

PLANNING
for the **FUTURE**



**Gippsland
Water**

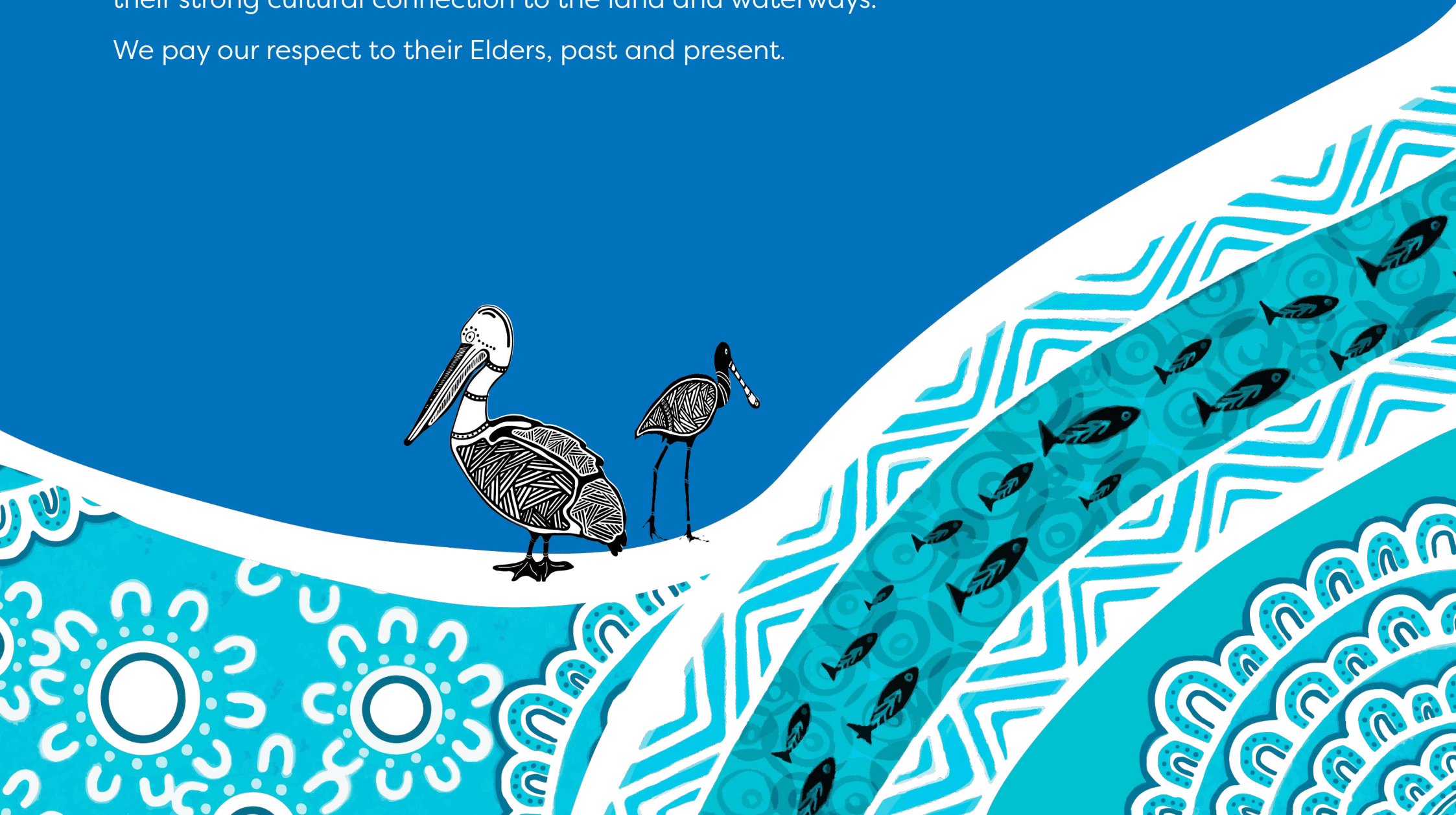
People's Panel Engagement Report

October 2026

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.





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BACKGROUND

About this report

This is a resource for our Planning for the Future People's Panel. It provides data from our customers and stakeholders, relevant to the panel's work or relevant to the broader Planning for the Future engagement program.

This report provides an account of the engagement we have done so far and key insights we've heard, as part of our Planning for the Future engagement program.

The information in this report was gathered through dedicated initiatives for this program, or through initiatives we already have in place, like customer surveys.

If any information in this report is unclear, please let a member of our team know and we will help explain it. Throughout the panel process, you can also request more information for the panel to consider.

How to read this report

You/your	refers to People's Panel members
We/our	refers to Gippsland Water
Customers	refer to Gippsland Water's customers
QR codes and links	will take you to additional information, including website content

Pictured right: Our Customer Reference Group with Managing Director, Sarah Cumming.





BACKGROUND

Our community engagement

Community engagement is central to how we work – not just in this process but all the time.

We're committed to listening to our customers and community and working with them on the issues that matter most.

We hear from customers through regular surveys and by asking for input on important decisions.

Two dedicated customer groups also help guide our decisions: the Customer Reference Group and the Sounding Board.

Keep up to date

Keep up to date with our community engagement on our website at www.gippswater.com.au/Lets-Talk

>> *Link launches external website*



Our community engagement continued

Customer Reference Group

Our Customer Reference Group (CRG) helps us keep customers at the heart of all we do. Representing the interests, concerns and priorities of our community, the CRG meets four times a year.

The group plays an important role in making sure customer views and expectations are understood and reflected in our decisions, services, performance reports and plans for the future. The members of the group are diverse, with each member contributing their insight and experience.

Initially established for our 2023 Price Submission, the group now has an ongoing role to keep our customers at the centre of our decision-making and to contribute to and review our engagement processes.

The CRG's role in this engagement program involves being part of designing our Planning for the Future engagement strategy, observing our engagement opportunities (including attending pop-ups, observing focus groups and panel days), and making sure that customer priorities are evident in our plans.



Sounding Board

Our Sounding Board is a group of customers and community members who share their views to help guide our decision-making. They get a chance to influence our water and wastewater services and share ideas and suggestions about how we contribute to our community.

Whenever there's an opportunity to have a say, we reach out to our Sounding Board, which is open to our customers and broader community.

Sounding Board members receive invitations to participate in engagement activities, such as focus groups, polls and surveys. They may also be invited to participate in panels and events. They choose what activities they want to take part in.

The Sounding Board's role in our Price Submission involves participating in engagement activities.

Sounding Board

Our Sounding Board is open to people who live in our community aged 16 and older. If you'd like to join, or find out more, visit www.gippswater.com.au/csb.

>> Link launches external website



Customer surveys

Our customers are regularly surveyed about us. Data from these surveys helps us understand whether we're meeting our customers' expectations. The main surveys our customers do are: our Customer Satisfaction Survey, our Customer Outcomes Survey and the Essential Services Commission's Customer Perception Survey.

Annual Customer Satisfaction survey

This survey is the biggest and most in-depth survey of our customers. It is done by independent researchers to seek our customers' views on how we're performing and perceived in the community. We are one of seven regional Victorian water corporations who are part of this survey.

Key insights from this survey, as well as trends from recent years are outlined in the Customer Satisfaction Survey section of this report.

Biannual Customer Outcomes surveys

We carry out these surveys twice a year to check that our customer outcomes are still important to our community, and to make sure we can respond to new issues or changes in our community's priorities. Our Sounding Board receive invitations to do this survey, and it's also open to our broader community.

Key insights from this survey are outlined in the Customer Outcomes Engagement section of this report.

Quarterly Customer Perception survey

The Essential Services Commission (ESC) surveys Victorian water customers four times a year across four key areas: value for money, reputation in the community, trust, and overall satisfaction. They publish the results as rolling averages on their website.

The latest results published by the ESC are in Appendix 2 of this report.

Roadmap – our engagement journey

Raising awareness and creating interest

March 2026 – May 2026

Sharing our [Planning for the future](#) engagement program, including why and how customers can get involved.

Activities:

- Promoting our [Planning for the future](#) opportunities through inserts with customer bills, on our social media channels, through our website and newsletters
- Recruiting to our Sounding Board
- Recruiting to our Customer Reference Group

Getting ready

November 2025 – February 2026

Getting everything ready for the program ahead. We worked with stakeholders and customers to design our [Planning for the future](#) engagement program together.

Activities: Engagement codesign workshops with our staff, stakeholders and organisations representing key customer cohorts.

Let's check in and talk!

May 2026 – August 2026

Getting out and about to hear from our customers and the wider community. Learning what's important to them, and checking in on what matters most about our services, pricing and priorities.

Activities:

- 27 pop-up engagement opportunities across 19 towns in the region
- Customer Outcomes Survey, including Urban Water Strategy
- Meetings with support agencies and organisations representing marginalised cohorts of the community
- Support agency survey
- Sounding Board workshop on Customer Outcomes
- Sounding Board workshop on Community Value and Partnerships

THROUGHOUT THE JOURNEY,
WE'LL KEEP OUR CUSTOMERS AND
COMMUNITY UP-TO-DATE ABOUT THE
PROGRESS OF OUR PLANS.

