

MEDIA RELEASE

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Planned discharges of recycled water – Kalimna West and Paynesville

East Gippsland Water will commence a controlled release of recycled water (treated wastewater) from its wastewater treatment facilities at Bruces Track (Kalimna West) and Paynesville this week (the week commencing 15 November).

The on-site storages for recycled water have reached capacity following significant rainfall across the Gippsland region this year and these controlled releases are critical to prevent uncontrolled overflow to surrounding communities and the environment.

This necessary action follows a previous controlled release from the Paynesville site during August/September.

East Gippsland Water's Executive Manager Service Delivery, Mark McNeil, said, "The water to be released has been treated to a standard usually used for the irrigation of pasture. However, the volume exceeds what can be used for irrigation and impacts how much water can safely be stored at the facilities.

"At Bruces Track wastewater treatment facility there will be a controlled discharge into nearby Bellbird Creek, near Bennetts Brook Rd, Stock Creek and the Tambo River. At our Paynesville site, the controlled discharge will be into nearby Forge Creek, near Barkhill Road.

"We are in the process of notifying adjacent residents, relevant community groups and partner agencies and signage is being erected in the immediate areas to advise that recycled water is mixing with creek and/or river water and that this water should be avoided.

"The quality and flow of the recycled water will be closely monitored to ensure there are no environmental impacts.

"We greatly appreciate the cooperation of the local communities and apologise for any inconvenience. Unfortunately, we cannot rule out the possibility of further discharges in future months to protect communities and the environment, including from other wastewater treatment facilities in our region."

For further information, please contact East Gippsland Water on 1800 671 841.

East Gippsland Water currently has around 132 hectares of irrigated pasture available to receive recycled water from the Paynesville wastewater treatment facility – including ten hectares purchased two years ago. Further improvement measures will be implemented to contain future extreme wet weather events and to meet population growth in the area served by the Paynesville wastewater system. Design work is nearing completion on the expansion of the current irrigation area by up to 50 hectares. The organisation will also be constructing a new treated wastewater storage as a multi-million-dollar investment to manage the community's wastewater.

Ends