

MEDIA RELEASE

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Powering up with sewage and food waste

East Gippsland Water's Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant is now well on the way to generating most of its power needs from little more than sewage sludge and local food waste.



Monitoring the new facility are East Gippsland Water Project Engineer, Hardy Fandrich (left) and Wastewater Treatment Operator, Dino Giove

The corporation recently installed a new combined heat and power facility at the plant, which is taking the methane generated from a blend of sewage sludge and local food waste and converting this into heat and electricity to run much of the on-site operations. This in turn provides a saving in operational costs and reduces East Gippsland Water's carbon emissions.

This pilot initiative has been driven forward as part of a joint project involving the East Gippsland Food Cluster, Federation University, East Gippsland Shire Council and East Gippsland Water, exploring ways to recycle organic waste instead of sending it to landfill.

The new facility is producing up to 40 kilowatts of electricity to help power the treatment plant, with any excess energy being fed into the electricity grid.

Visibly the site looks little different to before, except for the addition of a large white, 12m diameter inflated gas membrane, known as 'the bubble'.

East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Bruce Hammond, said, "As an organisation we are very much committed to environmental sustainability in all our operations and reducing costs, which are ultimately borne by our customers. This initiative represents a great advance in these areas and also has the potential to bring wider benefits to the region into the future."

More follows/...

Representing food producers and processors across the region, Dr Nicola Watts, Executive Officer of the East Gippsland Food Cluster added, “We’re very keen to cut the amount of food waste produced locally that’s ending up in landfill. Diverting this instead for beneficial reuse represents a great outcome and so we are very excited about the clean energy potential of this project.

“Ultimately, this could bring a reduction in the cost of transporting and disposing of food and other organic waste at landfill, while relieving pressure on the environment.”

Helping to supplement the energy generated by the new heat and power system at Bairnsdale Wastewater Treatment Plant is a 10 kilowatt solar panel installation at the facility.

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NOTE TO EDITORS

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