Dive in

**September 2026 –
December 2026**

Our People's Panel is active, exploring key issues in depth – testing options, working through trade-offs and choices together.

These recommendations will shape our Price Submission and our direction for years to come.

We'll do more community engagement to inform our Urban Water Strategy.

**We
are
here**

Work on plans, submit Urban Water Strategy

December 2026 – June 2027

We draft our 2027 Urban Water Strategy and 2028 Price Submission, using the insights and recommendations from our engagement journey.

Our Customer Reference Group works through insights from across the engagement journey and ensures they are visible in our plans.

We submit our Urban Water Strategy to DEECA.

Review and update

June – August 2027

We share an update on the direction of our Price Submission, showing the key things it will include. We check in to make sure we haven't missed or misinterpreted input from our community.

Key activities:

- Share Price Submission directions paper for feedback

Finalise and submit Price Submission

August – September 2027

Make final updates and submit our Price Submission to the Essential Services Commission.

WE'LL ALSO SHARE OUR PROGRESS
IN DELIVERING THE INITIATIVES AND
PROMISES WE MAKE IN OUR PLANS
THROUGH REGULAR UPDATES TO
OUR COMMUNITY.

Map of engagement pop-ups

MOUNT
BULLER

Legend

Gippsland Water
operating area

Location
of pop-ups



Neerim South footy



Glengarry Mother's Day Classic



Maffra cafe pop-up



Sale Sustainability Festival



Yinnar cafe pop-up



Mid Valley Shopping Centre



Moe Woolworths



Warragul Bunnings

MELBOURNE

WILSONS
PROMONTORY

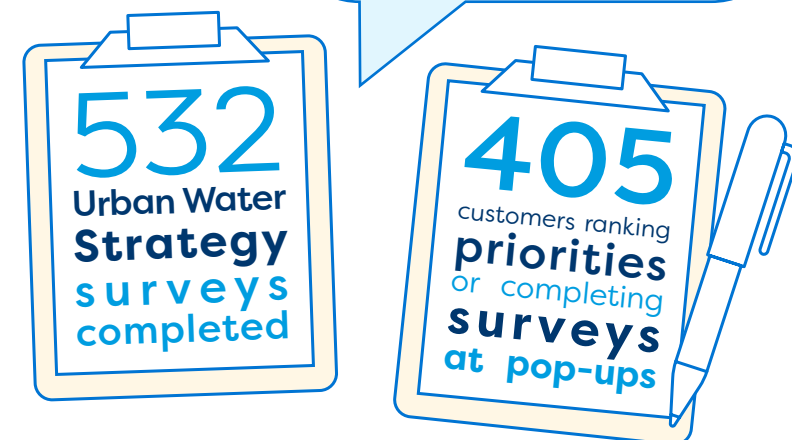
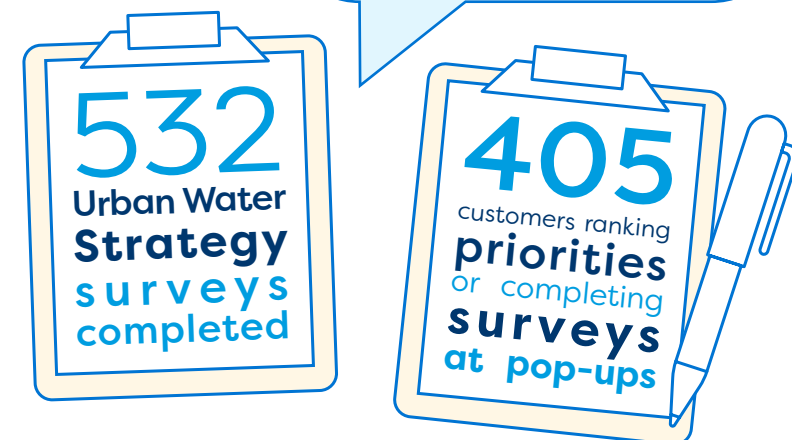
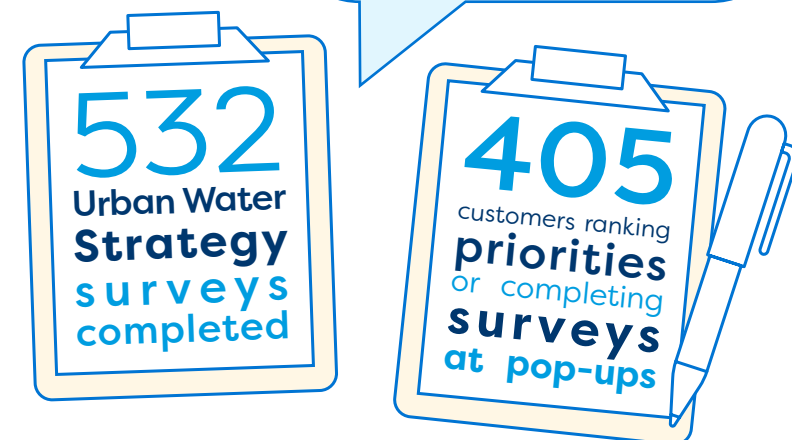
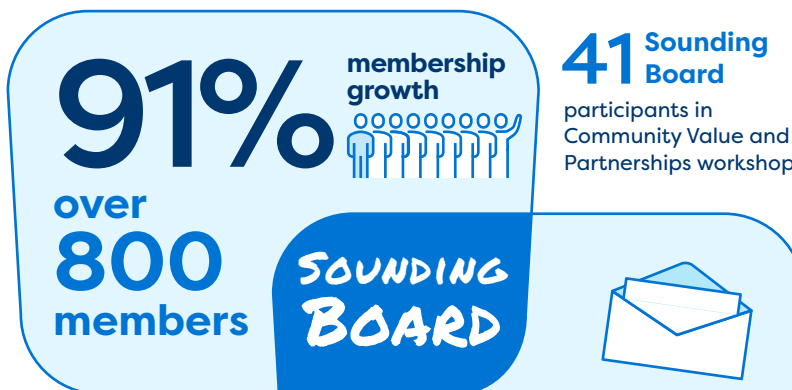
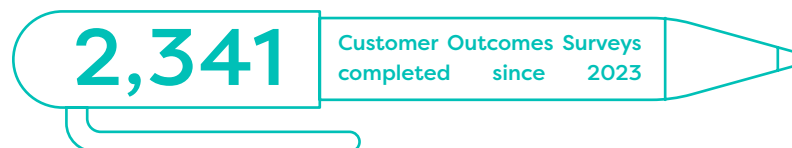
Australia

Victoria

Gippsland



Engagement so far (at 18 September 2026)



*note, individuals who participated in multiple opportunities will be represented in these statistics more than once. For example, if someone did a survey and also participated in a Sounding Board workshop, they would be counted twice.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE:

Working together to plan our services

Customers helped design the process and choose the big issues we're exploring through our engagement program.

As part of our early engagement, we held workshops with stakeholders and customers to ensure our strategic engagement program was shaped by the people we serve. Published in January 2026, Planning for the Future: Working together to plan our services is the strategic engagement plan for our 2027 Urban Water Strategy and our 2028 Price Submission.

The groups and organisations who helped design the strategy were:

- 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

Appendix 1 is a summary of our early engagement codesign workshops.

What we learned



Clarity is essential –

people want simple information about costs, trade-offs, and why decisions are made.



Show practical benefits –

people want to understand how changes (such as digital metering) will help them personally or improve services.



Transparency builds trust –

people want clear explanations of price changes, regulatory obligations, and how community input shapes decisions.



Inclusive design matters –

safe spaces, accessible formats, appropriate language, and support for participation are important.



Engagement must be accessible and flexible –

multiple channels (online, in-person, schools, community organisations, support services) are needed to reach diverse groups.



Youth expect modern communication –

stronger social media presence, school engagement, and concise digital content will help.



Cost-of-living pressures are front of mind –

affordability concerns shape how people view nearly every issue.



People want visible follow-through –

“closing the loop” is critical to show respect for participants' time and perspectives.

Working together to plan our services continued

How we're exploring the big issues

Our core challenge for engagement is central to the panel's work:

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

Within the core challenge, there are five big issues we committed to exploring together. Here is an update on how we've been tackling them with our customers and community, as well as work we've done behind the scenes.



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.



