

Deferring water tariff increases to assist customers financially



Steve McKenzie,
Managing Director

“To help ease financial pressure on residential and business customers impacted by the recent bushfires and the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we have taken the decision not to apply our annual increase in water tariffs until 2021.

“Deferring for six months means the update to water service and usage charges, which normally occurs on 1 July, will not now happen until 1 January next year, and then the charges will only increase by the rate of inflation.

“These are unprecedented times and we understand that things may be tough financially for many of you. Our aim is to help in any way we can, with a range of financial assistance available to residential and small business customers. This includes assistance programs and payment options - such as flexible payments - and these can

be arranged on a case-by-case basis. In addition, for the time being we are not applying interest charges to overdue accounts, not issuing final notices and suspending debt collection.

“There is also independent financial counselling available at no cost to the customer.

“For more information and advice please call our Customer Business Team in confidence on 1800 671 841.

Maintaining high levels of service

“Rest assured that East Gippsland Water’s high levels of service will be maintained.

“Over this financial year we are looking to invest around \$16 million in a major capital works program, which includes replacing or upgrading ageing infrastructure.

“We are also spending around \$24 million for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of existing water and sewerage infrastructure.”

Water situation update

Following notable rainfall and welcome increases to river flows over a number of weeks we were finally able to remove water restrictions for Mitchell River and Buchan customers at the start of July – six months after their necessary introduction to conserve vital water supplies.

This means that all our customers across East Gippsland are now on common-sense Permanent Water Saving Rules. These apply as a minimum to follow. For more information on the key ones please refer to the back of this newsletter.

While we are in a better position than this time last year, which is a promising sign for next summer, our experience in recent years has highlighted the increasing volatility of our climate. Consequently we have already commenced planning for increased water storage capacity in the Mitchell River system to give us extra resilience to climate variability.



As best practice we should all make sure we use water efficiently. *Target Your Water Use* is a voluntary program to assist regional Victorians to use water wisely, both in the garden and around the home. Visit our website egwater.vic.gov.au for more information and links to Smart Water Advice for tips on how to save water.

Email option

It is fast, efficient and convenient, so why not opt to receive your East Gippsland Water bill by email?

Simply go to the home page of our website and click on the 'Online Forms' section. Then click on 'My Account' and complete the 'Change of Customer Details'. Alternatively, call our Customer Business Team on 1800 671 841.

Concessions

Residential customers holding a Centrelink Health Care, Pensioner Concession, or Department of Veteran Affairs Concession Card, may be entitled to receive a discount on their East Gippsland Water bill, for their principal place of residence.

Concession card holders are also able to pay by instalment using Centrelink's Centrepay service.

For more information contact the Customer Business Team.

Stop it. Don't block it!

Customers are reminded to only flush toilet paper down the loo and not kitchen paper, tissues or wipes, as these can lead to sewer blockages and overflows and should be placed in the bin instead.

Other items for the bin include sanitary pads, tampons, incontinence pads and disposable nappies.

Wipes, including those marked as 'flushable', cause a significant problem when put down the toilet. They simply do not break down in the sewer system, blocking pipes and jamming up equipment such as heavy duty sewer pumps. This is very costly for East Gippsland Water to address.

If you encounter a problem, please call East Gippsland Water's 24 hour emergency and faults service on 1300 134 202.

Permanent Water Saving Rules



These rules apply at all times when there are no other water restrictions in force. Here are some of the key rules:

- **Residential and commercial gardens and lawns**
Can be watered:
 - only between **6pm and 10am** using a sprinkler system
 - at any time using a hand-held hose that is leak-free and fitted with a trigger nozzle, a watering can, or bucket.Only water if you need to.
- **Vehicles**
Can be cleaned at any time, but only if using:
 - a hand-held hose that is leak-free and fitted with a trigger nozzle
 - a high pressure water cleaning device
 - a watering can, or
 - a bucket.
- **Hard surfaces** (including driveways, paths, concrete and timber decking)
Can only be cleaned if:
 - it is required as a result of an accident, fire, health hazard, safety hazard or other emergency
 - it is to remove staining from a surface (this is permitted once per season), or
 - it is because of construction/renovation work.In these instances only a high pressure cleaning device, bucket or hand-held hose that is leak-free and fitted with a trigger nozzle may be used.
- **Fountains and water features**
Can only be used if they recirculate the water.

For more information, including details of exemptions, visit www.egwater.vic.gov.au, or call 1800 671 841.

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We welcome your feedback on this newsletter. Please contact:

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**24 HOUR
EMERGENCY
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