MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Ronan Carroll Ph: 0428 539 303

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Making Paynesville water recycling facility sunsational!

East Gippsland Water are about to switch on 200 new solar panels at their Paynesville water recycling facility – to offset the site's energy needs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For the $240,000 project, five banks of 40 solar panels each have been installed – which together span an area of 1,250 square metres.

It is calculated that this solar array will produce up to 150 megawatt hours of power a year. It will be used to run the Paynesville facility's aerators and irrigation pumps – which are integral to the recycling process. Any surplus electricity generated will be fed back into the grid.

Importantly, it is expected to reduce East Gippsland Water's overall greenhouse gas emissions by up to 130 tonnes a year.

East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Steve McKenzie, said, "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.

"This is a win-win situation, benefitting the environment and reducing our operating costs."

Looking at solar alone East Gippsland Water have commissioned a total of 366 kilowatts of solar systems across 19 sites in recent years. In addition, the organisation is in an energy partnership with 12 other Victorian water corporations to collectively purchase solar power from the Kiamal Solar Farm in north-west Victoria.

This initiative went live in January 2021 and continues to be significant in East Gippsland Water's drive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce operational costs – by enabling the purchase of solar power at a cheaper rate.

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Caption: *Inspecting the Paynesville water recycling facility's new solar panels from East Gippsland Water are (l-r) Managing Director, Steve McKenzie; Planning & Performance Analyst, Mathew Whitelaw; and, Project Manager Rich Fincher*