Working together to plan our services continued

	So far, we have:	Key information for the panel	Next steps
How to keep bills fair and make sure those who need support receive it.	Made sure that people in our customer support program received opportunities to get involved in our engagement. Met with and surveyed support agencies to get their insights on our support offering and the types of support that are most valuable to people experiencing financial difficulty.	The impact potential bill increases will have on our customers. The customer support we have available for people experiencing financial difficulty.	We're responding immediately with \$330K of annual investment (from 2026/27 financial year onwards) in our customer support program and Customer Care team (including three new roles). This boost will help us continue to provide support to customers who need it. We'll apply panel recommendations which have an impact on customer bills to the maximum extent possible in our Price Submission.
What matters most about our services and where changes could help manage costs.	Regularly asked our customers what their priorities are in relation to our services through our Customer Outcomes Survey. Received regular feedback on our services through our annual Customer Satisfaction Survey and the ESC's Customer Perception Survey. Completed a detailed review of our service standards to look for opportunities to improve our service at an efficient cost; or reduce our targets without materially reducing service quality.	Information in our Issues Report about service reliability. Results from our Customer Outcomes Survey. Results from our Customer Satisfaction Survey.	The panel will explore the issue in detail before making its recommendations. Our Customer Reference Group will work through what was said at the Sounding Board session on our Customer Outcomes to collaborate with us on any changes to these or how we measure our performance in achieving them. We'll apply the panel's and the Customer Reference Group's recommendations to the maximum extent possible.
How technology can improve our services, including whether our customers support digital meters.	Researched and learned a lot about digital meters – and recognised that they are in our future. Started a trial of digital meters in Briagolong. Done a lot of modelling to inform potential roll out options for digital meters. Developed business-wide strategies and roadmaps to ensure we're using technology to our advantage in the way we work.	Information in our Issues Report about digital metering.	The panel will explore the digital metering issue in detail, including different roll out options. We'll apply the panel's recommendations to the maximum extent possible.

Working together to plan our services continued

	So far, we have:	Key information for the panel	Next steps
Securing water for the future – preparing for droughts, recycling water and priority use during shortages.	Done detailed modelling on the long-term outlook for our water resources, to inform our Urban Water Strategy. Met with key agencies and stakeholders, including major water users, for their input into our plans. Surveyed our customers and Sounding Board to inform our Urban Water Strategy, as part of our April 2026 Customer Outcomes Survey.	This is not expected to be a key focus for the panel. However, insights gathered on this issue and included in this report will help you understand the entirety of our Planning for the Future program and what we're hearing from our community.	We'll do more engagement with local councils and in communities to inform our drought planning, which is part of our Urban Water Strategy. This includes asking the community which community spaces – such as parks and gardens – should be prioritised for water in dry conditions. We'll incorporate what we learn into our plans, so that priority community spaces are exempt from water restrictions in early stage water restrictions.
Our role in communities, including the programs and partnerships that deliver the most value	Held a session with our Sounding Board, sharing what we currently do to test if we're getting it right or there are changes we should make.	This is not expected to be a key focus for the panel. However, insights gathered on this topic and included in this report will help you understand the big picture of our Planning for the Future program and what we're hearing from our community.	Our Customer Reference Group will work through what was said at the Sounding Board session on Community Value and Partnerships, as well as data from surveys. They'll work with us to ensure our plans for work in this area match customer expectations.

Inclusive, accessible engagement

We serve a diverse community – and we've actively worked to make it easy for anyone in our community to get involved in our engagement activities. With the help of our customers and stakeholders, we've designed our activities to be inclusive, so that people from all backgrounds can take part.

We've provided multiple different ways for people to get involved across different towns, and in different ways over the last six months. This includes

opportunities in-person, online, in writing, over the phone, and in groups.

We also undertook targeted efforts to reach hard to reach groups to make sure their views are included. We held dedicated engagement sessions with customers from harder to reach cohorts, and with service providers who work with customers experiencing vulnerability.

We popped up in services, including the Morwell Neighbourhood House foodbank, to capture insights for our engagement while also providing customer care support to people experiencing financial difficulties.

As well as using traditional methods like media, social media, newsletters and advertising, we created short engaging videos to encourage people to get involved.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR:

Customer Outcomes engagement

Customer Outcomes surveys and pop-up community engagement

We have six 'Customer Outcomes' that underpin the way we work and inform the decisions we make. The outcomes are shaped by our customers priorities and expectations and set in our Price Submission.

Initially developed through customer input for our 2018 Price Submission, the outcomes have only had a minor update for our 2023 Price Submission. Our customers are still telling us that these outcomes areas are important to them.

Since 2023, we've been surveying our customers twice a year to check that the outcomes are still valued and look for any changes in priorities or emerging issues.

The survey asks customers to rank the six outcomes by priority and provides an opportunity to add free-text comments. We receive many comments reinforcing that all these outcome areas are important.

Six rounds of surveys have been completed between August 2023 and April 2026, with 2,036 total respondents.

We used a hands-on activity that replicated the survey ranking exercise at our 27 engagement pop-ups, generating an additional 305 responses. Pop-up event attendees tended to be younger and more financially comfortable than survey respondents.

Our customers' priorities

1. Do your job well
2. Be affordable and fair
3. Be environmentally responsible
4. Plan for the future
5. Be easy to deal with
6. Be involved in the community

The table below presents the Customer Outcomes Survey average scores alongside pop-up event scores and a combined weighted average across all 2,341 responses.

Outcome	Survey result average (n=2,036)	Pop-up events (n=305)	Combined (n=2,341)	Rank	Trend
Do your job well	4.82	3.69	4.67	#1	→ Stable
Be affordable & fair	4.03	4.27	4.06	#2	↓ -0.15 pts
Be environmentally responsible	3.83	4.04	3.86	#3	↑ +0.30 pts
Plan for the future	3.15	3.87	3.24	#4	→ Stable
Be easy to deal with	2.80	2.94	2.82	#5	↓ -0.35 pts
Be involved in community	2.36	2.19	2.34	#6	→ Stable

Survey result average = weighted average across all six Customer Outcomes Survey rounds (Aug 2023–Apr 2026).

Pop-up events = combined result across engagement events between March and July 2026 events. Trend column reflects Customer Outcomes Survey period movement only. Scores are out of 6 (6 = highest priority).

Across the six surveys, the priority order is stable. Do your job well has ranked first, and 'Be involved' last in every survey round.

In addition to the ranking exercise, the survey and pop-up engagement events included an option for people to add comments or suggest other priorities. Around 30% of respondents chose to answer the extra question, with many responses reinforcing that all of the priorities are important or that we are doing a good job. Analysis of the remaining responses shows that cost and affordability of bills is the most mentioned theme. Support for education, especially relating to water conservation was the second strongest theme.

Top themes

Cost and affordability of bills

This is the most common theme. Customers are feeling overall bill stress. There is interest in understanding bill charges.

Water conservation and public education

Customers expect education on water conservation — they want us to target schools and students, new residents, and the broader community. There is interest in water recycling and reuse.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR: Sounding Board workshops

In July and August, our Sounding Board participated in two online workshops, one on our Customer Outcomes and one on Community Value and Partnerships.

The sessions indicated support for our existing Customer Outcomes as well as for our existing community initiatives, especially education but not necessarily support for increased spend.

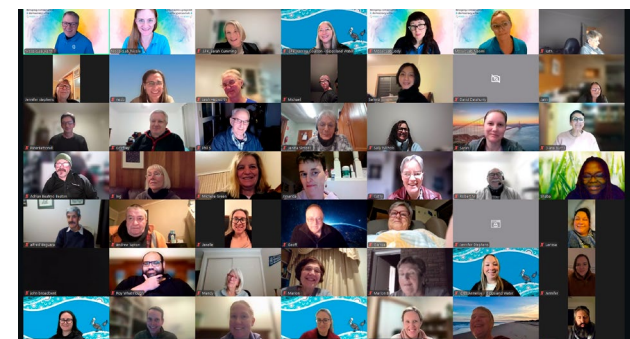
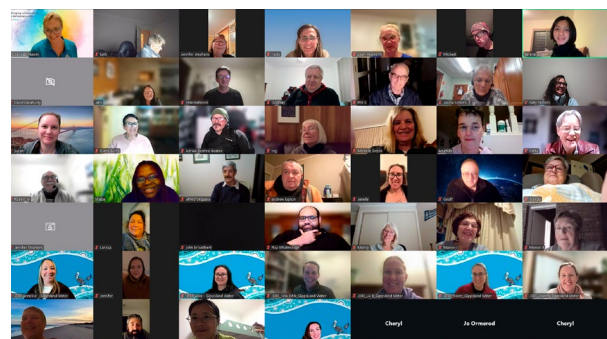
In the Customer Outcomes workshop, the participants explored what matters most about each outcome and explored what success would look like for each of them. The key themes from discussion were the importance of transparency and communication, affordability and education.

In the Community Values and Partnerships session, the participants learned about current initiatives in education, sponsorship, and the Community Emergency Support Program, and demonstrated broad support for these programs. They also learned about some opportunities to do more environmental initiatives - they were divided on how far we should go on these, and on who should pay.

The next step is for our Customer Reference Group to work with us through detail from these workshops, along with other engagement and survey data to:

- confirm our Customer Outcomes and how we report on our performance against them
- confirm how we approach any changes to our community initiatives.

