

Community engagement update



“Firstly, a big thank you to everyone who registered an expression of interest to participate in a special forum this autumn and help us make some big decisions about key areas of our business.

“There was a rich pool of applicants, which enabled engagement experts Insync to select a good cross section of customers from around East Gippsland to help shape our decisions, as we look to spend \$200 million in the next ten years.

“A key consideration for them: How should we fairly balance the cost of our services between current and future customers while considering customers in genuine financial hardship?”

“Their job: To put forward recommendations to our

Board, which will influence how we proceed with prices and services over the five years 2023 – 2028 for our Price Submission (our latest business plan).

“We will provide updates on the findings and outcomes of this engagement process in future issues of this newsletter, as well as in our monthly In the Flow public information page, which is printed in the Bairnsdale Advertiser, Lakes Post and Snowy River Mail.

“More information can also be found on our website – simply click on the ‘Your voice matters’ link on the home page.

“Importantly, if you have any queries, please contact our Customer, Community & Communications Team on 1800 671 841.”



Steve McKenzie,
Managing Director

To get you thinking

Our region is experiencing unprecedented fluctuations in climate and facing incredible challenges as a result.

Go back just three years and 2019 was the driest year on record for much of East Gippsland. Fast-forward to 2021 and we had the wettest year since records began - as recorded at Bairnsdale Airport. And the exceptionally heavy rainfall, accompanied by flooding, has continued into this year.

Despite all this – not to mention the ongoing impact of COVID-19 - East Gippsland Water staff have dug deep to make sure water and sewerage services have been maintained for all customers across the region.

When you consider we are talking about nine separate water supply systems and 11 sewerage systems, spread across an area of 21,000 square kilometres that we serve, that is quite a feat!

Paynesville wastewater

Upgrades are being carried out at our Paynesville wastewater treatment facility to future-proof the wastewater treatment and irrigation infrastructure. The last 12 months have been phenomenally wet and overwhelmed our capacity to irrigate on our land.

We currently have around 132 hectares of irrigated pasture to irrigate recycled water at the Paynesville facility – including ten hectares purchased two years ago. Irrigation expansion has already commenced to contain future extreme wet weather events and meet population growth. Design is nearing completion on up to 50 extra hectares of irrigation, which will be completed in less than 12 months for next summer.

We will also construct a new irrigation storage lagoon to get us through the wet years. Design is underway and preliminary estimates are around \$5 million as the investment to manage the Paynesville community’s wastewater.

Fast fact

East Gippsland Water looks after 973km of water mains and 735km of sewer mains - a total of 1,708km of pipeline. That’s enough to stretch from Bairnsdale to Brisbane by road!

Struggling to pay your bill?

We appreciate there may be many customers experiencing financial hardship at the moment.

We have a range of financial assistance available to residential and small business customers - including assistance programs and payment options, such as flexible payments. These can be arranged on a case-by-case basis. There is also independent financial counselling available at no cost to the customer.

For more information and advice call our Customer, Community & Communications Team in confidence on 1800 671 841.

Informing you fast with SMS!

We have been expanding our use of SMS to get important messages to customers quickly, such as service interruptions.

We want 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 1800 671 841, or go to the home page of our website and click on 'Change billing details'.

No water restrictions

As this newsletter goes to print there are no staged water restrictions in force in East Gippsland.

Common-sense Permanent Water Saving Rules do apply. This means not using a sprinkler system to water the garden, unless it's between 6pm and 10am. It also means not washing down hard surfaces such as driveways, paths or decking, unless absolutely necessary. For more, please refer to the back of your bill.

As best practice we should all ensure 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.

Community Rebate Program – Do you qualify?

The Victorian Government's Community Rebate Program provides eligible East Gippsland Water customers with a free water audit from a licensed plumber - to assist with reducing your water use and water bill.

The plumber will check your property for water leaks or excessive water use – such as from old appliances.

Eligible customers may then receive assistance of up to \$750 from the program for agreed products or services to improve water efficiency.

To be eligible for the program you must:

- Be an East Gippsland Water customer
- Be responsible for paying the water account
- Have had recent higher water usage
- Be on a concession, a vulnerable customer or in financial hardship.

To find out more, contact our Customer, Community & Communications Team on 1800 671 841

Stop it. Don't block it!

Only flush pee, poo and toilet paper down the toilet and **not** kitchen paper, tissues or any types of 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, rags and disposable nappies.

If you encounter a problem, please call our 24-hour emergency and faults service on 1300 134 202.



We welcome your feedback on this newsletter. Please contact:

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PO Box 52
BAIRNSDALE 3875

Ph: 1800 671 841
Fax: 03 5150 4477

Email: egw@egwater.vic.gov.au
Website: egwater.vic.gov.au

Translating & Interpreter Service
Ph: 131 450

TTY facility
Ph: 1800 555 677

**24 HOUR
EMERGENCY
AND FAULTS
SERVICE
1300 134 202**

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