

## Wettest August on record affects wastewater

It has been an incredibly wet year so far and the soggy conditions are predicted to continue up until summer.

In fact, we experienced the wettest August on record since 2011 and the Bureau of Meteorology just declared our third La Nina weather event in a row. This latest La Nina is expected to bring more heavy rains and flooding through spring and into summer.

This intense wet weather means our usual process of using treated wastewater for irrigation and environmental purposes hasn't been able to take place. Instead, we have had to conduct controlled releases of treated wastewater back into the environment and these releases will continue to take place throughout spring while the wet weather continues.

If we don't control the release, we risk uncontrolled overflow into the environment, which wouldn't be a good outcome for the environment or the community.

This isn't a situation isolated to East Gippsland. Water authorities around the state are facing the same challenges due to the unusually wet weather.

There have been some misconceptions in the local press about the quality of the water being released. We are not talking raw wastewater, any solids or sludge. The product being released is water that has gone through a treatment process and just looks like ordinary water.

The truth is that 99 per cent of what goes down your drains and toilets arrives in our wastewater treatment plants is just water.

Only one per cent is solid, which is filtered out.

Our staff are committed to ensuring a high quality standard of water

released back into the environment and work around the clock to make sure this is the case. Samples are collected multiple days each week and tested by an independent lab.

We live in this community too and are committed to protecting our local environment.

It's important to note that the wastewater being released has been treated to Class C standard, which means it is safe for irrigation, pasture and environmental purposes such as protecting the biodiversity and health of wetlands.

In some cases, the wastewater being released back into the environment will be of a higher quality than the water currently there.

We will continue to keep the community informed about our controlled wastewater releases while these events continue to be necessary. This includes engaging with the property owners who are directly affected, providing information publicly to the wider community and erecting signage at the release sites.



Steve McKenzie,  
Managing Director

## It's always great to engage with you!

You may have seen us at community events lately, proving water information and asking for your feedback about our 2023-2028 price submission.

To each and every one of you who engaged with us, either in person, at an event, online, over the phone or email, thank you.

Your feedback will help shape the delivery of our services over the next five years, including maintenance and construction of assets, hardship programs, and your water bill. Thank-you!



## Changes to our billing

There will be a small change to your water bill this coming January 2023, due to realignment of meter reading cycles to not cross over the Christmas/New Year period. For this upcoming quarter only (October to January), you will receive an invoice for 98 days of water usage rather than the usual 91 days.

Due to supply issues, we are also unable to continue including Reply Paid envelopes with our invoices. If this change will cause you hardship, please call our Customer Community and Communications Team on 1800 671 841 to discuss your bill paying options.

## Paying your bill

We have a few different options available to those who have concessions or if you are struggling to pay your bill.

Residential customers holding a Centrelink Health Care, Pensioner Concession, or Department of Veteran Affairs Concession Card, may be entitled to receive a discount on their East Gippsland Water bill, for their principal place of residence.

Concession card holders are also able to pay by instalment using Centrelink's Centrepay service. For more information contact the Customer Business Team. For those suffering hardship, we have financial assistance available for residential and small business customers.

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

## It's not a scam – don't hang up!

You may receive a phone call in the next few weeks asking you to take part in our annual customer satisfaction survey.

Don't worry, it's not a scam or a sales pitch! We legitimately want to hear your feedback about the way we provide water and wastewater services to the community. So please be honest about your experience with us over the past 12 months.

## Part of your community

We are proud to be part of the East Gippsland community. While you may have seen members of our team at public events, happy to have a chat, did you know we also play an important role in water education?

We offer a range of different options for talks, presentations and tours to educate the community about our human water cycle. Topics covered include tips on how to use water efficiently, the water cycle, ensuring the long-term security of drinking water supplies, water quality, water treatment, wastewater treatment and water recycling and environmental sustainability.

Community and school groups also love tours of our facilities! Visit our website or give us a call to find out more about our activity days, which can be adapted to the individual needs of schools or community groups. We'd love to see you soon!



## Stay informed 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. Simply call 1800 671 841, or go to the home page of our website and click on 'Change billing details'.

### We welcome your feedback on this newsletter. Please contact:

Executive Manager  
Customer, Community &  
Communications

Ph: 1800 671 841  
Fax: 03 5150 4477

East Gippsland Water  
133 Macleod Street  
PO Box 52  
BAIRNSDALE 3875

Email: [egw@egwater.vic.gov.au](mailto:egw@egwater.vic.gov.au)  
Website: [egwater.vic.gov.au](http://egwater.vic.gov.au)

Translating & Interpreter Service  
Ph: 131 450

TTY facility  
Ph: 1800 555 677

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