

MEDIA RELEASE

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Strengthening French water ties

Opportunities to further develop links between East Gippsland Water and France's prestigious engineering school ENSIL were top of the agenda at a recent meeting between the two organisations in Bairnsdale.

ENSIL's Principal, Patrick Leprat, in the region as part of a relationship-building visit to Australia, expressed his sincere appreciation for the contribution East Gippsland Water has made to his institution, with Managing Director Bruce Hammond. Both discussed the value of continuing and strengthening the current internship program.



East Gippsland Water's Managing Director Bruce Hammond (left) meets with ENSIL's Principal Patrick Leprat

Leading the way for the Victorian water industry, East Gippsland Water initiated an internship program in 2010, offering ENSIL students the opportunity of a three month placement with a participating Victorian water corporation.

This has enabled a number of students specialising in water and the environment to gain an invaluable appreciation of Australia's water issues and engineering practices, while carrying out research projects on behalf of their host. It has also provided water industry professionals here with an insight into the water engineering industry in France.

Looking at the long-term, this program is seen as an important tool to help address skill shortages in Australia's water industry. Indeed, one former intern subsequently returned to the corporation on a two-year graduate program.

Said East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Bruce Hammond: "There is great potential for this initiative that goes beyond a comparison of engineering practices and assisting interns with their professional development back home. By providing students with a taste of the Australian lifestyle we hope that a number will be attracted back here to live and work."

East Gippsland Water has just commenced the selection process that will see another ENSIL student work with the corporation over winter.

In addition a French environmental science student studying for a Masters Degree will be starting a four month placement later this month.

While in East Gippsland, Patrick Leprat also took the opportunity to visit the Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant and Ramsar listed Macleod Morass, as well as the innovative water treatment plant and storage infrastructure located at Woodglen.

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