Appendix 3 is a summary of the two Sounding Board workshops.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR:

Traditional Owner and First Nations community engagement

Traditional Owner engagement

We've been working on our plans for the future with both Traditional Owner Corporations with Native Title granted over our region: the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) and the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC). The Gunaikurnai people are the Rights Holders of most of the land in our service area.

Both groups have identified key priorities and we've been speaking about specific opportunities we could explore together.

Understanding Traditional Owner values, priorities and aspirations will help ensure that relevant initiatives are jointly developed, reflected in our future plans and effectively delivered.

These relationships are ongoing, and we'll continue to partner with Traditional Owners beyond the life of the plans we're developing today.

First Nations community engagement

Alongside our work with Traditional Owners of the land and waters in our service area, we're also working to ensure the priorities of First Nations people in our region are reflected in our plans for the future.

We've been meeting with people who work directly with First Nations communities at Federation University, Latrobe City Council, Kurnai College and Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation to understand their priorities.

Several common themes have emerged:

Strong relationships

We heard that building strong relationships through face-to-face engagement is important and often the most important way to build trust. Across all discussions there was a clear preference for us to maintain a visible presence within the community through attending events, NAIDOC celebrations, and local activities to stay genuinely connected with the community.

Communication

Opportunities were identified to strengthen communication through continuing to build strong partnerships with schools, universities, local government and community organisations.

Education

Our engagement has also highlighted the importance of continually creating education, training and employment opportunities for First Nations young people, including school programs, work experience, internships and pathways into careers in the water industry.

Education was also identified as a key opportunity for collaboration, including classroom presentations, school-based learning opportunities and site visits to improve understanding of water and wastewater and environmental management processes.

Next steps

To broaden the range of First Nations perspectives in our planning, we're also connecting with Nindedan Quarenook Aboriginal Corporation and Warrigunya, an Aboriginal Community Controlled incorporated not-for-profit organisation working towards building culturally connected and stronger Aboriginal communities.

As we've continued our First Nations engagement, we sought advice from our Board Committees Independent Aboriginal delegate, on our engagement approach. The delegate acted as a critical friend in the process, using their first-hand understanding of First Nations communities to provide valuable insights.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR: Support service engagement

Key insights

Support services are seeing an increase of people struggling with the cost of living. Services praise our Customer Care program for its valuable support offerings.

Neighbourhood House insights

We've had face-to-face meetings with people working at four neighbourhood houses in our region, to gain their insights on the support we offer customers experiencing vulnerability and financial difficulty.

All shared that they're seeing an increase in people struggling with the cost of living. They were all experiencing higher numbers of people seeking help from their services which vary but can include help applying for rebates or access to food relief.

They all suggested their clients would benefit from more education around bill help and water – especially tips for saving water and why drinking tap water is so important.

Support organisation survey

We emailed 32 organisations that support people in our region experiencing vulnerability and offered to meet with them to get their input into our support offering and plans for the future. Nine organisations got involved and completed a survey to share their observations and insights.

The participating organisations acknowledged that our Customer Care program provides valuable support for customers. All mentioned their clients are struggling with the rising cost of living.

Face-to-face support, incentivised payment plans and payment extensions were considered the most impactful type of support we can provide.

Many highlighted a need to have multiple ways for customers to interact with us. Paper, phone and in person opportunities were just as important as online and technology-based solutions. Some highlighted a need for easy English content around Customer Care.

Consumer Action Law Centre input

We met with senior staff from Consumer Action Law Centre to discuss how we support customers experiencing vulnerability and learn more about the financial pressures households across the state are experiencing. We learnt that while water bills aren't within the top 10 consumer bill concerns, they contribute to overall cumulative bill stress.

They were supportive of initiatives we have in place, including our incentive payments that encourage small regular payments, extra support for customers experiencing financial difficulties and reaching out to customers early. They were also supportive of recent additional staffing changes we've made to support customers experiencing vulnerability.

We'll engage with Consumer Action Law Centre again before finalising our Price Submission, seeking their view on whether we have the right mix of support measures in place and if there are others they can recommend.

Customers experiencing vulnerability

Key insights

People experiencing vulnerability expect us to do our job well, be affordable and fair, and be easy to deal with. Their expectations are consistent with those of the broader customer base.

We have taken extra steps to make sure all voices from people in our community are included in our engagement, including vulnerable customers.

On advice from people who've experienced vulnerability and from support organisations that helped design our Planning for the Future engagement program, we've provided multiple ways for people to get involved.

This has included opportunities where people could do our surveys or provide feedback on our services in places where they access support services, including at Warragul Community House, the food bank at Morwell Neighbourhood House and at the Headway Community Expo in Trafalgar.

We also directly emailed customers who have told us they've experienced financial difficulties to encourage them to have their say.



WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR: Young people

Key insights

Youth expect us to be affordable and fair, be environmentally responsible and do our job well. They value short videos and clear communication. They are slightly more inclined to prioritise the importance of looking after the environment and planning for the future than the broader customer base.

Young people are a group at risk of being underrepresented in our engagement, for several reasons, including being hard to reach because they are less likely to be bill paying customers.

We had a dedicated early engagement and codesign workshop with young people to make sure we created opportunities in our program to make it appealing and easy for youth to participate in our Planning for the Future engagement program.

On their advice, we developed short videos for social media about our work and as part of our campaign to boost membership of our Sounding Board, and therefore participation in our engagement opportunities.

We also held our pop-up engagement events at targeted locations to boost young people's participation, including at Federation University and Sale Careers Fair, where we also promoted careers in the water industry.

Sounding Board

Our Sounding Board is open to people who live in our community aged 16 and older. If you'd like to join, or find out more, visit www.gippswater.com.au/csb.

>> Link launches external website



Customer Satisfaction Survey

Each year our independent researchers survey a random sample of our customers to seek their views on how we're performing and perceived in the community.

We participate in this survey as a member of the regional Victorian water corporation alliance. The survey has been carried out annually since 2014, initially as a phone survey, and since 2023 as an online survey.

The results in this report are from the latest survey, which was in October 2025. The survey will be carried out again in October 2026.

Methodology

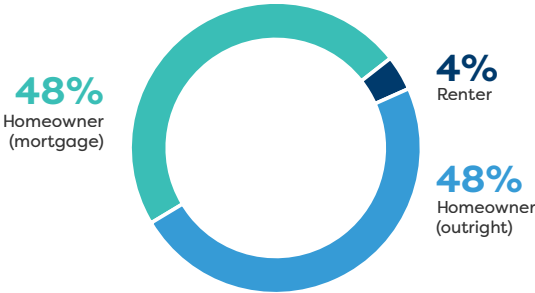
An invitation to complete the survey is sent to a random selection of customers, with an incentive to win one of 10 prizes of \$100 off your next bill.

To account for varying demographics in those who participate in an online survey, the data is weighted so that it is reflective of our customer base.

We aim for a target of 400 responses to the survey, to achieve 95% confidence that the responses are reflective of our population, leaving a 5% margin of error. We achieved 522 responses, so there is more than 95% confidence in the data.

Respondent characteristics (cont. over page)

Home Ownership Status

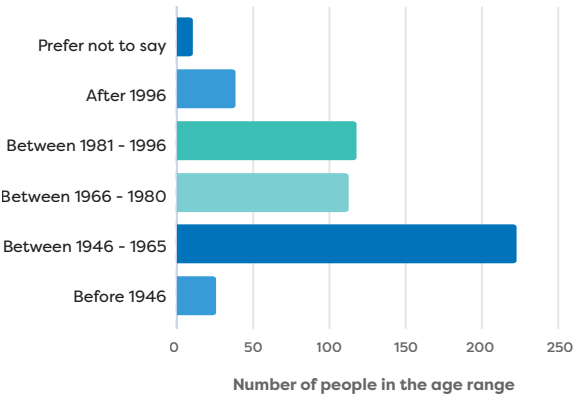


Key results from Customer Satisfaction Survey

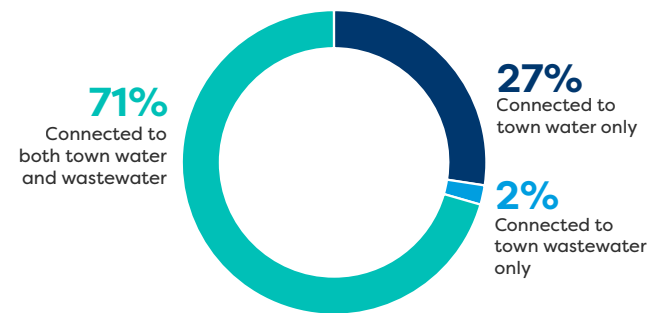
2025 SCORE	TREND	LONG-TERM TREND					
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<i>Value for money - Yes %</i>							
69%	→	68%	71%	62%	69%	73%	69%
<i>Overall satisfaction (1-10) - average rating</i>							
7.8	→	7.8*	7.7	7.6	7.7	7.9	7.8
<i>Net trust</i>							
+15	↑	4	8	-1*	11	18	15
<i>Valued member of the community (community reputation) - Yes %</i>							
68%	↑	61%	61%	66%	62%	66%	68%
<i>Water quality satisfaction - Yes %</i>							
89%	→	90%	83%	90%	89%	90%	89%

