

MEDIA RELEASE

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Stage 2 Water Restrictions from 13 January

Continuing extreme dry conditions mean East Gippsland Water will bring in Stage 2 water restrictions for all customers reliant on the Mitchell River supply system* and Buchan River from Monday 13 January.

The East Gippsland region is experiencing its driest three years on record and the Mitchell River's water flow fell below 265 megalitres per day on 11 December, which is some 80 per cent below average for this time of year, necessitating restricted pumping from the river.

The Mitchell is extremely important because it supplies 85 per cent of customers - those in Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Paynesville, Metung, Bruthen and surrounds.

East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Steve McKenzie, said, "Our off-stream water storages are full and we expect to keep them full for at least another month. However, modelling of the Mitchell River indicates further restricted pumping will be required by February, so early action is being taken to reduce water demand and conserve water supplies - extending our reserves held in storage through to autumn.

"The Buchan River system is also being affected by low flows and bushfires. The emergency backup arrangement for Buchan is to truck water in from the Mitchell system, so as a precautionary measure water restrictions will be introduced in the Buchan system on 13 January as well.

"As we're in a situation where water flows are dropping to unusually low levels, we will go straight to Stage 2 to hopefully avoid any tougher restrictions being required this summer. This will mean no watering of residential lawns at any time. In addition it will mean no watering of residential garden areas except by means of a bucket, watering can, or hand-held hose fitted with a trigger nozzle. Sprinkler watering systems are permitted, on alternate days, between 6am-8am and 6pm-8pm.

"A summary of the water restrictions is currently being mailed out to all affected customers and signs will be placed at the entrances to all towns to clarify where water restrictions are in force.

"Water restrictions are not expected to be required in the towns of Orbost, Newmerella, Marlo, Bemm River, Cann River, Omeo, Dinner Plain, Swifts Creek or Mallacoota. Lower level Permanent Water Saving Rules will remain in place for these communities.

"We are prepared for a hot, dry summer and have four to five months of water stored. If we all do our part and follow these water restrictions, we could add another month to our reserves.

"We appreciate customers' cooperation at this challenging time. Further water situation updates will be provided over coming months. In the meantime, for tips on how to save water please visit the East Gippsland Water website www.egwater.vic.gov.au. In addition, anyone with a query about water restrictions can contact our Customer Business Team at on 1800 671 841 during business hours."

* The Mitchell River supply system = Bairnsdale, Walpa, Lindenow South, Lindenow, Eagle Point, Newlands Arm, Paynesville, Raymond Island, Sarsfield, Bruthen, Nicholson, Johnsonville, Swan Reach, Metung, Kalimna, Lakes Entrance, Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust, Lake Tyers Beach, Nowa Nowa and surrounding areas