

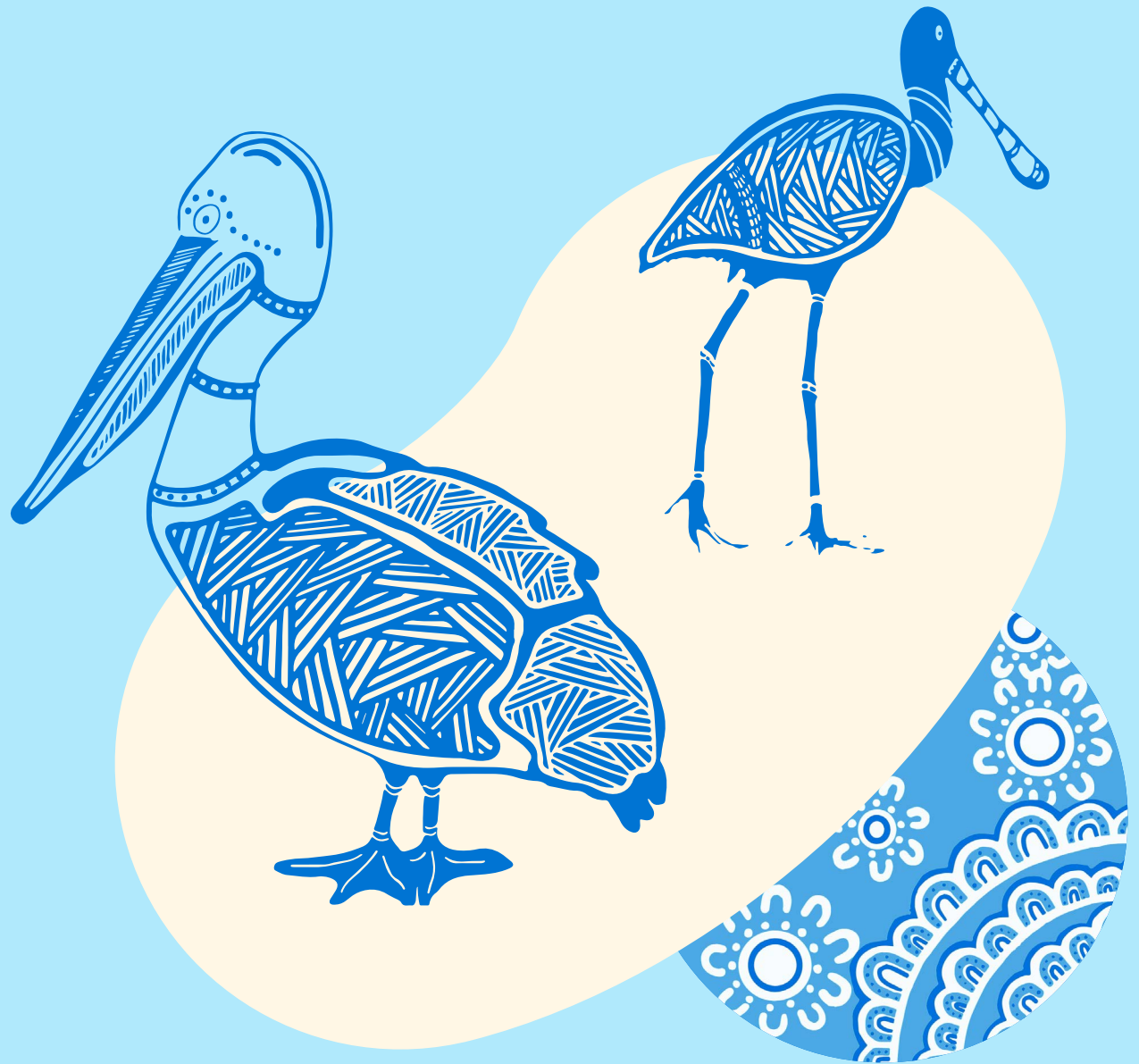
2025 Community Report



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land we work on, the Gunaikurnai people and the Bunurong people, and recognise their strong cultural connection to the land and waterways.

