



ON TAP

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A message from Steve McKenzie Managing Director



We have now received the final determination from the Essential Services Commission (ESC) on our Price Submission. The Price Submission is really our Strategic Plan and Budget for the next five years, taking us to 2028.

We are absolutely delighted that the plan we put forward was accepted with only a couple of minor changes. This means that over the next five years we will be embarking on our biggest capital investment program ever, investing \$115 million to protect the environment and prepare for climate change and future growth. This is almost double what we have spent in the last five years, and includes: investing in additional water storage to secure more water for the region in times of drought; upgrading our wastewater networks and treatment plants to cope with more intense wet weather events, and working to reduce our Greenhouse Gas Emissions to zero by 2035.

You may not be aware that we do not receive any government funding and rely solely on the income we receive from our customers when you pay your water and sewerage bill. This means that you may see prices increase by around CPI each year.

We are fully aware that people are struggling with the cost of living and we currently have around 30% of customers receiving a rebate. Our Customer Support Team works hard to connect customers with the rebate and support programs available.

During the development of our Price Submission, the overwhelming feedback we received is that we need to secure our operations and infrastructure for future generations. As the ESC has now accepted our Price Submission, we can now get on with the job and make the important investments in environmental management and securing water resources for the future.

Customer Connect

During the past couple of years, we have provided our customers opportunities to tell us what their priorities are so that we can continue to provide high quality customer support. We have listened to your feedback and, as a result, representatives from our Customer Support Team will be undertaking regular visits to Omeo, Orbost, Mallacoota and other areas over the coming months.

David Radford, Executive Manager Customer, Community and Communications said: "We appreciate that our customers often want to talk to someone face-to-face about their bill, flexible payment options, financial hardship and just any general enquiries they may have. So, providing opportunities for our customers to meet members of our Customer Support Team face-to-face in remote areas is a fantastic way for us to achieve this."

Orbost residents can see us on the third Thursday of each month at 6 Clarke Street. Other dates and locations of when a Customer Support Team member will be in your area, will be communicated over the coming weeks and details will also be available on our website and Facebook page.

In the meantime, customers are welcome to call us on 1800 671 841 or drop into our office at 133 Macleod Street in Bairnsdale to discuss their individual circumstances with our local, friendly staff.



New water efficiency rebate program

Over the next five years, residential and small business customers will be able to get assistance with water saving measures and reducing their water consumption, through East Gippsland Water's Water Efficiency Rebate Program.

We have based this new program off a previously successful Victorian State Government initiative 'Living Victoria Rebate Program'.

Each year, \$90,000 has been committed for rebates on water efficiency savings products such as, showerheads, pool covers, tank to toilet connections, rainwater divertors, permanent grey water systems, shower timers, dual flush toilets, washing machines and a whole lot more.

There will also be a process for larger community water efficient projects to apply. These will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

This program also complements the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action's (DEECA) \$5 million state-wide Water Smart program available to non-residential customers.

These programs will be rolled out in the near future and further information on the application process will be available through our website egwater.vic.gov.au, on social media or contact us on 1800 671 841.



Struggling to pay your bill?

During the COVID-19 pandemic the National Cabinet agreed a set of National Principles to support households and small businesses facing hardship in paying for essential services. Under these guidelines, East Gippsland Water chose to cease all referrals to debt collection and suspend legal action/restrictions for customers with active accounts (excluding vacated tenant accounts). This has been in place since July 2020.

As the pandemic has now been officially declared over by the World Health Organisation, we will be resuming referrals for debt collection from Billing Cycle 1 2023/24, beginning July 2023. Should you have an arrears amount outstanding, and are not in an active arrangement to pay this amount when you receive your next bill, you may be at risk of referral to debt collection, and therefore possible legal and/or restriction action.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties and would like to discuss assistance options that may be available to you, please contact our Customer, Community and Communications Team on 1800 671 841, so that the necessary help and support can be provided.



We need your feedback on how we communicate!

As part of providing continuous improvement to our customers, we would really value your input on how and when you would like to receive communications from us, and what information you would like to receive.

We would appreciate it if you could complete a short survey – it should only take up to five minutes of your time.



Please scan the QR Code or visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RX7BJQW> or call our Customer Support Team on 1800 671 841 for assistance.

Closing date: Thursday, 31 August 2023

Do you want to represent broader customer views?

We have a volunteer position available to join our Customer Advisory Committee.

Do you think you have what it takes? Are you an East Gippsland Water customer who believes you can provide invaluable feedback and fairly represent broader customer views?

If yes, we want to hear from you!

For more information and to apply, visit our website egwater.vic.gov.au, email egw@egwater.vic.gov.au or call us on 1800 671 841.