

# IN THE FLOW!

Keeping you in the know about your water and wastewater services.

East Gippsland **Water**

## Shaping the future of our services - Closing the loop

"Some 18 months ago we commenced a program of comprehensive engagement with customers, stakeholders and the wider East Gippsland community to help shape the delivery of our services over the next five years.

"We have engaged with more than 800 people from a wide cross section of our diverse community and are now in the process of finalising our draft Price Submission, or business plan, for 2023-2028 - which has carefully considered your preferences, needs and priorities.

"We'd like to thank everyone who has participated and helped shape the way forward for East Gippsland Water. There is now one further opportunity for you to have a say on what we are



Your voice matters

proposing to do in relation to our delivery of services and our prices over the next five years. We will then submit our final draft Price Submission to the Essential Services Commission (our economic regulator) at the end of September for review, before it is implemented on 1 July next year.

"Next month (August) we will be publicising the final draft of our proposals, including what this means for your East Gippsland Water bill, so that you can have your say. We will be doing this by email to more than 7,000 customers who registered their details with us, as well as via our Facebook page, our website [egwater.vic.gov.au](http://egwater.vic.gov.au) and the local newspapers.

"In the meantime, if you have any questions about our Price Submission please contact our community engagement team on 1800 671 841."



Steve McKenzie,  
Managing Director,  
East Gippsland Water

## Taking a closer look at Paynesville's wastewater treatment

Local residents recently attended a public open day at the Paynesville wastewater treatment facility to learn more about how their wastewater is treated and recycled.

They were taken on a journey along the treatment process, hearing and seeing how East Gippsland Water has been addressing the challenges presented over the last 12 months from exceptionally high rainfall, which was the wettest on Bureau of Meteorology records across East Gippsland.

They heard how the ongoing impacts of this rainfall had left East Gippsland Water with no choice but to undertake controlled releases of treated wastewater (recycled water) from the facility into nearby Forge Creek, to avoid storage dams overflowing.



On a fact-finding tour of the wastewater treatment facility

In a normal irrigation season there are six or seven months of suitable weather for irrigation, but in the last year it has been impossible to irrigate the waterlogged soil.

It was explained that in all cases the quality of this released water has fallen within the water quality parameters set by the EPA.

It was also pointed out that, following initial investigation, the EPA had withdrawn an Improvement Notice issued in September last year. This was after receiving detailed information about the impact of extreme climatic conditions on the operation of the facility and about site upgrades recently completed and planned.

Those on the tour also heard how East Gippsland Water's wastewater treatment and irrigation infrastructure is being upgraded to cater for future extreme wet weather events and to meet population growth. This is being done by expanding the area available for irrigation and constructing a new irrigation storage lagoon.

## ... and Metung

Due to the impact of excessive rainfall we have also just commenced a controlled release of recycled water (treated wastewater) from our Metung wastewater treatment facility into the nearby Tambo Bay wetlands.

The on-site storages for recycled water have reached capacity and a controlled release is critical to prevent an uncontrolled overflow to the surrounding community. The wastewater has been treated to a standard usually used for the irrigation of pasture.

At this stage, the plan is to release an estimated 130 megalitres of recycled water over two months into the Tambo Bay wetlands, 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 our discharges, we comply with regulatory requirements, including notifying downstream neighbours, residents, relevant community groups and government agencies. Signage has been 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.

## Assistance for customers in financial hardship

We recognise that there may be many residential and business customers experiencing financial hardship at the moment.

We have a range of financial assistance available including assistance programs and payment options, such as flexible payments. These can be arranged on a case-by-case basis.



We're here to help

There is also independent financial counselling available via East Gippsland Water at no cost to the customer.