We pay our respect to their Elders, past and present.



A message from our Managing Director

It's a great pleasure to present the 2025 Community Report.

This year, our focus has been on planning and building for the future.

To support Australia's fastest-growing town, we upgraded the north-east sewer in Warragul and began upgrades at the Warragul wastewater treatment plant, to ensure customers can always rely on our services.

We undertook one of the most complex projects across the water sector by replacing the ageing covers of two industrial wastewater lagoons at the Gippsland Water Factory. The completion of this unique project is a testament to our exceptionally talented team and organisational safety culture.

A section of the Regional Outfall System in Traralgon was also replaced to protect the surrounding houses and the environment, while ensuring the continuity of services for our major customers.

Our commercial business, Gippsland Regional Organics, continued to boost the local economy and put downward pressure on our customer's bills. To further increase capacity and reduce

the amount of waste going to landfill, we completed the expansion of the facility, making it the largest composting facility in the state.

Customers expect us to be environmentally responsible, and this year we demonstrated our commitment to environmental stewardship and customer expectations by successfully transitioning to 100% renewable operations from 1 July 2025.

We delivered a very special regional project in collaboration with GLaWAC and Gunai artist Alice Pepper. Alice's artwork 'Cultural Flow' can be seen on the Stratford water tower with its depiction of Borun and Wahyang, further representing our partnership with Traditional Owners and our respect for the Country we service.

Throughout the year we continually engaged with customers on a range of issues and projects of importance to them. The feedback we received helped with a study on the taste of Sale's water, raised community awareness for projects, kept us informed during the early stages of our next Price Submission and helped shape our delivery of strategic projects.

Thank you to all our customers who engaged with us over the past year and provided valuable insight. Your ongoing input shapes what we do, helping us deliver what is important for the community, now and into the future.

Sarah Cumming,
Managing Director



A message from the Chair of our Customer Reference Group

The Customer Reference Group (CRG) plays a key role in ensuring that Gippsland Water consistently and deliberately places customers at the heart of everything they do.

We're a small but diverse group, committed to representing you, the customer. We're there to ensure customer needs and interests are central to decision making and confirm that engagement with the community is genuine, robust and transparent.

Throughout the year, we've continued to assess how Gippsland Water is performing against the commitments they made in their 2023-28 Price Submission. We've held them accountable to the targets they set, but we've also challenged them about what the community would consider a fair and reasonable measure of success when we believe they've marked themselves down too harshly for missing an ambitious goal.

We've also played a significant role in the way Gippsland Water engages with the community. We've provided advice and feedback on plans for engagement, and been witness to how the feedback received has been translated into decisions and actions that reflect community expectations.

A few highlights for this year:

- When Gippsland Water was at risk of missing their self-imposed interim climate change targets, they empowered the community to decide what they should do next: purchase

additional renewable electricity or plant 10,000 trees, in line with our customer promise. The community voted for the trees, and planning is underway for plantings that will provide ongoing environmental benefit and include locations where the trees can be enjoyed by the community.

- To better understand the way Sale and Wurruk customers experience their drinking water, Gippsland Water commissioned a research project. This work included interviews, focus groups and a survey, which sought customer perceptions of tap water in Sale, as well as Morwell and Warragul. The Customer Reference Group even got to sample the aquifer water ourselves! This project is helping the organisation plan for the future and determine where more investment is needed.
- The installation of Alice Pepper's artwork, Cultural Flow, on the Stratford water tower. This work celebrates our First Nations community and tells the story of how Gippsland Water works closely with Traditional Owners to care for our waterways. The video for this project features Customer Reference Group member Liv, speaking about what the installation means to her as a First Nations person.
- We invited the Board of Gippsland Water to observe one of our meetings, to build connections and demonstrate how we're

contributing to good governance and effective decision making. This was a great session that demonstrated how the customer voice is being heard at all levels of the organisation.

Once again, I would like to thank the Customer Reference Group members who volunteer their time to undertake this important role. Your contributions really do make a difference for our community.

