

MEDIA RELEASE

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Powering up with biogas!

East Gippsland Water's Bairnsdale water recycling plant will soon commence generating enough energy onsite – as part of the wastewater treatment process – to meet the facility's power needs into the future, while at the same time cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Under its \$1.3 million biodigestion initiative to reduce greenhouse gases and operating costs, the organisation is bringing into operation a new combined heat and power unit at the site.

The biogas given off during the wastewater treatment process is captured and stored in a large white, 12 metre diameter inflated gas membrane, known as the 'bubble'. The newly installed combined heat and power unit will generate more than enough energy from this gas to power the Bairnsdale water recycling plant. Up to 40 per cent of the total is being earmarked for the site, with the excess to be fed back into the grid.

Once fully operational, it is estimated that the new heat and power unit will be able to produce some 500 megawatt hours of electricity a year – representing eight per cent of East Gippsland Water's total annual power usage for all its operations.

East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Steve McKenzie, said, "As an organisation we are very much committed to environmental sustainability in all our operations and reducing operating costs, which are ultimately borne by our customers. This initiative represents a great advance in these areas.

"This is just one project in a raft of initiatives being implemented under a major program to help us meet our organisation's target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 44 per cent by 1 July 2025. Even more important, we have a commitment to achieve zero net emissions by 2035."

In addition to the energy generated by the new heat and power system at the Bairnsdale plant, there is also a ten kilowatt solar panel installation on the site.

Ends

Photo:



Caption: *Checking out the new combined heat and power unit from East Gippsland Water are: Managing Director, Steve McKenzie; Planning & Performance Analyst, Matthew Whitelaw; and, Project Engineer, Jim Russell*