

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Controlled discharge of recycled water – Metung

East Gippsland Water will shortly start a controlled release of recycled water (treated wastewater) from its Metung wastewater treatment facility into the nearby Tambo Bay Wetlands (week commencing 25 July).

The on-site storages for recycled water have reached capacity following significant rainfall across the East Gippsland region over the last 18 months and a controlled release is critical to prevent an uncontrolled overflow to the surrounding community.

East Gippsland Water’s Executive Manager Service Delivery, Neville Pearce, said, “The wastewater 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 facility.

“We have exhausted all alternatives to avoid this action, however a slow, controlled discharge is now essential.

“At this stage, the plan is to release an estimated 130 megalitres of recycled water over two months into the Tambo Bay Wetlands, located partly on the site of the treatment facility, which also receives stormwater, where it will be further diluted. Importantly, the wetlands are a highly effective natural filter designed to greatly reduce the level of nutrients found in water runoff from surrounding roads and land, entering Tambo Bay.

“As with all discharges, we comply with regulatory requirements, including notifying downstream neighbours, residents, relevant community groups and government agencies. Signage is being erected in the immediate area to advise that recycled water is mixing with wetlands water, and possibly also Tambo Bay water, and this water should be avoided as a health precaution.

“The quality and flow of the recycled water will be closely monitored to ensure minimal environmental impact.

“We are working with East Gippsland Shire Council, who are responsible for stormwater drainage in the area, to clear the stormwater drain running close to the wetlands and the border of some private properties. This to help ensure the discharged treated wastewater does not encroach onto nearby private property, and is to prevent as much as possible, any treated wastewater entering Tambo Bay.

“We greatly appreciate the cooperation of the local community. These are exceptional times and the weather is having a real impact on our region. Unfortunately, as we head through winter we cannot rule out the possibility of further discharges, including elsewhere in East Gippsland.

“In the past year, we’ve had no choice but to make controlled releases of treated wastewater from our Lakes Entrance (in Kalimna), Cann River, Metung, Paynesville, Omeo and Bairnsdale wastewater treatment facilities.”

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

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