For customers who want to have a say, just like we do, I encourage you to sign up to the Customer Sounding Board to receive opportunities to be involved in future research. It's your water, and your voice matters.

Diane Wilkinson,
Chair Customer Reference Group



About the Community Report

Our annual Community Report provides a snapshot of our performance over the last 12 months against the key promises and commitments we made in our 2023-28 Price Submission.

Share your thoughts on our
Community Report:



You can find the detailed
performance report on our website:

www.gippswater.com.au/community-report





Be affordable and fair

We promised to provide affordable and fair water and wastewater services for all our customers, industry and community, and to make more customers aware of the support we offer.

Be affordable and fair

Our performance

73%

of customers believe we provide value for money

75%

of customers aware of the customer support we offer

100%

of customers notified within five business days of a detection of significantly high water use in a billing period

\$25.12

increase in cost to serve each customer

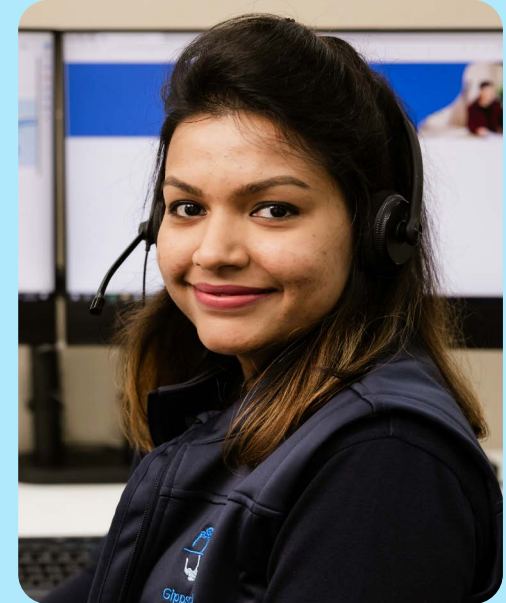
Offering customers support paying bills

We know some of our customers are really feeling the pinch from the rising cost of living. We want them to know we're here to help.

We've taken a proactive approach to supporting our customers experiencing difficulties paying their bills, reaching out to offer assistance and launching an awareness campaign that encourages them to contact us for help.

We helped 2,221 customers apply for assistance through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's Utility Relief Grant program. In total, \$767,435 of funding was approved to help customers pay their water bills through this program - the highest amount secured so far.

No customers in our Customer Care program had their water restricted.



This year we've worked hard to find additional controllable operating cost savings to offset the lower than anticipated connections growth. We ended the year with 1,253 fewer customer connections than expected. Controllable operating costs ended the year slightly higher than expected, impacting our overall efficiency. A record number of breaks drove up repair costs and the effort required to reinstate areas impacted for the community. While we delivered some savings, our cost per connection rose this year. This internal measure does not affect customer tariffs, and we're committed to reducing it in future years where possible.



Do your job well

We promised to provide safe, reliable water and wastewater services and keep customers informed when their services were affected.

Do your job well

Our performance

95%

of planned
interruptions
restored within
advised times

65%

of customers
believe we
keep them
informed when
their services
are interrupted

97mins

average time
to rectify a
sewer blockage

96%

sewer spills
inside a house
contained within
one hour

0

drinking water
samples not
compliant with
E.coli standards

Critical upgrade

We completed a major upgrade at one of our most complex industrial sites – the Gippsland Water Factory near Morwell.

Ageing covers were replaced on two lagoons that treat industrial pulp and paper wastewater. These lagoons use anaerobic processes to break down waste and capture gases and odours before further treatment. These gases are then transported to biogas generators that generate electricity for use on the site.

Due to the high gas concentrations, the project required detailed planning, advanced safety measures and collaboration across multiple teams.

This was the first time a cover had been replaced on a lagoon containing pulp and paper waste in Australia, making it a milestone not only for us but for the wider sector.

The project reflects our strong safety culture and commitment to doing our job well – even when the task is anything but ordinary.

