



Gippsland  
Water

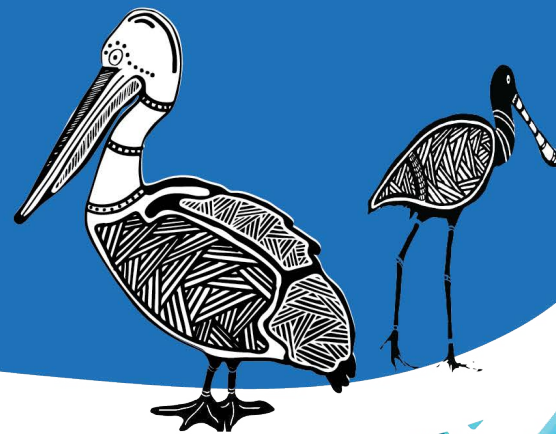
# PLANNING *for the* FUTURE

Working together to plan our services

January 2026

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Gippsland Water areas, the Gunaikurnai 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.



We're involving our customers and communities in our plans for the future.

**Together, we'll  
explore the issues  
we're facing, as  
we develop two  
important plans:  
our Urban Water  
Strategy and Price  
Submission.**

These plans affect the services we deliver and the prices we charge.

Here we set out our promises to everyone who gets involved, as well as what we hope to achieve together.

## **What is the Price Submission?**

Our Price Submission is a five-year plan for our water and wastewater services. It includes our customer service standards, prices and the investments we'll make in infrastructure.

The Essential Services Commission (ESC), the independent regulator of essential services in Victoria, reviews and approves our submission.

Our next Price Submission will cover the period from 1 July 2028 to 30 June 2033.

## **What is the Urban Water Strategy?**

Our Urban Water Strategy is a long-term plan to secure water and sewer system capacity in our region for the next 50 years. It outlines how we'll respond to challenges like population growth, climate change and droughts.

Our next Urban Water Strategy will include actions we need to take between 2027 and 2032 to ensure ongoing reliability of our services.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) reviews and approves our strategy.

We want community input to help us respond to our **core challenge:**

**How can we balance  
the services our  
community needs,  
now and into  
the future, while  
keeping bills fair?**

As we face rising costs, ageing infrastructure, a changing climate, and changes to local industries, we need to work through the trade-offs that shape an affordable bill and reliable services.





## Context

# What is happening around us right now

Gippsland is changing. The changes are significant and they affect local people, communities and organisations - including ours.

Higher everyday costs are putting strain on household and business finances.

Major industry closures are changing our communities and putting pressure on our revenue.

Opportunities for new water-intense industries are emerging.

Climate change, new technology and growing expectations are reshaping how we work.

Extreme weather and higher electricity costs affect how we manage our systems.

We must work closely with our community to respond to these pressures, and realise the opportunities that our unique region can offer.

Together, we can make sure our plans reflect today's realities and customer priorities.

The challenge for us is to keep bills fair, while delivering the reliable services our communities depend on.

Customer influence

**Working transparently  
with our customers to  
shape and develop  
our plans for the  
future.**



## What to expect through this process and how we'll use the insights

**What we learn  
will help shape  
our bills, services,  
investments  
and approach  
to long-term  
planning.**

Over the next two years, we'll:

- Share information about what we do and how we do it.
- Revisit what we've heard before, share how we've acted on it, and ask if we're getting it right.
- Ask if there are new issues or priorities we should consider.
- Explore big issues together.

There will be multiple ways for our customers, stakeholders and rights owners to get involved. These could include surveys, interviews, focus groups, workshops, and a customer panel.

## Our promise to you

We promise to clearly define levels of influence in engagement and:



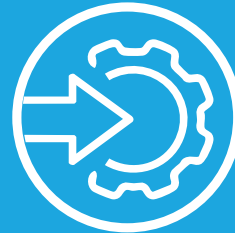
**1. We will listen and make sure your voice is heard**

We'll take the time to understand what matters to you, record what you tell us, and treat every contribution with respect.



**2. We will be open about what we're doing and why**

We'll keep you informed with clear, timely updates so you always know what's happening, what decisions are coming up, and how you can get involved.



**3. We will show how your input shapes our decisions**

We'll explain how your ideas, concerns and recommendations have influenced our thinking and be upfront about where your feedback has led to change.



