

MEDIA RELEASE

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Seeking customer feedback on possible water restrictions ahead

East Gippsland Water is keen to receive customer feedback on likely water restrictions as the region continues to experience extreme drought and prepares for another hot, dry summer ahead.

Acting Managing Director, Mark McNeil, said, “It’s been very cold over recent weeks and while this has been accompanied by storms and significant rainfall in some parts of Victoria, much of our region has remained unusually dry. Indeed, the Mitchell River catchment, which we rely on to supply 85 per cent of our customers (those in Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Paynesville, Metung, Bruthen and surrounding communities) has experienced paltry levels of rain.

“Normally we are able to pump enough water from the Mitchell to maintain at least three months of supply in our storages. However, last summer the river was so low that we couldn’t extract water for nearly a month, which cut our reserves. Agricultural irrigators were also prevented from pumping out of the Mitchell River.

“We cannot deny we are in drought and our previous assumptions regarding reliance on the Mitchell River as a reliable water source have been challenged. This summer is trending to be similar to the last two dry years and we’ve already commenced planning for an additional off-stream water storage, which could be built within three years if required.

“That said, we must focus on the short term reality that if conditions don’t improve over the next few months then restricted water pumping from the Mitchell River is likely and water restrictions may be required to conserve the community’s precious water reserves.

“Importantly, our water reserves can be stretched out by another month if moderate water restrictions are applied and so we are reviewing the trigger point for when restrictions are implemented.

“We would like to know what customers think and they can help us by completing a very brief, three minute survey on our website egwater.vic.gov.au. Alternatively, a hard copy of the survey is available at East Gippsland Water’s office, 133 Macleod Street, Bairnsdale.

“The survey closes on Tuesday 17 September, providing a great opportunity for customers to have their say.”

Customers can also do their bit to help now by ensuring they comply with mandatory Permanent Water Saving Rules that apply Victoria-wide as a minimum for everyone to follow. This means not using a sprinkler system to water the garden, unless it’s between 6pm and 10am, and then only if they need to. It also means not washing down hard surfaces such as driveways, paths or decking, unless absolutely necessary.

In addition, Target Your Water Use is a voluntary water efficiency program to assist regional Victorians to use water wisely, both in the garden and around the home. Visit the East Gippsland Water website for more information, including links to Smart Water Advice for tips on how to save water and the full set of Permanent Water Saving Rules.

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