New emergency water trailer ready to roll

We've now got a new water trailer to help support communities during emergency events. Holding up to 2,000 litres of drinking water and branded with our Drink Gippy Tap campaign, the trailer can be quickly deployed when regular services are disrupted by extreme weather or power outages.

Equipped with four taps to reduce wait times, it'll be staffed by team members who can assist locals in filling bottles and containers. It's one more way we're doing our job well by being there when our communities need us most.



Do your job well

Powering through the storm to keep services flowing

Early September saw our region hit with wind gusts of 150km per hour. This brought trees and debris crashing down – damaging property, blocking roads and cutting power to thousands.

This was no ordinary weather event, and it required an extraordinary response. At the height of the storm, power was lost to critical water and wastewater sites, including:

- 50+ sewer pump stations, water pump stations, and storages
- seven water treatment plants
- two wastewater treatment plants.

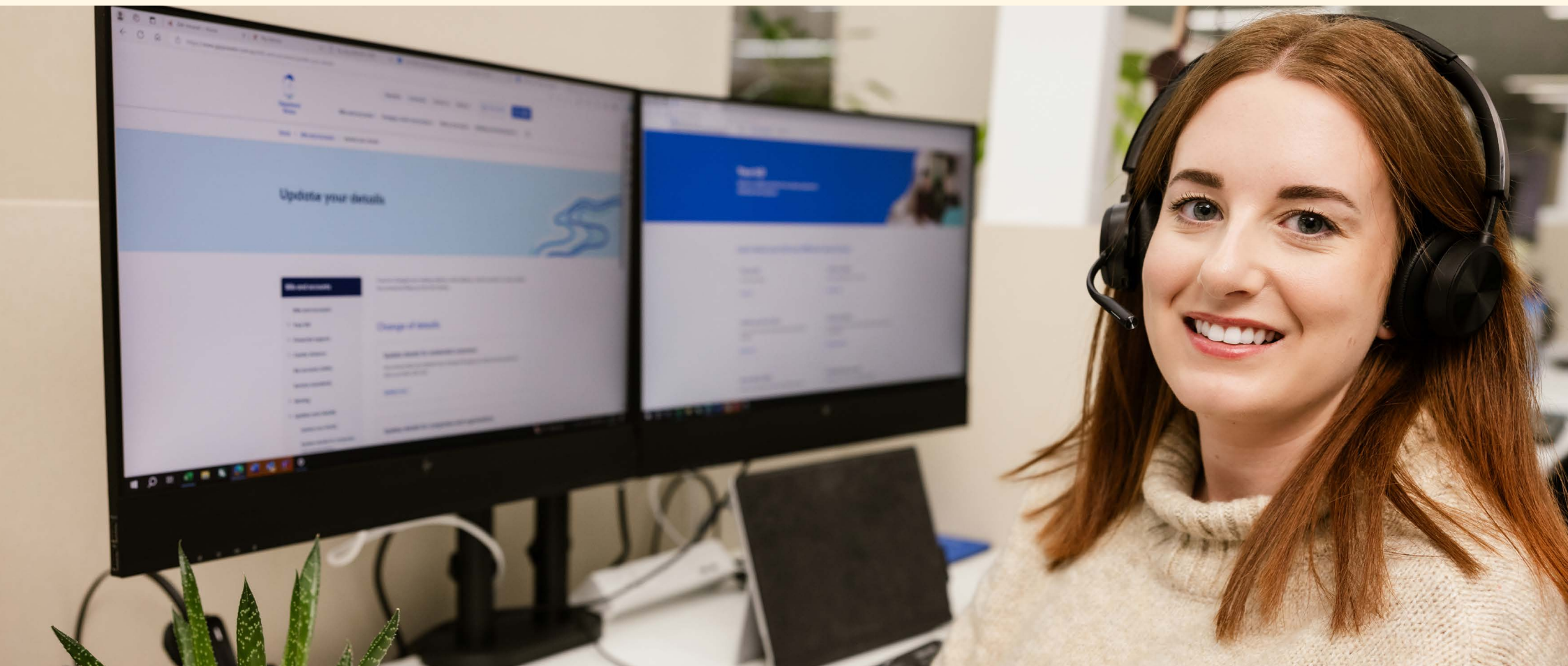
Losing power to these sites can quickly become a public health risk, so time was of the essence. We applied the learnings we'd made from a similar event in Mirboo North earlier in 2024.