**4. We will explain the limits and the trade-offs**

When we can't adopt a suggestion, we'll say so and we'll explain why – including the costs, risks, obligations or constraints we need to balance.



**5. We will report back regularly so you can see progress**

We'll close the loop by sharing updates throughout the process, including what we've heard, what we're doing next, and what outcomes your involvement has helped create.

## Our success measures

# We want to understand



### 1. What our customers want

Clear, evidence-based customer directions (mandates) that inform our pricing approach, service levels, investment priorities and long-term planning.



### 2. Customer preferences on key trade-offs

How customers want us to balance cost, reliability, environmental outcomes and equity, so that decisions in our Price Submission and Urban Water Strategy reflect real community priorities.



### 3. The needs of different groups in our communities

Insights from diverse people including customers experiencing vulnerability, people who are culturally and racially marginalised, people with disabilities, youth, First Nations people, Traditional Owners, people in small towns, and commercial customers to ensure decisions account for varying needs and expectations.



### 4. What “value for money” means to our customers

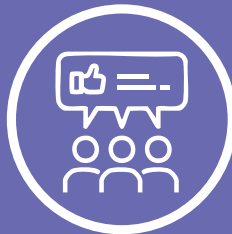
What customers see as fair, affordable and worthwhile, and translate this into measurable criteria that guide future pricing and service decisions.

# We hope people feel



## 1. Genuinely heard and respected

We'll create a safe and inclusive space where customers and community members can openly share their experiences, knowing their voices are valued, respected and listened to.



## 2. Input leads to impact

We'll show customers that their feedback directly influences decisions — that what they say makes a real difference and shapes outcomes we deliver.



## 3. We are transparent and follow-through

We'll explain how what we learn through engagement is applied, closing the loop so people see evidence that we have acted on what we heard.



## 4. Included, confident and empowered

We'll design an experience where you feel valued, confident and equal in the process — and able to make a difference.

## Not everything can be influenced through this process, including:



### **1. Regulatory and safety obligations**

This includes compliance, cyber-security and safety standards and requirements.



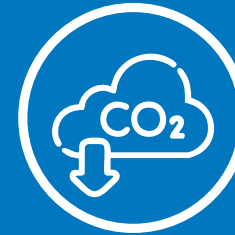
### **2. Timing and delivery of mandated actions**

Certain actions, timelines and focus areas are locked in through legislation, compliance obligations or government direction.



### **3. The split between fixed and variable charges on bills**

This is worked out to ensure we cover our fixed operating costs of providing sewerage and water services to a widely spread population.



### **4. Net zero and renewable energy commitments**

These are essential mandated requirements that we must meet.



### **5. Partnerships with Traditional Owners**

Our partnerships with Traditional Owners are guided by our promise to walk in step with First Nations people, the principle of self-determination and Government policy.



Decision making

**Let's focus on what  
we can change.**

## Big issues we'll explore together



How to keep bills fair - and make sure those who need support receive it.



What matters most about our services and where changes could help manage costs.



How technology can improve our services, including whether our customers support digital meters.



Securing water for the future - preparing for droughts, recycling water and priority use during shortages.



Our role in communities, including the programs and partnerships that deliver the most value.





