

Water update



Steve McKenzie,
Managing Director

“As we head rapidly towards the end of the year we continue to monitor the water situation across our drought-affected region very closely.

“Over the wetter autumn and winter months we took the opportunity to bolster our various water storages across East Gippsland to address

customer needs over summer, as we also prepare for any potential bushfire and dry weather threats in the months ahead.

“I encourage customers to regularly check for any

water restrictions that may apply. Simply refer to colour strip on the back of your East Gippsland Water bill. You can also call us free of charge on 1800 671 841, or visit our website egwater.vic.gov.au, where all the possible stages of water restrictions are covered in detail. Please also look out for any news updates in the local media.

“We greatly appreciate customers’ cooperation during this uncertain period. As best practice we should all 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. Again, visit our website for more information and links to Smart Water Advice for tips on how to save water.”

Your water supply in a bushfire

East Gippsland Water customers are urged to carefully consider their water supply when planning for a bushfire and not to rely solely on the reticulated town water supply during a major fire event.

The CFA advise leaving early as the safest option to protect you and your family. Should you decide to stay and defend your property the CFA recommend having at least 10,000 litres of water stored for emergency use. Ensure there is a CFA fitting on water tanks.

East Gippsland Water does have comprehensive measures in place to help maintain drinking water supplies wherever possible in the event of bushfires, including back-up generators at critical sites. However, reticulated water supply systems are only designed to cope with customers’ everyday needs. Excessively high levels of water consumption and any damage to the system during a severe fire mean the town water supply will be operating under extreme load, which may lead to a drop in water pressure or loss of water supply, as well as possibly impacting on water quality.

To assist with preparing your bushfire plan you should consult the CFA website cfa.vic.gov.au for free information and advice. The CFA also has the Fire Safety Outreach Program, offering bushfire planning and preparation advice to those in East Gippsland. To register your interest email firesafetyoutreach@cfa.vic.gov.au, or call 0419 874 484 during business hours. For details of fires visit the website emergency.vic.gov.au. In addition there is the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.

Where a bushfire poses an imminent threat to property, any water saving rules or restrictions are automatically waived.

Help us to help you by registering your mobile

The bushfires at the turn of the year highlighted the value of being able to SMS customers with important information about service disruptions and water quality very quickly.

We are keen to make our SMS messaging service even better, which means having more customers register their mobile contact details with us. This will make it easier for us to get in touch with you when we need to. Simply call our Customer Business Team on 1800 671 841, or go to the home page of our website and click on ‘Change billing details’.



Plan for your water supply in a bushfire

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. To know more contact the Customer Business Team.

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, give us a call on 1800 671 841.

Assistance for those in Financial hardship

We recognise there are residential and business customers experiencing financial hardship due to the bushfires at the start of the year and the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We want to help in any way we can, which is why we will not now be applying 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 now happen on 1 January next year, and then the charges will only increase by the rate of inflation.

We also have a range of financial assistance available to 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 the Customer Business Team in confidence on 1800 671 841.

2018-23 – A summary of our performance so far

Summary Table		18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
1	Current levels of water and sewerage services maintained	●	●			
2	Safe, high quality drinking water supplies delivered	●	●			
3	No increase in the average customer bill	●	●			
4	Supporting environmental sustainability	●	●			
5	Enhanced liveability and resilience in our region	●	●			
OVERALL		●	●			

Business comments

This is the second year we have rated ourselves against five key outcomes that our customers told us they valued most. These outcomes were determined through extensive engagement with our customers in the lead up to our 2018-23 price submission.

This year we have rated our overall performance yellow because we met three of the five outcomes. The traffic light scores for each outcome were workshopped with our Executive Team and then approved by our Customer Committee. While the majority of the outcomes were met, we have taken time to deeply understand and analyse our performance. This will allow us to put measures in place to address any deficiencies and ensure we continuously strive to meet our commitments to customers.

The 2019-20 financial year presented significant challenges for our region and our business. The summer bushfires that followed three of the region's driest years on record were devastating for local communities. The ongoing challenges associated with responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic have also compounded recovery efforts. We are proud of our response to these extreme events; particularly as our staff have been, and continue to be, personally impacted by both. Throughout the 2019-20 financial year we have prioritised the continuity of essential services and the provision of bespoke support solutions for our customers. However, we have also managed to deliver one of our largest capital investment programs in order to maintain the high levels of service our customers expect of us.

● Target met this year ● Target partially met this year ● Target not met this year

For more on our performance go to the home page of our website egwater.vic.gov.au and click on the link.

We welcome your feedback on this newsletter. Please contact:

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