Customer Satisfaction Survey continued

Year of Birth



Connection type



Concession status

2%
Aboriginal or
Torres Strait
Islander descent

46%
concession
card holder

54%
non-concession
card holder

Service

Of the customers who did the 2025 survey, 40% had been in touch with us in the prior 12 months. Of those who had been in touch, **98% agreed that we are easy to deal with.**

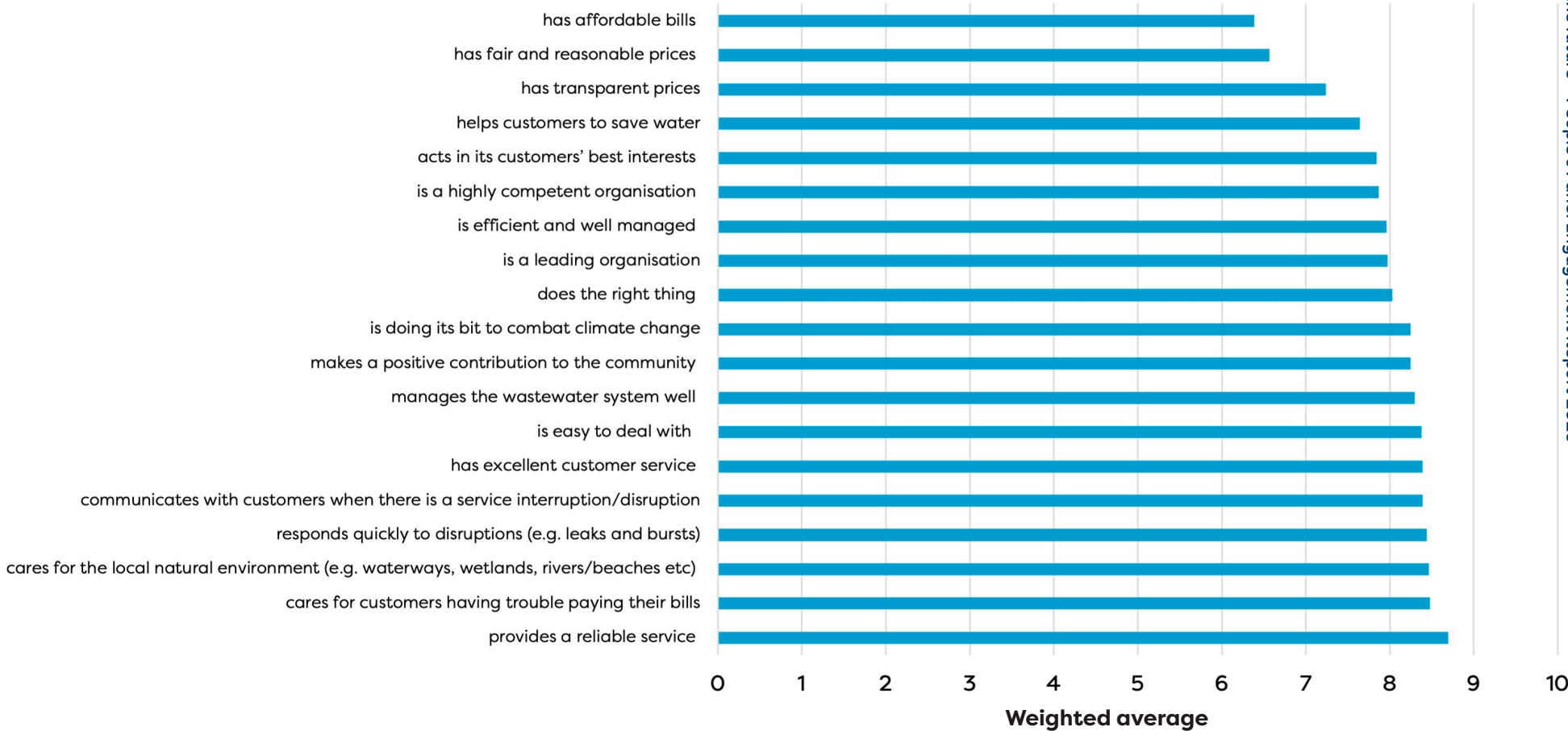
We also asked an optional question, to all survey respondents, to find out if there is anything we could do differently to make it easier for customers to deal with us. 58% of survey respondents chose to respond to this question. Many of the responses praised our service, the top themes with suggestions are in the table below.

Theme	% of responses	Suggestions	How we're responding
Digital self-service (app/portal/online)	17%	An app, usage tracking and online payment are customer expectations.	We're upgrading our online services, which includes an app. We made this commitment in response to customer insights gathered for our 2023 Price Submission. The upgrade and app are expected to go live in 2027.
Affordability	15%	Fixed and service charges are the comments relating to cost and affordability.	We're educating our customers on what their bill pays for and how our charges work. We're promoting payment plans and investing in customer support initiatives.
Phone & contact accessibility	9%	Extended hours, call-backs, reduced wait times would make it easier for some people to access our customer service.	We've created a contact form on our website to offer a call back service.

Customer Satisfaction Survey continued

We also asked customers to indicate their level of agreement with a series of service-related statements, as shown in the table below

Rate your level of agreement with the statement 'Gippsland Water...

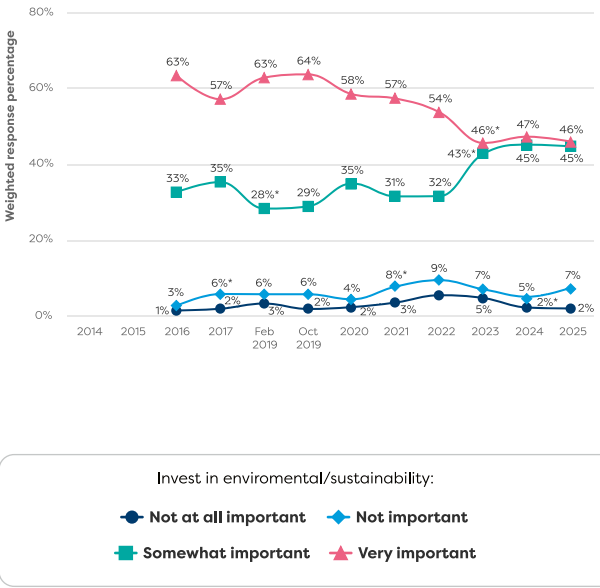


The average score has been weighted to account for differences in sample groups.
Thinking about my water corporation, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements: ...
Date period: Responded 2025
Response filter: Water Corporation: Gippsland Water

Customer Satisfaction Survey continued

Other results

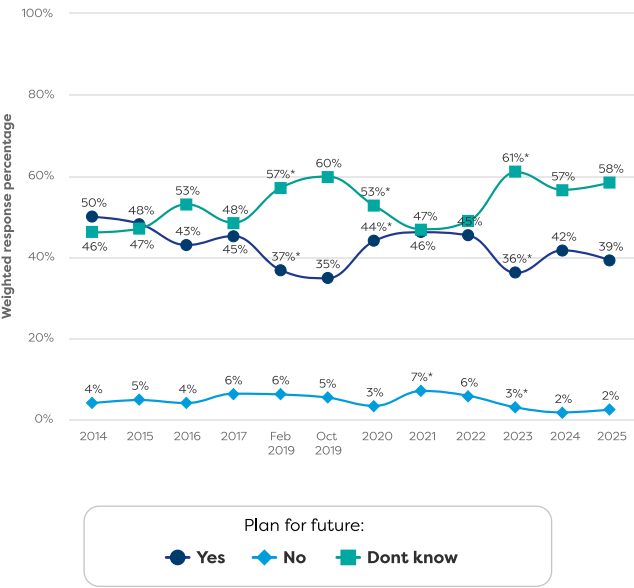
How important is it to you that Gippsland Water invests in environmental or sustainability initiatives?