Working closely with our trusted service partners, our team mobilised 15 portable generators and five eductor trucks. They were constantly relocated across the region to where they were needed most.

Behind the scenes our team worked around the clock to monitor water and sewer network performance, prioritise our response, manage generator refuelling and maximise our emergency response team resources.

This event put our systems, people, and partnerships to the test. Our quick and effective response ensured that no town lost access to water.





Be easy to deal with

We promised to provide great customer service that resolves customers' issues and keeps them informed. We also promised to do more community education we provide on things that matter, like water conservation and environmental sustainability.

Be easy to deal with

Our performance

98%

customers received five days notice prior to a planned interruption taking place

98%

customers with their mobile number registered notified by SMS of an unplanned interruption

96%

customers who had contact with us in the past 12 months said we were easy to deal with

90.1%

account enquiries resolved at first point of contact

Face-to-face support

We gave customers more opportunities to connect with us in person through local pop-ups across our service area.

Our Customer Care team was on hand to answer questions about bills and offer support to those facing cost-of-living pressures. We helped with flexible payment plans, concessions, government assistance, and referrals to financial counsellors.

This is another way we're making it simpler to connect with us by offering face-to-face support when it's needed most.

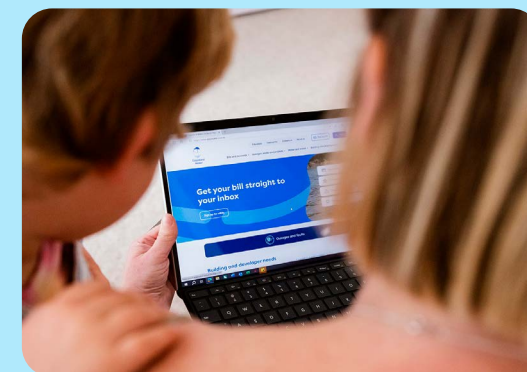


Customer friendly updates

We're updating our Customer Charter and Trade Waste Customer Charter with clearer layouts, easier navigation and more accessible information about financial and family violence support. These documents outline the service levels we commit to and the rights and responsibilities of our customers.

We invited customer feedback and will use it to shape the final Charters.

We also commenced upgrading the outage map on our website to make it more user-friendly and informative. These updates will help customers stay better informed during service interruptions and improve their overall experience with us.





Be involved in the community

We promised to be a present, visible community partner and support our community in times of need.

Be involved in the community

>\$100,000

invested in programs that support the wellbeing of our communities including education campaigns, drinking fountains and sponsorship.

80%

of customers agree we make a positive contribution to our community.

66% of customers see us a valued member of the community.

We sponsored Warragul Community House's program that offers free showers and laundry services to people in need in the local community.



Encouraging healthy habits

As part of our *Drink Gippy Tap* campaign, we launched active prize packs to help local kids stay hydrated and build healthy habits. Each pack included a reusable stainless steel drink bottle, sticker sheet, and drawstring backpack.

We partnered with junior sports clubs to reward young athletes for personal bests, teamwork, or standout performances. The aim was to make hydration fun while promoting tap water over sugary alternatives.

We also donated Drink Gippy Tap sporty drawstring backpacks to a Boomers basketball clinic, attended by 200 local kids.



Educating future generations

More than 2,200 students took part in our hands-on education sessions, with an additional 95 secondary, university, and TAFE students touring our sites. Our long-running program helps young people understand the value of water and the role it plays in a healthy, sustainable future.

We cover topics like the natural and urban water cycle, treatment processes, and water-efficient behaviours. Messages from our *Drink Gippy Tap*, *Reduce Your Use*, and *Caretakers for Tomorrow* community education campaigns are woven throughout — helping us inspire the next generation of water caretakers.