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

## Works in brief

- Major electrical upgrades have commenced at the **Lakes Entrance** Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Works to clean and reline 3.1km of gravity sewers in **Bairnsdale, Paynesville, Metung, Lakes Entrance, Orbost and Mallacoota** are underway
- Ongoing upgrades are being carried out to our Paynesville Wastewater Treatment Plant to improve the irrigation infrastructure
- Works are nearing completion on the replacement of 550m of water main along the section of the Paynesville Road, between The Grange and Main Road, in **Paynesville**
- Construction of a new 430,000 litre water storage tank at the **Buchan** Water Treatment Plant is progressing well. The project is being funded as part of the Victorian Government's \$2.7 billion Building Works stimulus package
- Work is underway to renew around 200m of ageing water main in Nicholson Street, **Orbost** - between Scott Street and Reed Street, and Stanley Street and Gladstone Street.

## Positions vacant

- Process & Performance Improvement Specialist
- Water Industry Trainee (Mitchell)
- HR Advisor
- Co-ordinator Trade Waste
- Reuse Officer

For more information, including a position description, go to [egwater.vic.gov.au/positions-vacant](http://egwater.vic.gov.au/positions-vacant)

EN1086

## Water snapshot

Stream flows on 22 July (2022) and the five-year average for the current month

Town/water supply system	Stream flow (million litres/day)	5 year average stream flow (million litres/day)	Stream flow as a percentage of 5 year average
Bemm River (Bemm River)	675.9	250.8	269%
Mallacoota (Betka River)	67.1	8.7	771%
Orbost, Newmerella, Marlo (Brodribb River)	556.7	229.1	243%
Buchan (Buchan River)	256.4	214.1	120%
Omeo (Butchers Creek)	7.5	5.8	129%
Cann River (Cann River)	146.1	215.1	68%
Mitchell River Supply System* (Mitchell River)	1,682.2	5,002.9	34%
Swifts Creek (Tambo River)	148.6	663.9	22%

\*Mitchell supply system = Bairnsdale, Walpa, Lindenow South, Lindenow, Eagle Point, Newlands Arm, Paynesville, Raymond Island, Sarsfield, Bruthen, Nicholson, Johnsonville, Swan Reach, Metung, Kalimna, Lakes Entrance, Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust, Lake Tyers Beach, Nowa Nowa and surrounding areas

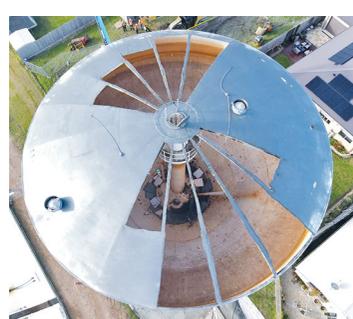
There are currently around 1,350 million litres of drinking water held in our storages across the region and approximately five months of water held in storage in the Mitchell River Supply System.

While there are no formal, staged water restrictions in the region, common-sense Permanent Water Saving Rules do apply at all times. 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.

Visit our website for more information on Permanent Water Saving Rules and for links to Smart Water Advice - providing tips on how to save water.

## Dismantling the Kalimna water tower

Specialised demolition contractors are well underway with dismantling the disused 21-metre-high water tower overlooking Kalimna.



The Kalimna water tower before dismantling ...and last week showing the roof partially removed

The East Gippsland Water-owned steel structure, capable of holding up to 900,000 litres of water, was installed on the hill at Kalimna in 1987 to supply water to nearby residents. It was removed from service in 2016 because subsequent growth in demand and housing development around the base of the tower meant it could no longer meet minimum pressure requirements. Specialised pressure pumps are now used instead to deliver a good water pressure to nearby customers, reliably and cost effectively.

The tower is a redundant asset that nonetheless requires continuing maintenance to ensure it remains safe. There is ultimately an ongoing cost to East Gippsland Water customers to do this. It makes sense to remove the structure before it begins to deteriorate and potentially becomes a safety hazard to adjacent residents, as it continues to age over time.

The structure is being dismantled in sections, with the steel salvaged for recycling. We have been in regular contact with nearby residents directly impacted by the works and we would like to thank them for their patience and cooperation.

The whole project is expected to be completed by the end of August.

For more information about East Gippsland Water call 1800 671 841 or visit our website at [egwater.vic.gov.au](http://egwater.vic.gov.au)

