

MEDIA RELEASE

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24 June, 2020

Additional measures announced to assist customers financially

East Gippsland Water has announced that it will not apply the annual increase in water tariffs until the beginning of 2021, as part of a program of measures to help ease financial pressure on residential and business customers impacted by the recent bushfires and the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The six month deferral means the update to East Gippsland Water tariffs (water service and usage charges), which normally occurs on 1 July, will not happen until 1 January next year, and then they will only increase by the rate of inflation.

In addition, East Gippsland Water is extending financial assistance available to residential customers to also cover small business customers. There are a range of assistance programs and payment options, such as flexible payments, that can be arranged on a case-by-case basis. There is also independent financial counselling available at no cost to the customer.

Measures implemented by the organisation include not applying interest charges to overdue accounts, not issuing final notices and suspending debt collection.

For more information and advice, customers can call the Customer Business Team in confidence on 1800 671 841.

East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Steve McKenzie, said: "These are unprecedented times and we understand that things may be tough financially for our customers. Our aim is to help in any way we can."

East Gippsland Water's high levels of service will be maintained. Over the 2020/21 financial year the organisation is looking to invest around \$16 million in a major capital works program. This will include replacing or upgrading ageing infrastructure to maintain high quality, reliable services to customers. Key projects include:

- Completing construction of a new 36 million litre water storage tank at our water storage facility in Wy Yung
- Doubling the water storage capacity at the Sarsfield tank site to help meet the long-term needs of a growing population across Nicholson, Johnsonville, Swan Reach, Metung, Tambo Bluff and Lakes Entrance.

The organisation will also be spending around \$24 million for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of existing water and sewerage infrastructure.

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