

pipeline

East Gippsland Water News and Events



Issue 27 - Winter 2013

Price increases kept to a minimum

"East Gippsland Water bills for the average residential customer are being pegged close to the rate of inflation over the next five years, with an overall increase of 1.39 percent for the period.

"Looking at the 12 months to the end of July 2014, the average residential customer (using 145,000 litres of water per year) will see their combined water and sewerage bills go down by \$9, with inflation taken into account. This represents a decrease of 0.8 percent, with their annual expenditure on these services falling from \$1,113 in 2012/13 to \$1,104 in 2013/14.

"The actual cost will be lower for those consuming less water and higher for those consuming more.

"Typical bills for non-residential customers will increase by 2.7 percent over the next five years, excluding inflation, and by 2.57 percent for 2013/14 - taking inflation into account.

"The new prices have been set by the water industry's economic regulator, the Essential Services Commission (ESC), and are included in its final decision on our business plan for 2013-18, known as Water Plan 3.

"A new billing structure has been implemented. This is in response to customer feedback and designed to give customers more control over their bill, with an increasing emphasis placed on the water usage component of the bill and reducing the fixed charge component.

"Water and wastewater service charges for not-connected, vacant land have also been reduced to half of the full services charge.

"In addition, Standard New Customer Contributions will decrease from the current level to zero by the end of the five year period. Charges for non-standard developments will be determined as appropriate.

"Other highlights covered in the centre pages of this Pipeline include our investment in major capital projects around the region through to 2018 - worth around \$9 million a year. We also have some \$17 million a year earmarked for operations and maintenance.

"East Gippsland Water has introduced Guaranteed Service Levels. This means that any customer receiving a significantly poor level of service in one of five key areas, will be compensated.

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

"The last five years have seen us invest in a significant multi-million-dollar capital works program to protect our current and future customers as much as possible against the impact of extreme weather events; providing long-term water security for a growing population. That forward-thinking investment has enabled us to scale back the level of prices to be charged between now and 2018.

"Importantly, these prices provide us with sufficient capital to progress with major projects around the region, and to sustain a high quality maintenance program for our water and sewerage network, so that it continues to operate reliably and efficiently."

Bruce Hammond,
Managing Director, East Gippsland Water



Earmarked for upgrades: Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant (top) and the water treatment plant at Mallacoota

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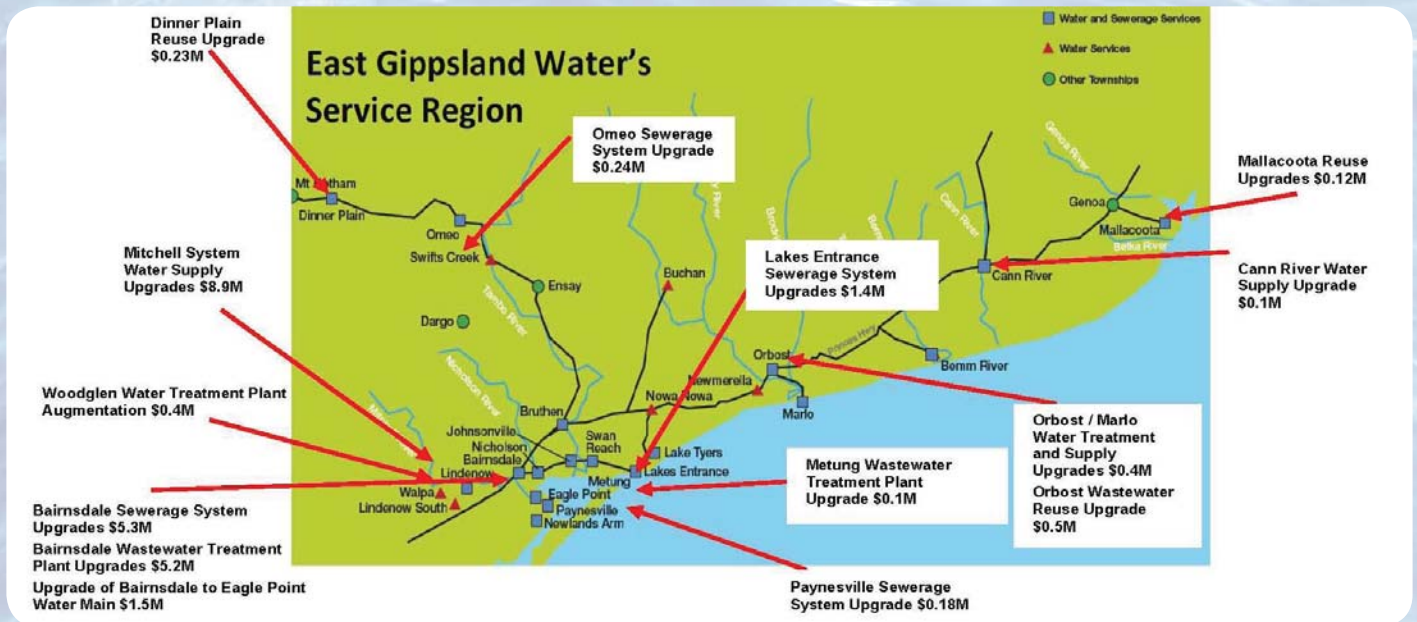
Water Plan 3 – some highlights

