

IN THE FLOW

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

East Gippsland **Water**

Recycled water releases continue due to wettest October on record

While we have been fortunate in our region not to have extreme flooding conditions like other areas of the state, the unusually consistent wet weather that East Gippsland has endured for over 12 months has caused issues for many industries including our wastewater treatment and recycling facilities.

As we have communicated with the community on several occasions, we are undertaking controlled recycled wastewater releases at many of our treatment plants, due to our inability to irrigate as much as normal over the last year.

Our preference is always to use our recycled water for irrigation as much as possible, but the consistent wet weather means our pastures simply can't absorb any more water.

You may have seen images of our vehicles and other equipment bogged to the axles trying to navigate the irrigation properties. We know that our region's farmers can sympathise as they have been facing the same predicament.

As the weather clears up and we have more sunny days, we are increasing the amount of recycled wastewater we are using for irrigation.

However, many of our storages are so full, we still need to make controlled releases to ensure they don't overflow and to create capacity for the coming tourist peak period.

This work must be done now so that our facilities can cope with the increase in wastewater generated during the influx of visitors.

It is important to remember that our controlled releases are fully reported to the Environment Protection Authority and we conduct water testing through an independent laboratory before, during, and after the release to ensure no environmental damage.

The release is recycled wastewater, not raw sewerage. It has been treated to a standard suitable for irrigation on crops, sports ovals and golf courses and is clear water.

Without controlled recycled wastewater releases, there is a heightened risk of our storages overflowing and collapsing in an uncontrolled overflow into the environment.

The latest information about our recycled wastewater releases is on our website at www.egwater.vic.gov.au. We are also happy to answer any questions if you give us a call on 1800 671 841 or email us at egw@egwater.vic.gov.au.

* Bureau of Meteorology, October rain results for Victoria, 2022.



Water testing which took place at a recent open day we held for the community.

Opt for text message

When there is a disruption to your water supply, you want to know quickly, before jumping in the shower or trying to flush your toilet. An emergency text message is the quickest and easiest way for us to let you know if there is a disruption to your service.

If we don't have your mobile number on file or permission to use your number for this purpose, we can't send you emergency text messages.

To make sure, contact us via our website or phone to sign up for our messaging service.

Controlled releases continue

Ongoing wet weather has resulted in the necessity for controlled releases throughout East Gippsland.

Releases have created some capacity in our Paynesville and Metung facilities already, which meant we could cease those releases for the moment.

If the weather remains favourable and we do not receive the forecast La Nina rainfall in this region for the rest of spring, it is hoped no further releases will be required from these two facilities. However, if the high rainfall continues to the end of spring and into summer, more controlled releases may be necessary.

This is the current status of our controlled recycled wastewater releases:

Paynesville (Forge Creek): Releases have ceased at this location due to targets being met. It is anticipated that releases will not need to resume in 2022, weather-dependent.

Bruces Track, Kalimna West: Along with irrigation where possible a controlled release is currently taking place, into Mississippi Creek.

Metung (Tambo Bay): Controlled release was conducted but ceased on 15 October. A further release may be required, dependent on ongoing rainfall.

Omeo: Along with irrigation where possible, a controlled release is currently taking place into Livingstone Creek.

Orbost (Newmerella): Along with irrigation where possible, a controlled release is currently taking place.

The population of East Gippsland multiplies during the summer season, which is why it is important to ensure our wastewater treatment facilities are in the best possible position to cope with the influx from the busy visitor period.

We must ensure a seamless service for our local community and visitors, so they don't have to think twice about their wastewater while enjoying their holiday season.

We can help you pay your water bill

We know the festive and holiday seasons can be stressful for many. It's traditionally an expensive time of year and we don't want you stressing about your water bill.

If you are a residential customer with a current Centrelink Health Care, Pensioner Concession, or Department of Veteran Affairs Concession Card, you may be entitled to a discount on your East Gippsland Water bill, at your principal place of residence.

Concessions are also available to those reliant on certain life support machines who hold an eligible concession card. Those receiving Centrelink support can also pay their water bill by instalments via Centrelink's Centrepay service. We also have assistance available including our pay and save plan and we can assist eligible customers with the Utility Relief Grant Scheme, which could save you up to \$650 off your account.

Please visit our website at www.egwater.vic.gov.au or give us a call on 1800 671 841 to find out how we can help.

Tours and incursions available

Have you ever wondered how the water ends up in your tap, or what happens to your wastewater once it goes down the sink? We offer tours of our water treatment plants, water storages and wastewater facilities for schools and community groups. Incursions are also available, where we come to you to discuss the water cycle, long-term water security and other water-related topics. All age groups from pre-kinder to seniors are catered for. Interested? Give us a call on 1800 671 841 or visit our website.



Works in brief

Orbost: Extensive capital works have been taking place in Orbost to improve water supply services. Around 200 metres of potable drinking water main is being replaced in Nicholson St, Orbost and around 40 metres of water main is being relocated at Youngs Creek. The two mains, one made from asbestos cement and the other cast iron cement lined, are being replaced with the latest PVC and high-density polyethylene water main technology that is lightweight but robust, flexible, corrosion resistant, and protects against bacteria growth.

Lakes Entrance: Electrical & control upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant and the effluent transfer pump station are almost complete.

Buchan: Installation of the new Buchan Wastewater Treatment Plant raw water tank is almost complete, with testing and commissioning to occur soon.

Bairnsdale: Woodglen Water Treatment Plant fluoride system upgrade is complete. The South Bairnsdale Industrial Estate water main upgrade (Bosworth Road) is about 50 percent complete.

Get your bills online

Sick of paper and clutter? Sign up to receive your water bills via email and pay them online! It's a great way to keep track of your accounts digitally and you don't have to come into the office to pay the bill. Give us a call to organise or sign up via our website.

3P reminder

In the lead-up to the holiday season, we always remind our customers about the "3Ps" when it comes to wastewater systems. To ensure there are no unnecessary, unpleasant blockages of your sewer, please remember to only flush the "3P's", that is poo, pee, or paper. So-called flushable wipes are a big no-no because they actually are not flushable and block the sewage collection system causing overflows!

Why the festive season you may ask? Because this is the time many households have visitors to our region coming to stay and they may not know about the 3P. Please do not flush wipes, sanitary products, tissues, paper towel, or anything that isn't poo, pee or paper. Otherwise, you may experience an embarrassing blockage!

Water snapshot

Stream flows on November 10 (2022) and the five-year average for the current month

Town/water supply system	Current stream flow (million litres/day)	5 year average stream flow (million litres/day)	Rating of current flow	Current flow as a percentage of 5 year average
Bemm River	1223.9	753.6	Average	162%
Betka River	42.4	66.9	Average	63%
Brodribb River	578.5	353.6	Average	164%
Buchan River	886.1	518.0	Average	171%
Butchers Creek	10.1	5.2	Average	194%
Cann River	577.9	168.0	Above Average	344%
Mitchell River	4763.9	767.0	Above Average	621%
Tambo River	410.5	145.5	Above Average	282%

* 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.

For more information about East Gippsland Water call 1800 671 841 or visit our website at egwater.vic.gov.au