Be involved in the community

Celebrating cultural connection through public art

We were thrilled to celebrate the launch of a striking new mural on the Stratford water tower joined with Gunnai artist Alice Pepper, her family, Aboriginal community leaders, and Stratford locals.

Alice's artwork, Cultural Flow, now wraps the tower in vibrant storytelling, symbolising connection to Country and the shared responsibility to protect water for future generations.

Featuring traditional symbols and imagery, the artwork portrays Borun the pelican, representing First Nations people, and Wahyang the spoonbill, representing us, working together to care for waterways.

It was an honour to collaborate with Alice on this meaningful project. Public installations art like the Stratford Water tower deepen our ties to place and people. It's also a powerful way to be involved in our community, celebrate culture, and highlight the importance of protecting our natural resources. We're proud to have helped bring this vision to life.





Be environmentally responsible

We promised to provide our services to the community with minimal environmental impact and where possible, make our natural assets available for the community to enjoy.

Be environmentally responsible

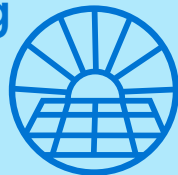
Our performance

100% biosolids reused

30% emissions reduction compared to baseline of 42,021 tonnes CO₂ emissions

29% total electricity from renewable sources

We're working towards net zero carbon emissions



Expanding Gippsland Regional Organics

We completed a \$12.2 million expansion of our Gippsland Regional Organics facility. With \$4.8 million in government funding, we constructed new composting hardstands to increase processing capacity from 180,000 to 250,000 tonnes.

Now, we can recycle more organic waste, reduce landfill emissions and support the state's goal to divert 80% of waste from landfill by 2030.

The Gippsland Regional Organics expansion was supported by the Circular Economy Organics Sector Transformation Fund delivered by Sustainability Victoria on behalf of the Victorian Government and the Australian Government's Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund.



Eco-education with students

We partnered with Kurnai College's Morwell Campus to help students learn develop hands-on skills in planting and re-potting native Lomandra grasses. Together, we planted 150 seedlings on campus and prepared another 100 to be planted at Moondarra Reservoir.

This project gave students a chance to connect with nature, learn about local ecosystems, and contribute to sustainable gardening. The grasses will enhance the school grounds and support our ongoing upgrades at Moondarra's recreation area.

It was a great way to support education, care for the environment, and be involved in our community through meaningful action.



Be environmentally responsible

Restoring soil and yielding results

We successfully used innovative, science-based techniques to improve soil quality and grow high-yield wheat and canola crops on marginal farmland at Dutson Downs. Managed by our Gippsland Regional Agribusiness team, the site supports Victoria's circular economy.

We applied regenerative practices - like low-impact fertilisation and compost from our Gippsland Regional Organics facility - to enhance soil health, biodiversity, and carbon retention. This large-scale soil restoration effort is unique in our industry and reflects our commitment to sustainability.

By improving soil, we're also protecting waterways and biodiversity - it's part of our work as Caretakers for tomorrow.



Protecting Moe's water supply

We completed a major revegetation project along the Tanjil River near Tanjil South, planting over 8,000 native trees and shrubs to protect a critical part of Moe's water network.

By stabilising the riverbank, we reduced the risk of erosion and debris entering the Tanjil River pump station, which supplies up to 24 megalitres of water daily to the Moe water treatment plant.

This project improved water quality, reduced long-term operating costs, and enhanced biodiversity. With strong support from local landholders, we delivered lasting environmental and operational benefits for the community and safeguarded this essential asset for the future.



Protecting threatened species in Warragul

During our Warragul north-east sewer upgrade, we successfully relocated two threatened native species - Warragul Burrowing Crayfish and Flinders Pygmy Perch - from the construction area to nearby reserves.

Working with licensed ecologists, we ensured the safe translocation of these species, both listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. This work reflects our commitment to environmental stewardship and forms part of our Caretakers for Tomorrow campaign.

By protecting local wildlife, we're being environmentally responsible while building critical infrastructure for Warragul's growing community.



Be environmentally responsible

Helping our community reduce water use

Through our *Reduce Your Use* campaign, we inspired our community to make small, everyday changes that add up to big water savings.