Capital works

East Gippsland Water will invest around \$9 million a year in essential major works from 2013 to 2018.

Prudent expenditure on significant projects is necessary to ensure customers are able to use as much water as they wish from a reliable, high quality supply. It will also ensure that customers continue to enjoy a reliable wastewater removal and treatment service.

Work will include progress on a major upgrade to the Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant and upgrades to the Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance and Omeo sewer systems. In addition new water supply infrastructure is proposed for Cann River, Bemm River and Orbost, upgrades to infrastructure in Mallacoota and the replacement of sections of ageing water pipeline and other assets across East Gippsland.



Operations and maintenance

Approximately \$17 million a year, for the next five years, will be invested to maintain and operate water and sewerage infrastructure, ensuring services are kept to a high standard.

Some notable areas for expenditure include:

- running the Woodglen Water Treatment Plant for the five-year period, to make sure we provide high quality drinking water that meets both customer and regulated standards - \$2.3 million.
- forecast increases in the cost of electricity used in pumping water and moving sewage - \$5.7 million.
- desludging sewerage lagoons, required every 15 to 20 years to ensure the effective treatment of wastewater - \$0.8 million.



Ongoing initiatives include high-pressure cleaning water mains to keep on top of water quality

Guaranteed Service Levels

East Gippsland Water is committed to delivering a very high level of service.

Occasionally there may be a problem, which is why we have introduced Guaranteed Service Levels as an incentive to maintain high standards. It means that any customer receiving a significantly poor level of service in one of five key areas will qualify for compensation:

- Customers who write to East Gippsland Water about any matter which requires a response, can expect this response within 10 working days. If we fail to do this a rebate of \$30 will be applied to the customer's bill.
- ** We provide notice to customers of any planned interruption to their water supply, which gives the timeframe for when water will be unavailable. If water is unavailable for longer than the time set in the notice, and the customer notifies us, a rebate of \$65 will be applied to the customer's bill.

- We have excellent hardship procedures. If a residential customer is having difficulty paying a bill, and we restrict the water supply or take legal action against the customer before taking reasonable action to provide information about these procedures, a rebate of \$300 will be applied to the customer's bill.
- If we fail to update a customer's billing details after the customer has requested such a change, a rebate of \$30 will be applied to the customer's bill.
- ** If we cause a sewage spill within a customer's house, we will pay the customer \$1000. This is providing the flooding has not been contributed to by the customer's own actions (a defect in their house drain/blocked overflow relief gully) or as a result of widespread flooding due to extreme weather. We will also clean up the property and provide alternative accommodation as required.

The following exclusions apply to these Guaranteed Service Levels:

1. If the event is caused by, or is the responsibility of the customer or a third party;
2. Where a property or house is occupied by a tenant and the tenant is a customer, only the tenant's account will be credited for the failure to meet those Guaranteed Service Levels marked **.

There is more

For further information on Water Plan 3, and to estimate your bill, please visit the Water Plan 3 section on our website www.egwater.vic.gov.au.



Committed to quality customer service

MWH for engineering services

East Gippsland Water has selected MWH Australia to provide the bulk of its engineering services, commencing this coming spring.

MWH boasts worldwide expertise in the field of water engineering and significant experience servicing the Victorian water industry over many years.

As part of their arrangement with East Gippsland Water, the company will be setting up a local office in Bairnsdale. They will be utilising local skills and resources, and partnering with local companies.