Comment on environmental investment trend

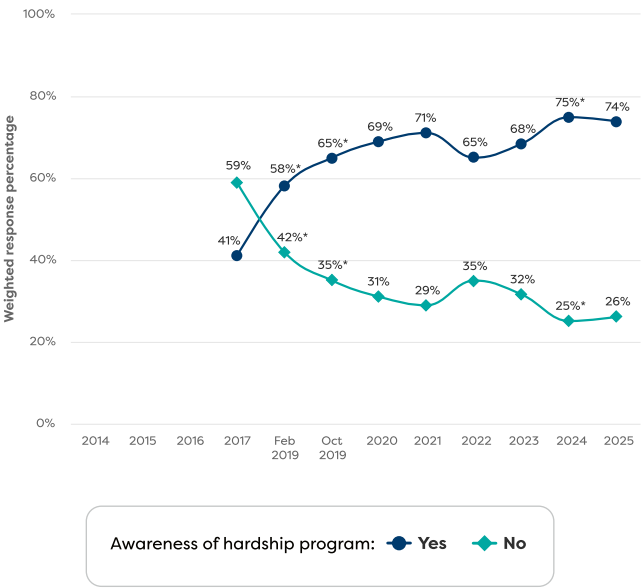
Since 2023, we've seen the percentage of people who think it's very important that we invest in environmental or sustainability initiatives stop its declining trend. We've also seen the percentage of people who think it's somewhat important increase. It's possible that our increased

Does Gippsland Water plan for the future?



promotion of the work we do in environmental and sustainability initiatives has created more awareness of our work to protect the environment – therefore there are less people saying it is 'very important' and more saying it is 'somewhat important'.

Are you aware that Gippsland Water helps customers in need of assistance with their bill, through a financial assistance and hardship program?



Urban Water Strategy engagement

We've spoken with stakeholders including major customers, councils, Traditional Owners, and industry partners to inform our Urban Water Strategy. This work is ongoing.

Major customers

We're the state's major industrial water and wastewater service provider. For decades we've supported the biggest water consumers in critical industries, including power generation, paper mill production and food manufacturing. These major industries underpin the economy of the state and require a high level of reliability for supply, which isn't necessarily available in other regions.

We've been talking to our biggest water users to understand what they do to save water and what impact water restrictions could have on their operations.

Water restrictions would affect major customers in different ways, but they all emphasised the need for a consistent and reliable water supply, even if available at a reduced capacity.

All major customers let us know that they've implemented all commercially viable options to reduce and reuse water where possible.

We'll continue to work with them to understand how we can be best prepared for drought conditions and how we best work together in times of drought.

Local councils

We've worked with Baw Baw Shire Council, Latrobe City Council, South Gippsland Shire Council and Wellington Shire Council to inform our development and growth projections and to help us identify priority community assets – such as public parks and reserves – to prioritise for water supply in times of drought.

We also have shared our future capital project investments for their area to ensure a coordinated approach to capital timing and the approvals needed.

Later this year, we'll engage directly with the community to check that these assets are also the ones the community most want to protect in times of drought.

Industry partners

We've engaged with industry partners including Southern Rural Water, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and the Environmental Protection Authority. So far, this has focused on information sharing and exploring potential opportunities to work together or partner on future projects and initiatives.

Working together

All our major customers have demonstrated willingness to work with us and other stakeholders in times of drought.

Customers and community

We included two Urban Water Strategy questions in our annual Customer Satisfaction survey, which we do as part of an alliance with seven regional Victorian water corporations (other results are summarised in the Customer Satisfaction Survey section of this report).

We tested customer support for which approach we should take in times of reduced rainfall or drought. Most customers surveyed supported a balanced approach, with only 4% of our customers supporting higher investment in infrastructure to maintain supply – the lowest score of the participating water corporations.

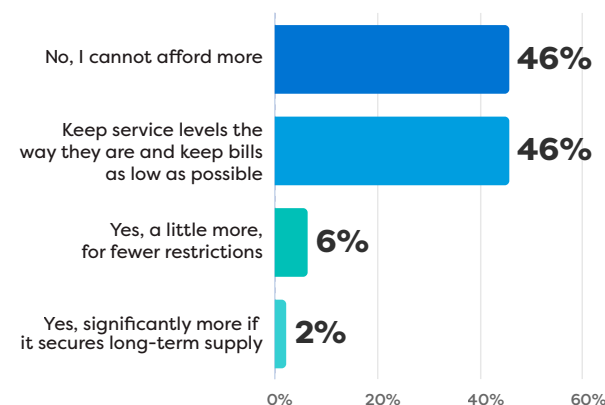
This sentiment was repeated in the second question, which explored willingness to pay for improved water security: 92% of survey respondents either said that they could not afford to pay more, or to keep service levels the way they are and bills as low as possible. Only 8% of customers said they would be willing to pay a little more, or significantly more.

In April 2026, we did an additional survey of our customers. We asked customers if water intensive industries should take action to reduce water use. In normal conditions, when there is no drought, over 86% of respondents said yes. In times of drought or water shortage, over 98% said yes.

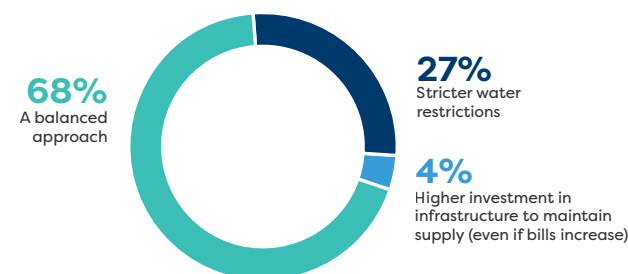
We also asked what actions water intensive industries should take. Customers showed high levels of support for industry implementing water efficiency measures, using recycled water where possible and building skills in their workplaces. We have shared these results with our major customers.

In that survey, we also asked if community assets should be protected in times of water shortage – 91% of customers said yes, and prioritised community gardens, recreation reserves and ovals, and public parks. We're now planning further engagement with communities to explore which specific community spaces are most important, using the priority lists we've worked on with local councils.

Would you be willing to pay more on your bill for improved water security (e.g. fewer restrictions, more drought-proofing)?



In times of reduced rainfall or drought, which one of these approaches do you prefer?



WE HAVE LEARNED THAT OUR CUSTOMERS:

- are happy with their current supply reliability
- don't want to pay more for better reliability
- would prefer to be on water restrictions than pay more for drought mitigation.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Early engagement and strategy codesign workshops summary

Purpose of workshops

To prepare for community engagement on the 2028 Price Submission and 2027 Urban Water Strategy, we sought the advice of groups representing the voices of several key, and less often heard, voices from the Gippsland community.

Held in late 2025, the purpose of the workshops was to test emerging issues with representatives of under-represented customer groups, to ensure the topics are clear, relevant and framed in ways that reflect lived experience. These workshops were also tasked with identifying any key methods or accommodations that could be used to more effectively engage these participants.

Objectives

The sessions were focused on how to design an inclusive and accessible engagement process - one that enables all community members to participate confidently and have their voices heard. The workshops had three objectives:

1. Allow participants to explore and understand key issues – allow participants to delve into the 10 key topics Gippsland Water had prepared.
2. Get feedback on clarity – understand from participants what may be difficult to understand or require clarity, particularly for the groups participants represented.
3. Understand what is needed to make engagement more accessible – hear from participants what support should be considered to ensure everyone has an opportunity to engage?

Participants

The participants included youth, as well as representatives who work with vulnerable customers and disabled people. There were participants from Anglicare Victoria, Gippsland Women's Health, Ladder, Latrobe Valley Enterprises, Disability Connect Victoria, Interchange Gippsland, Wellington Youth Council, Gippsland Youth Services and the Centre for Multicultural Youth.

Summary of discussions

Excerpt from engagement report provided by MosaicLab:

Customers experiencing vulnerability

Comments on key issues

Participants representing customers experiencing vulnerability emphasised the importance of clear, plain-English communication across all issues presented. Tools such as accessible billing formats, fact sheets and straightforward visual summaries were suggested to make information easier to navigate.

They noted that many people they support struggle to understand bills, pricing drivers and regulatory requirements, and would benefit from simple explanations of where money is spent, why costs change and what Gippsland Water is required to deliver.

Participants also encouraged Gippsland Water to be transparent about the impacts of climate events, service standards, renewables investment and digital technologies, and to provide practical examples when discussing potential changes or trade-offs.

What would make engagement inclusive?

Participants highlighted the need for engagement processes that are accessible, safe and designed with the realities of vulnerable customers in mind. Ensuring culturally appropriate communication, translation options and welcoming spaces for Aboriginal, culturally and racially marginalised people, women and gender-diverse participants were seen as important.

Participants recommended offering multiple ways to get involved- including online and paper surveys, outreach through neighbourhood houses and community organisations, and sessions co-delivered with support services.

Participants also noted the value of staff being trained to work effectively with vulnerable customers, and the need to close the loop by clearly showing what was heard and how decisions were influenced.

Overall, they emphasised transparency, digestible information and flexible engagement options as key to enabling meaningful participation.

People living with disability

Comments on key issues

Participants representing people living with disability noted that many of the key issues presented are difficult to engage with when information is text-heavy, highly technical or overwhelming in volume.

They emphasised that clarity, simplicity and practical relevance are essential for meaningful engagement- particularly clear explanations of costs, how changes will affect individuals and what benefits customers can expect.

The group highlighted that accessible communication formats, including pictorial or visual summaries, plain

English, and text-to-speech compatibility, would make the topics significantly more approachable. They also noted that across all issues, the perceived value for customers needs to be clearly articulated to support understanding and trust.

What would make engagement inclusive?