We promoted simple habits like using the half flush, fixing leaky taps, planting drought-tolerant gardens, and only running dishwashers when full.

To support action at home, we offered a showerhead exchange and trigger nozzle program, helping customers use water more efficiently outdoors and in the bathroom.

We also provided online resources, including tips, water-saving activities for kids, and a guide to Permanent Water Saving Rules.

We took the campaign on the road, engaging with the community at local events through fun games and giveaways.

We also replaced ageing signage across the region with fresh reduce your use reminders –reinforcing the message that that every drop counts.



Be environmentally responsible

Community chooses 10,000 trees

We set ambitious climate change targets to support our goal of achieving net zero by 2030. The targets minimise our contribution to climate change by reducing carbon emissions and getting more electricity from renewable sources.

To reach our climate change targets in 2024-25 we would need to purchase renewable electricity for the first time. We turned to our customers to ask what we should do next.

We asked if we should buy the renewable electricity, or miss the target and plant 10,000 trees, in line with the promise we made in our Price Submission. We explained that purchasing the additional renewable electricity would cost about \$600,000 and planting the trees would cost about \$60,000.

We empowered our customers to decide. We had over 750 responses to our survey, which showed that 77% supported the option to plant 10,000 trees. Now, we're working to implement this decision.

We're planning to plant those trees in locations that enhance the health of our local land and waterways, as well as public locations that our local community can enjoy.





Plan for the future

We promised to provide a secure and reliable water supply today, and resilient water and wastewater services for the future.

Plan for the future

Our performance

42%

customers believe
we plan for
the future



Bubbling with innovation

We were awarded \$50,000 through the Victorian Water Minister's Climate Innovation Challenge to trial nanobubble oxygenation technology at our Neerim South wastewater treatment plant. This innovative approach aimed to reduce energy use by making aeration more efficient.

By producing smaller bubbles, the system could cut operating time for pumps and motors, lowering both energy consumption and costs. We partnered with Custom Fluids to deliver the six-month trial and planned to share our findings with the broader water industry.



Water and sewer upgrade program

We're constantly planning for the future and upgrading your water and wastewater services.

Through our planned renewal program, we replace ageing water mains and upgrade sewer mains across our service area.

We replace water mains by installing a new water main in a similar alignment to the existing main. We then connect customers to the new main.

We assess future demand to determine if larger pipes are needed to support town growth – avoiding unnecessary costs where possible.

We also clean and reline sewer mains to strengthen existing pipes, extend their lifespan, and improve service performance well into the future.



Plan for the future

Major projects we're tackling over the next three years

We're strengthening our network for the future with a series of upgrades, renewals and new asset infrastructure projects.

Some of the major projects that have progressed this year include:

- Futureproofing the water supply networks and facilities for Morwell, Traralgon and surrounding towns with three big projects that involve:
 - Building a new 50ML water storage basin at Clarkes Road, Traralgon.
 - Building a new major water pipeline between Traralgon and Glengarry.
 - Building a new major water pipeline on the western side of Traralgon as stage one of a future connection between the Traralgon and Morwell water networks.
- Upgrading the Warragul wastewater treatment plant to cater for the growing town's needs and increased volumes of wastewater.



Plan for the future

Major projects we're tackling over the next three years

- Building a new major water main in the north-west of Drouin to make sure there's ample water supply well into the future.
- Replacing our Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system – our key interface between our physical assets and team members.

We are close to completing:

- Replacement of a section of the sewer main in the north-east of Warragul to allow for growth.

This year, we completed:

- Replacement of ageing covers on two industrial wastewater treatment lagoons at the Gippsland Water Factory near Morwell.
- Replacement of a section of the Regional Outfall System in Traralgon to protect the surrounding houses and environment and ensure the continuity of services for our major customers.





Gippsland Water

PO Box 348
55 Hazelwood Road
Traralgon VIC 3844

General enquiries 1800 050 500
Faults and emergencies 1800 057 057

contactus@gippswater.com.au
www.gippswater.com.au

ABN 75 830 750 413