

MEDIA RELEASE

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23 October, 2019

Water restrictions very likely this summer

Water restrictions are now looking likely this summer for East Gippsland Water customers supplied by the Mitchell River supply system and may be required as early as December.

East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Steve McKenzie, said "We recently surveyed our customers about their attitude to water restrictions and an overwhelming 90 percent of respondents supported restrictions to conserve water and wanted to take action early. We are taking on board their clear feedback to be advised early.

To prepare and adjust, customers are being requested to voluntarily reduce their water use. A saving of just two buckets per person a day, would cut overall consumption by ten percent and help conserve precious water reserves. Reducing water use will conserve our water reserves and minimise impact on the environment.

"The Bureau of Meteorology recently announced that East Gippsland is experiencing its driest 32 months on record and the forecast for the coming three months is for the very dry conditions to continue. River flows around the region are at the lowest for many years and the Mitchell, which supplies 85 percent of our customers (those in Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Paynesville, Metung, Bruthen and surrounding communities) is dropping to levels experienced during the Millennium drought in 2006.

"We are prepared for a dry summer and have four to five months of water already stored and we will maximise our reserves over coming months. Importantly, managed water restrictions would add another month to our reserves.

"The Mitchell River and other rivers in the region have been extremely reliable and respond to rainfall rapidly, so over the next few months there is potential for a healthy river flow and uninterrupted supply. That said, we should be pragmatic and prepare early to implement managed water restrictions if required.

"We appreciate that if water restrictions are required, they will impact on customers passionate about their gardens, as well as on sporting clubs and businesses such as those involved with garden maintenance, nurseries, swimming pool construction and car washes. Therefore we strongly encourage everyone likely to be affected to prepare accordingly."

For tips on how to save water, customers can visit the East Gippsland Water website www.egwater.vic.gov.au

Further water situation updates will be provided over coming weeks. In the meantime, anyone requiring more information should monitor the East Gippsland Water website or phone 1800 671 841 during business hours.

Ends