Participants stressed that genuine inclusion requires both accessible communication and thoughtful engagement design. They emphasised the importance of creating environments where people with disability feel comfortable, supported and able to contribute - recognising that in broader groups their voices can be overshadowed. Direct involvement of people with disability, alongside carers or support workers where needed, was considered essential.

Participants also encouraged Gippsland Water to partner with local disability organisations, host targeted events and ensure that questions and language are appropriate and easy to understand.

Providing practical supports, offering multiple ways to participate, and ensuring information is available in accessible formats (such as text-to-speech and plain English) were all seen as important foundations for inclusive engagement.

Youth

Comments on key issues

Young people responded to the engagement issues from a practical, future-focused perspective. They highlighted concerns about the long-term costs of aging infrastructure, water security and the pressure created by climate change, noting that these challenges will affect their generation most.

Digital metering was generally seen as a positive development that could support better communication, leak detection and responsible water use, although some questioned whether customers should pay extra for its benefits.

Participants also expressed interest in how Gippsland Water uses AI, seeking clearer information about its purpose, risks and ethical implications, and noting that investment might be better directed to essential maintenance or renewable energy in the short term.

Cost-of-living pressures were a recurring theme, with young people emphasising the need to balance necessary investments with affordability and fairness for households already under strain.

What would make engagement inclusive?

Participants offered clear advice on how to engage young people effectively. They stressed the importance of accessible, youth-friendly communication channels-including reduced reliance on paper, greater use of SMS, email and social media, and more straightforward explanations of complex topics.

They also encouraged Gippsland Water to be active and visible in schools and community settings, suggesting presentations, workshops or short educational videos to build awareness of water security, renewable energy, digital metering and climate impacts.

Providing practical examples, outlining clear aims, and showing how community feedback will influence decisions were all seen as essential for building understanding and trust. Participants also highlighted the importance of safe, welcoming engagement environments and opportunities for genuine two-way conversation, noting that young people respond well to interactive formats and platforms that allow them to share their perspectives and ask questions.

Customer Satisfaction Survey continued

We also asked an optional question to find out if there is anything more that we currently do, that customers would like to see more of, 38% of people chose to respond to this question. The top themes and insights in the responses are outlined in the table below.

Theme	% of responses	Suggestions	How we're responding
Communication & transparency	14%	More visibility of what Gippsland Water does, how money is spent, and future plans	We share information about the work we do, our costs and our plans through education and communication. We committed to educational campaigns and customer engagement, in response to customer insights gathered for our 2023 Price Submission. These are being delivered through our channels including social media, newsletters, website, community events and annual Community Report.
Affordability	14%	Pricing relief, concessions, and more transparent billing	We've increased investment in our customer support initiatives and we're educating our customers on what their bills pay for and what the charges are.
Community presence & events	12%	Visibility at community events and in public spaces	Through engagement for our 2023 Price Submission, our customers told us they would like us to be more visible in the community. We've responded by attending more community events, such as agricultural shows and farmers markets. At these events we share information to support our educational campaigns.
Water conservation & environment	11%	Conservation education, sustainability initiatives, water-saving campaigns	One of our campaigns developed in response to customer insights gathered for our 2023 Price Submission is 'Reduce your use', which teaches people how to save water and why it is important. Another of our campaigns is 'Caretakers for tomorrow', which shares information about the work we do to protect the environment, and encourages people to take positive sustainability action.
Infrastructure & supply security	10%	Dam capacity, proactive pipe renewal, future supply assurance	We share our water supply levels and planned maintenance on our website. Every year we share our annual water outlook. We also share our Urban Water Strategy and encourage customers to provide input into it.
Water quality	7%	Chlorine taste/smell, monitoring, proactive communication on water quality events	We're educating the community about our water treatment process. When water quality events occur we communicate promptly with affected customers.
Schools & education	4%	Water education programs – word-of-mouth effect noted (children teaching parents)	Our school incursion programs continue to be a valued part of our education program.

Appendix

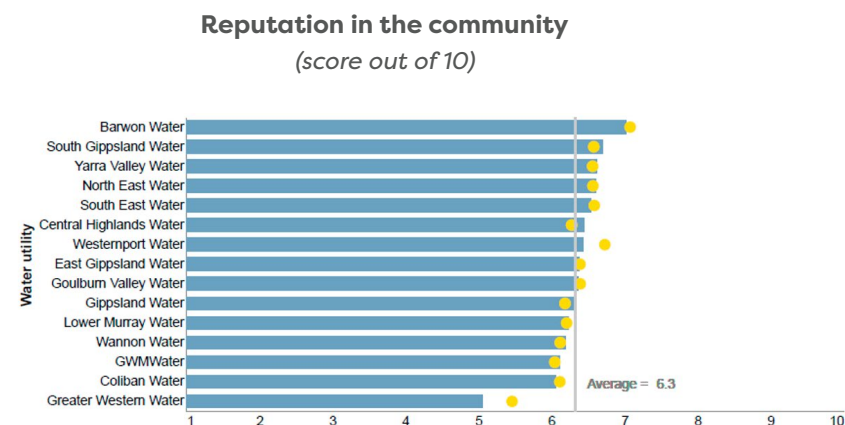
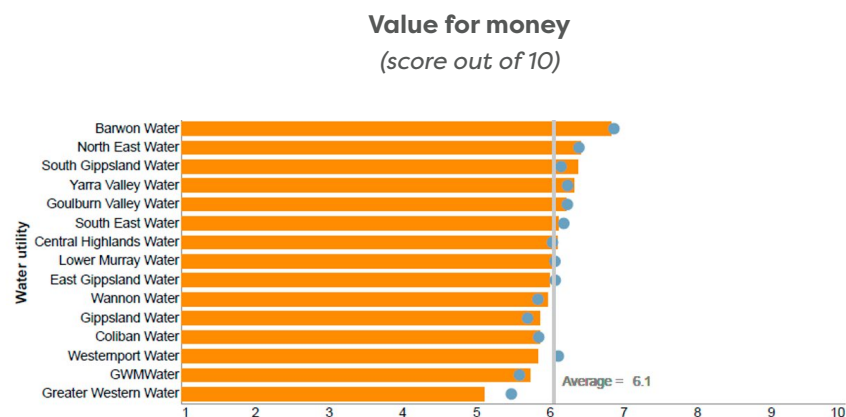
Appendix 2 – ESC Customer Perception Survey

Methodology:

Phone survey (robocall), of 100 people living in our region, conducted four times a year.

Results (12 month rolling average):

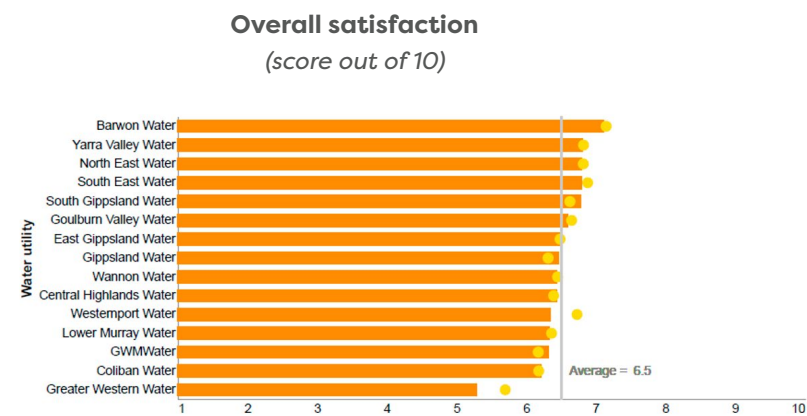
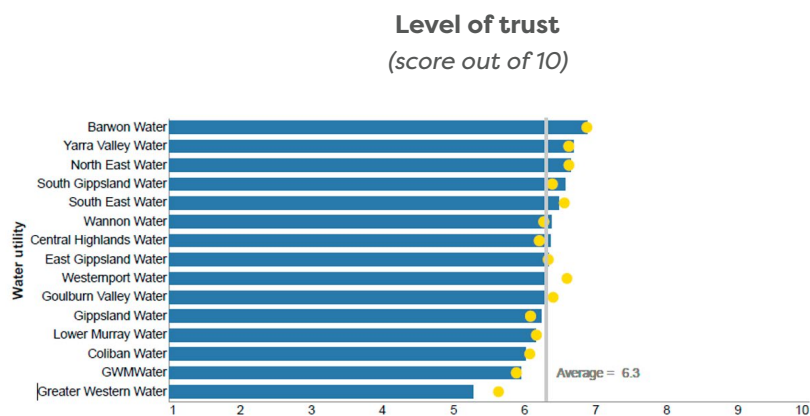
Customer rate their water business September 2025 to May 2026



The blue (yellow) dots above (below) show June 2025 to February 2026 results.
The bars show September 2025 to May 2026 results.

Appendix 2 – ESC Customer Perception Survey continued

Customer rate their water business September 2025 to May 2026



The blue (yellow) dots above (below) show June 2025 to February 2026 results.
The bars show September 2025 to May 2026 results.