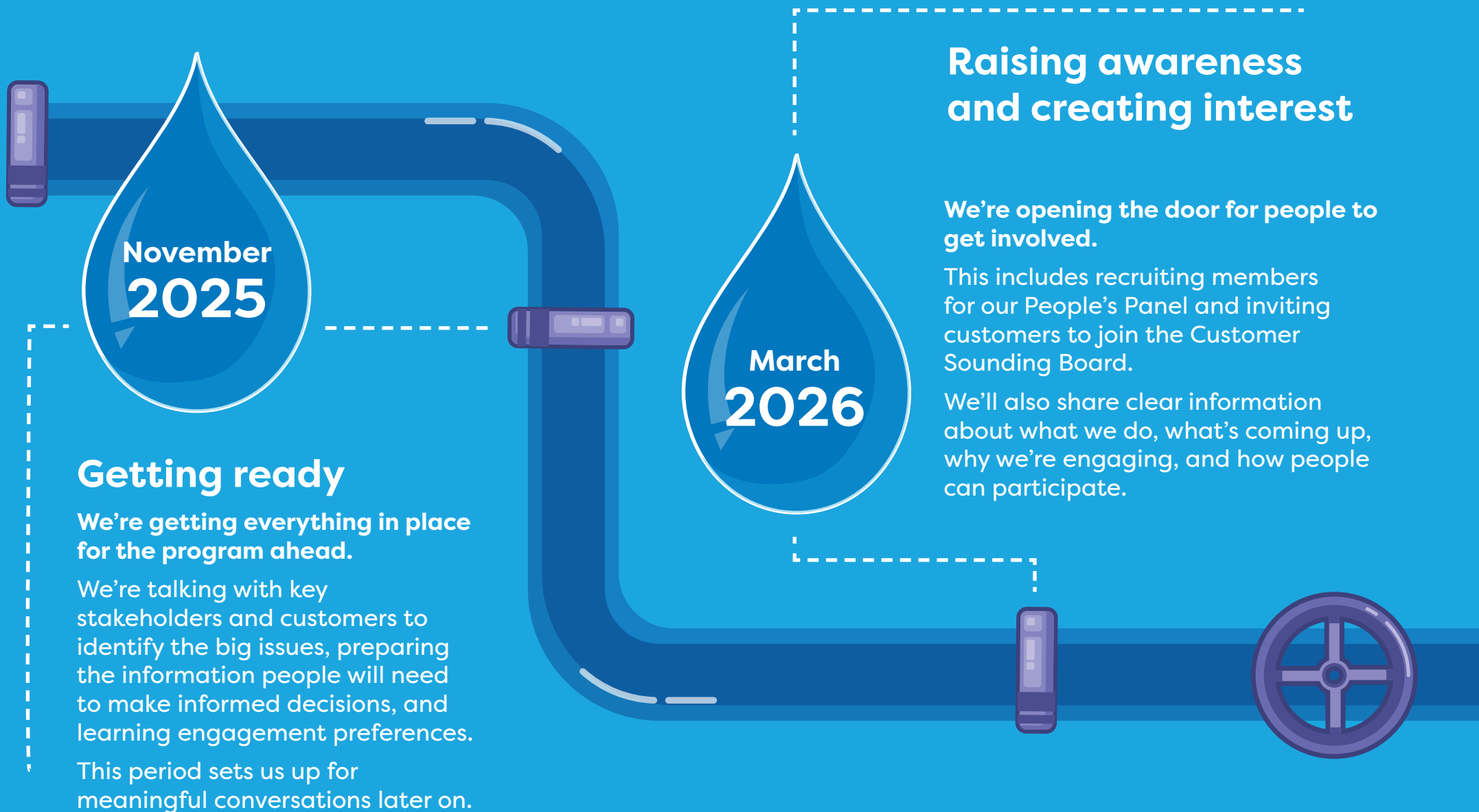


We also want  
you to tell us  
about anything  
else we should  
explore  
together.



Check our website for opportunities to get involved:  
[www.gippswater.com.au/LetsTalk](http://www.gippswater.com.au/LetsTalk)

## Roadmap - Our journey together





**We're getting out and about to hear from the wider community.**

This is where we gather early views from people, businesses and community groups across our service area.

We share what we already know, test our understanding and check in on what matters most about our services, pricing and priorities.

**Let's check in and talk!**

**May  
2026**

**August  
2026**

**Dive in**

**We're working closely with our People's Panel and Customer Sounding Board.**

This phase is all about deeper exploration – testing options, understanding trade-offs, and working through the choices together. These insights and recommendations will shape our direction for the next five years.

**October  
2026**

**Work on submission**

Apply insights and customer directions and priorities into the Price Submission and Urban Water Strategy. Show how engagement shaped decisions, finalise drafts, and prepare for Board sign-off.

# Thank you

Thank you to the people, groups and organisations that have already helped design our engagement plan, including:

- Gippsland Water Customer Reference Group
- Gippsland Water Board of Directors
- Anglicare Victoria
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Gippsland Women's Health
- Gippsland Youth Spaces
- Interchange Gippsland
- Ladder
- Latrobe Valley Enterprises
- Orange Door
- Wellington Youth Council

And thank you to all our customers and community members who get involved in our planning over the next two years.

Check our website for updates and opportunities to get involved [www.gippswater.com.au/LetsTalk](http://www.gippswater.com.au/LetsTalk)

