #SoNotCrap initiatives, exploring how East Gippsland's beautiful natural environment has been protected and enhanced through the smart use of recycled water.

The brainchild of artist Sue O'Connor, #SoNotCrap saw the inside of Bairnsdale's historic water tower in Main Street transformed to provide the canvas for a captivating audio and visual experience by Sue herself. This captured the interdependence of the Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant and the adjacent Macleod Morass, where the flora and fauna of the morass thrives on recycled water produced by the plant.

Sharna Stone from Sarsfield scooped the People's Choice Award in the public photo exhibition, for her amazing image of a mini eco-system. In addition there were tours of Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant and the morass – led by East Gippsland Water staff and rangers from Parks Victoria.

#SoNotCrap was sponsored by East Gippsland Water and East Gippsland Shire Council.

### Did you know?

- We provide wastewater services to around 21,600 customers
- We have eleven separate wastewater systems and 680km of sewer mains serving the communities of Bairnsdale, Bemm River, Bruthen, Cann River, Dinner Plain, Eagle Point, Johnsonville, Lakes Entrance, Lake Tyers Beach, Lindenow, Mallacoota, Marlo, Metung, Newlands Arm, Nicholson, Omeo, Orbost, Paynesville, Raymond Island and Swan Reach
- We are one of the best performing water corporations in Victoria when it comes to recycling water, often achieving a reuse level of 100 percent from our wastewater treatment plants
- All the recycled water we produce is directed towards beneficial reuse, with a focus on protecting the environment. As well as being used on our own properties to irrigate pasture and tree plantations, it is used by farmers and at sporting facilities like golf courses and Bairnsdale Racecourse. It also benefits wetlands including the internationally significant Macleod Morass.



East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Bruce Hammond, congratulates Sharna Stone on her winning photo - 'Turning rain into a mini eco-system'



# Keeping price increases below inflation

East Gippsland Water is keeping price increases well below the rate of inflation for the 2015/16 financial year in a move designed to benefit both residential and business customers.

A key driver for us, as a state government-owned enterprise and an essential service provider, is ensuring that customers continue to receive efficient, reliable, high quality water and sewerage services that meet their needs now and well into the future. These services need to represent good value for money.

Continuing on our program from last year, we are actively implementing a range of efficiency improvements in our business to reduce costs. These include utilising innovative technology, maximising operational efficiency and working closely with neighbouring water corporations to achieve sustainable business cost reductions. This has enabled us to absorb increased prices on the goods and services that we need for our operations and keep price rises for customers well below inflation.



*A bank of highly efficient solar panels just installed at Woodglen Water Treatment Plant will greatly reduce the running costs of the facility*

The average residential customer (using 148,000 litres of water a year) will see their combined water and sewerage bills go up as little as \$3.89 in total over the 12 month period to the end of June 2016. This is a 0.34 percent increase, one per cent less than inflation, and means the average bill will rise from \$1,146.17 to \$1,150.07 (the actual cost will be lower for those consuming less water and higher for those consuming more).

In addition to keeping costs below inflation, residential customers are receiving a \$28 Victorian Government rebate on the first East Gippsland Water bill they receive in the 2015/16 financial year. Those to benefit are owner-occupiers and tenants.

The average business customer also stands to benefit from below-inflation increases, with their average bill going up by 1.01 percent, or 0.33 percent less than inflation.

Furthermore, the new prices are lower than those approved by the water industry's economic regulator, the Essential Services Commission (ESC).

Over recent years we have invested in a significant multi-million-dollar capital works program to protect customers from the impact of extreme weather events. Integral to this has been providing for our growing population.

We will invest approximately \$8 million during 2015/16 on essential major capital projects, with an emphasis on wastewater. This includes further progress on a significant upgrade to the Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant and ongoing improvements to the town's sewer network, including pump stations, to cater for future growth of the local area.

Major sewer network enhancements are also planned for Lakes Entrance and Omeo, as well as significant irrigation and reuse upgrades at a number of wastewater treatment plant sites around East Gippsland. This will help maintain East Gippsland Water's record as one of the best performing water corporations in Victoria when it comes to recycling water, typically achieving a reuse level of 100 percent.

In addition, new water infrastructure is proposed to ensure the long-term security of drinking water supplies to Lakes Entrance, together with the replacement of ageing sections of sewerage and water pipelines and other assets across East Gippsland.

Further investment is planned to optimise the water treatment facilities at Woodglen, Omeo and Cann River, to maintain high drinking water quality standards for customers.

Around \$18 million will also be invested to maintain and operate water and sewerage infrastructure, ensuring services are kept to a high standard of efficiency and reliability.



*We're committed to delivering value for money services*

## Attention schools

It's that time again for local primary schools to get creative with the annual National Water Week Poster Competition.

This initiative is supported by East Gippsland Water and provides a great opportunity for primary students, including home-schoolers, to put their artistic talents to the test, while learning more about the importance of water and using it efficiently.

The closing date for entries is Friday, 11 September, with the winners to be presented with their prizes during National Water Week (which runs from 18-24 October).

As well as any state honours which may be won this time round, we will be awarding prizes, including science experiment kits, to winning students, and a fun, educational prize to their school.



Get creative!

Students are encouraged to create a poster reflecting water-related issues that are important to them. If they can connect this with what East Gippsland Water does, so much the better.

There is plenty of material on our website which can be used for inspiration.

Information about the competition has been sent out to primary schools. Please contact our communications and education team on 5150 4452 with any queries.

## News in brief

- Thousands of East Gippsland Water customers stand to benefit from an ongoing program to clean and re-line sections of ageing sewer main. Designed to boost the long-term efficiency and reliability of the region's sewer network, parts of **Bairnsdale, Wy Yung, Paynesville, Lucknow, Metung, Kalimna and Orbost** recently became the latest to be targeted.

The use of state-of-the-art technology eliminated the need to dig up existing sewer pipes. Instead, the main was high-pressure cleaned to remove any debris and then a new internal lining fed down maintenance holes and slid into position.

- Some 3km of new sewer main has been installed on the outskirts of **Bairnsdale**, from the Bridge Street pump station to the wastewater treatment plant at Holloway Street. This project, worth nearly \$2 million, will help ensure the reliability of the town's wastewater services in the long-term and cater for population growth.
- Around 500m of ageing water main has been replaced recently in **McCullough Street, Lakes Entrance**. This will help ensure the long-term reliability and efficiency of water services for our customers in the eastern part of the town.
- Dinner Plain is benefiting from the installation of a new UV (ultraviolet) water treatment system. This will maintain the very high quality of the town's drinking water and ensure the reliability of the treatment system well into the future.



Laying out sections of new sewer main on the outskirts of Bairnsdale before installation underground

## Take a tour

East Gippsland Water is able to provide a range of FREE presentations and tours for schools and community groups, which can be tailor-made to meet specific requirements.

Learn more about the water and wastewater services we provide including our collection, treatment and supply of drinking water to customers, and the use of recycled water to benefit the local community and environment.

To make a booking please visit the 'Education' section of our website [egwater.vic.gov.au](http://egwater.vic.gov.au) and complete the application form. For more information call 5150 4452.

## Water Update

As *Pipeline* goes to print there are no water restrictions in force anywhere in East Gippsland and ample drinking water supplies are available to meet customer demand.

State-wide common-sense rules (Permanent Water Saving Rules) do still apply. For example, you can use a hand-held hose at any time to water gardens and lawns; just make sure that the hose is leak-free and fitted with a trigger nozzle.