

## Your water bill



Steve McKenzie,  
Managing Director

“Underlining our commitment to provide you with affordable water and sewerage services, there will be no increase to the average customer bill for this 2022/23 financial year, save for inflation.

“Rest assured that current high levels of service will be maintained.

“As a state government-owned enterprise, and a provider of essential services, we have to make sure that our customers receive reliable and high quality water and sewerage services now and well into the future. We also have to ensure that these services are provided efficiently and represent good value for money.

“Taking inflation into account, the average residential customer, using 146kL (146,000 litres) of water a year, will see their combined bills for water and sewerage increase by \$49.80 overall for the 2022/23 financial year - from \$1,199.54 to \$1,249.34. The actual cost will be lower for those consuming less water and higher for those consuming more.

“During 2022/23 we are looking to invest around \$15 million in a major capital works program. This will involve replacing or upgrading ageing infrastructure and takes into account regulatory

requirements and climate change, as well as regional economic and population growth. Key projects include:

- expanding areas under irrigation at our Paynesville and Metung wastewater treatment facilities, and additional upgrades to the Paynesville facility, to ensure wet weather environmental compliance
- completing energy efficiency upgrades to our Bairnsdale and Paynesville wastewater treatment plants and the Wy Yung transfer water pumping station
- undertaking upgrades to Lakes Entrance Wastewater Treatment Plant to improve its operating performance
- commencing work to install new drinking water storage tanks for Mallacoota, Lindenow and Lindenow South – to maintain and improve drinking water quality for customers.

“We will also be spending around \$25 million on the day-to-day operation and maintenance of our existing water and sewerage infrastructure, and supporting services, across the region.

“Customer priorities and preferences covered by our five-year business plan are being maintained. These include providing grants for environmental projects and maintaining current levels of financial assistance to customers experiencing genuine difficulty paying their water bills.”

## Community engagement update

A big thank you to everyone who participated in our special forum sessions held in April/May to help us make some big decisions about key areas of our business.

This forum has played an invaluable role in our community engagement process as we look to invest \$200 million in the next ten years.

A key consideration was how should we fairly balance the cost of our services between current and future customers while considering customers in genuine financial hardship? The forum expressed strong support for bringing forward additional capital expenditure to soften price shocks in the future and increasing support for those experiencing hardship.

Their recommendations were carefully considered by our Board at their June meeting and will

influence how we proceed with prices and services over the five years 2023–2028. Our Price Submission (our latest business plan) will be submitted to the Essential Services Commission (the water industry economic regulator) this September for review and community feedback, before it is implemented on 1 July next year.

Our Customer Committee have also played an instrumental role in the engagement process for the Price Submission – collaborating with us on the structure and review of the engagement conducted and how we should measure our performance against our key customer outcomes.

More information can be found on our website – click on the ‘Your voice matters’ link on the home page. For any queries please call our Customer, Community & Communications Team on 1800 671 841.

## 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.

## Be messaged 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'.

## Use water wisely

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](http://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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