The selection of MWH follows a rigorous assessment process spanning more than five months, with expressions of interest received from 19 companies.

It follows a very productive relationship spanning nearly 20 years with AECOM and its predecessor organisations Maunsell, EarthTech, Fisher Stewart, and Garlick and Stewart.

East Gippsland Water's present contract with AECOM is due to expire this October. The water corporation will be working closely with both AECOM and MWH to make the transition to the new contractor as smooth as possible.

Prize draw is a win-win!

East Gippsland Water has launched a free prize draw aimed at rewarding residential customers paying their bill on time.

This competition is being run on a quarterly basis to coincide with the billing period and will initially operate for one year.

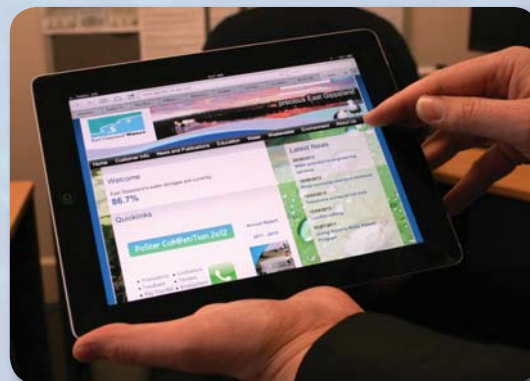
Everyone paying their bill by the due date will be automatically entered in the draw for that quarter, with the chance to win an Apple iPad 4th Generation, 32GB with 3G, or \$750 credited to their East Gippsland Water account.

Winners will be selected randomly by computer, with the first to be drawn on 16 October, 2013.

This is designed to be a win-win for everyone involved. The aim is to reward and encourage customers to pay their bills by the due date. The expected reduction in the number of bill reminder notices that need to be issued, and the related savings involved, should more than offset the cost of the prize.

Terms and conditions for the competition can be found in the customer information section of our website www.egwater.vic.gov.au. Alternatively, a copy is available from our Bairnsdale office at 133 Macleod Street, during office hours.

In the meantime, customers who have a query about this initiative, or wish to be excluded from the draw, should contact our customer service team on 1800 671 841, or email egw@egwater.vic.gov.au.



Up for grabs – an iPad 4th Generation

Orbost covered

Customers in Orbost, Marlo, Jarrahmond and Newmerella are now reaping the benefits of a specialist shade cloth cover installed over a major local water storage.

The cover has been positioned over East Gippsland Water's 45 million litre clearwater storage in Orbost, which holds treated drinking water before it is supplied to the surrounding area.

Importantly, the shade cloth material used will protect this stored water from soil, algal or airborne particles, while also cutting evaporation from the storage by up to 90 percent.

The Victorian Government awarded more than \$270,000 from its Small Towns Water Quality Fund to assist with the \$600,000 project, with the remainder of the funding provided by East Gippsland Water.

We also have shade cloth covers installed over water storages at Mallacoota, Omeo, Cann River, Swifts Creek, Bemm River and Lindenow.

Attention schools!

Local primary school students have a great incentive to get creative with this year's National Water Week poster competition, which is proudly supported by East Gippsland Water.

Prizes up for grabs include science experiment kits for students winning the regional round, with their schools receiving a fun, educational prize. Winners will also be in the running to take out additional, exciting prizes at state level.

The competition is open to all primary schools and encourages students to push out the boundaries of their artistic talents, while learning more about the importance of water and using it efficiently. If they can connect this with what East Gippsland Water does, so much the better.

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

The closing date for entries this year is Friday 13 September, with the winners to be presented with their prizes during National water Week itself (which runs from 20 – 26 October).

The artistic talent displayed by East Gippsland students over past years has been terrific, with a number going on to become statewide winners, so we are very much looking forward to seeing this year's posters.

Information about the competition has been sent to primary schools already and they should contact our communications and education team on 51 50 4452 with any queries.

Water update

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

State-wide, commonsense rules (Permanent Water Saving Rules) do still apply. For example, you can use a hand-held hose at any time to wash your car, and to water gardens and lawns. Just make sure that the hose is fitted with a trigger nozzle. Also, manual and automatic watering systems can be used daily between 6pm and 10am.

Book a tour

East Gippsland Water offers 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 www.egwater.vic.gov.au and complete the application form. For more information call 51 50 4452.



Installing the cover



Just a few of the posters received last year



Our tours are free