GIPPSLAND WATER SOUNDING BOARD

CUSTOMER OUTCOMES

Summary report

July 2026



ABOUT THIS SESSION

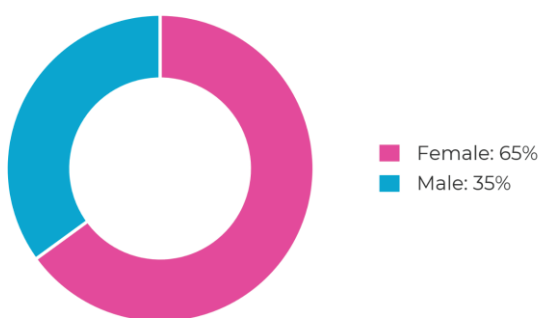
Every five years, Gippsland Water submits a plan to the Essential Services Commission, Victoria's independent regulator of water services, setting out the prices it will charge and the outcomes it will deliver. As part of preparing its 2028 Price Submission, Gippsland Water is engaging with its Sounding Board, a group of customers who have signed up to engage with Gippsland Water in more depth.

This Sounding Board session, held online on 29 July 2026, introduced Gippsland Water's six customer outcomes (do your job well, be affordable and fair, be environmentally responsible, plan for the future, be easy to deal with and be involved) gathered customer input on what matters most about each outcome and explored what success would look like. This report is a summary of the session; for the full record of the discussion, please refer to the Gippsland Water Customer Sounding Board – Customer Outcomes – What was said report.

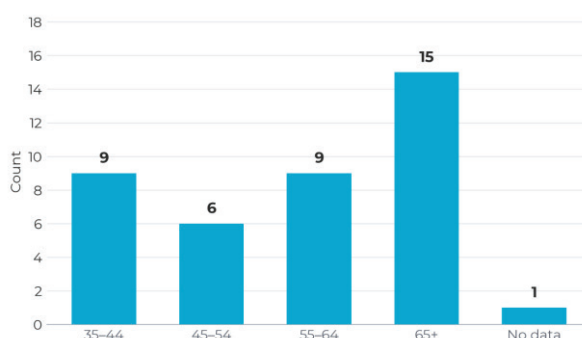
WHO TOOK PART

Gippsland Water customers from across the region took part. Half were from Latrobe City, with Baw Baw and Wellington evenly represented. Sixtyfive per cent identified as female and 35 per cent as male, and the largest age group was 65 and over. Financial circumstances ranged from living comfortably to not having enough to meet basic expenses, and threequarters lived in large towns.

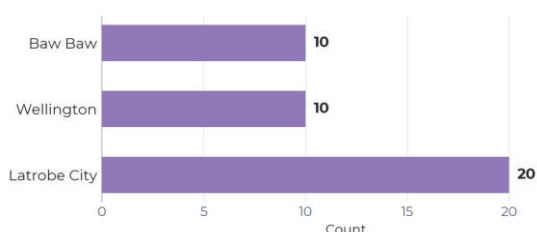
Gender



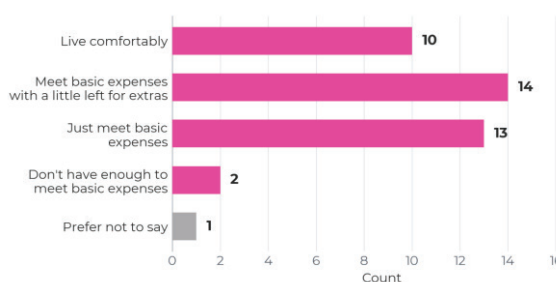
Age range

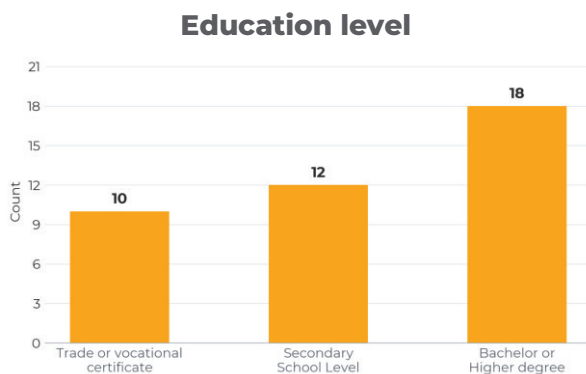
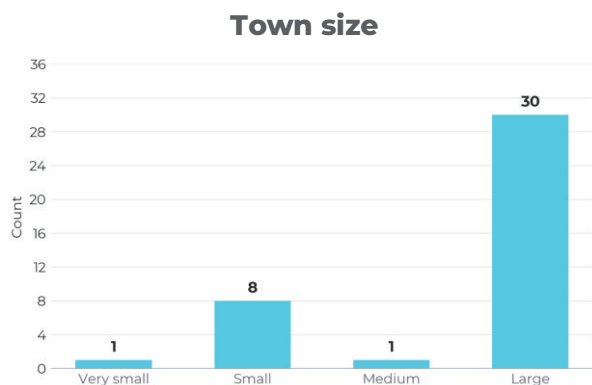


Region



Financial situation





KEY THEMES ACROSS THE SESSION

Communication and **transparency** ran through almost every outcome discussed, from wanting a breakdown of bill costs to an explanation of how Gippsland Water's debt arose and is being managed. **Affordability** was a constant undercurrent, particularly for people on limited incomes, and **education**, especially for children in schools, came up repeatedly as something participants valued and wanted extended. **Planning for the future** centred on population growth, climate change and the water needs of data centres and artificial intelligence. A number of participants wanted a genuine, ongoing say and wanted to know how their input will be used.

WHAT WE HEARD

HOPES FOR THE SESSION

Hopes clustered on how Gippsland Water will plan for the future - population growth, climate change, data centres and the water needs of artificial intelligence - while keeping bills affordable and stable. Several wanted to learn more about how water is treated from source to tap, and a smaller group wanted a genuine say in decisions and the chance to contribute practical ideas.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CUSTOMER OUTCOMES

After hearing an introduction to Gippsland Water's six customer outcomes, participants raised a mix of clarifying questions rather than settled opinions. Several focused on the future: how Gippsland Water is planning for growing demand, including from artificial intelligence and data centres, and what this means for prices out to 2050 and beyond. Others asked about fairness and affordability, including how Gippsland Water's prices compare with the rest of the state and how large, longstanding customers with legacy water arrangements are treated. A few asked about Gippsland Water's debt and whether it has improved.

WHAT MATTERS MOST, BY OUTCOME

Do your job well (8 comments): Participants see this as a baseline expectation - safe water at a reasonable price, with quick, wellcommunicated fixes. One participant questioned whether it needs to be a stated outcome at all. Other comments were about balancing quality, education and environmental care without pushing up costs, reducing Gippsland Water's debt, and water quality being inconsistent at times.

Be affordable and fair (9 comments): Affordability is seen as essential, particularly for people on limited incomes or facing costofliving pressures. Individual comments questioned the fairness of static charges for lowuse properties, noted there is no alternative provider to compare prices with, and queried paying water rates on a property not connected to water.

Be environmentally responsible (8 comments): Concerns centre on water quality impacts from logging and from farm and industrial runoff, and on how wastewater is managed and reused. One comment questioned how environmental responsibility will be measured, and noted that events such as bushfires and floods affect water quality.

Plan for the future (7 comments): Education is a recurring theme - about water conservation for future generations - alongside water quality concerns linked to population growth. Individual comments called for new industries to be mandated to capture their own rainwater, and for smart meters to monitor usage and flag leaks quickly.

Be easy to deal with (6 comments): Prompt, easy communication is seen as central, along with compassionate support for customers in financial hardship. Other comments sought flood alerts before flooding occurs and clarity on how many staff are available to take calls from customers.

Be involved (7 comments): Education is the strongest theme - where water comes from, what planning happens behind the scenes, and how to save water - with clear interest in open days and site visits. Comments also noted that younger homeowners may need more education, while older residents have lived through severe restrictions.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE, BY OUTCOME

Do your job well (19 comments): Success is framed as reliability and transparency; - a service so smooth that customers barely notice it, quick answers, no false promises, and publicised measures such as response times and firstcontact resolution rates. Comments also sought an explanation of how Gippsland Water's debt arose and is being managed, and raised water taste and chemical treatment.

Be affordable and fair (17 comments): Success is framed around transparency and comparison - understanding what it costs Gippsland Water to deliver water, seeing that breakdown published, and being able to benchmark bills against other water corporations. Support for customers in hardship features strongly, including holding prices during payment plans and more government help with bills.

Be environmentally responsible (14 comments): Success is tied to transparency about treatment and quality - what goes into the water, what affects its taste, and being told about changes - alongside visible action such as signage on wastewater recycling and tree replacement when new infrastructure goes in. Specific concerns include PFAS and microplastics, rubbish entering waterways, and native vegetation clearing leading to silt buildup.

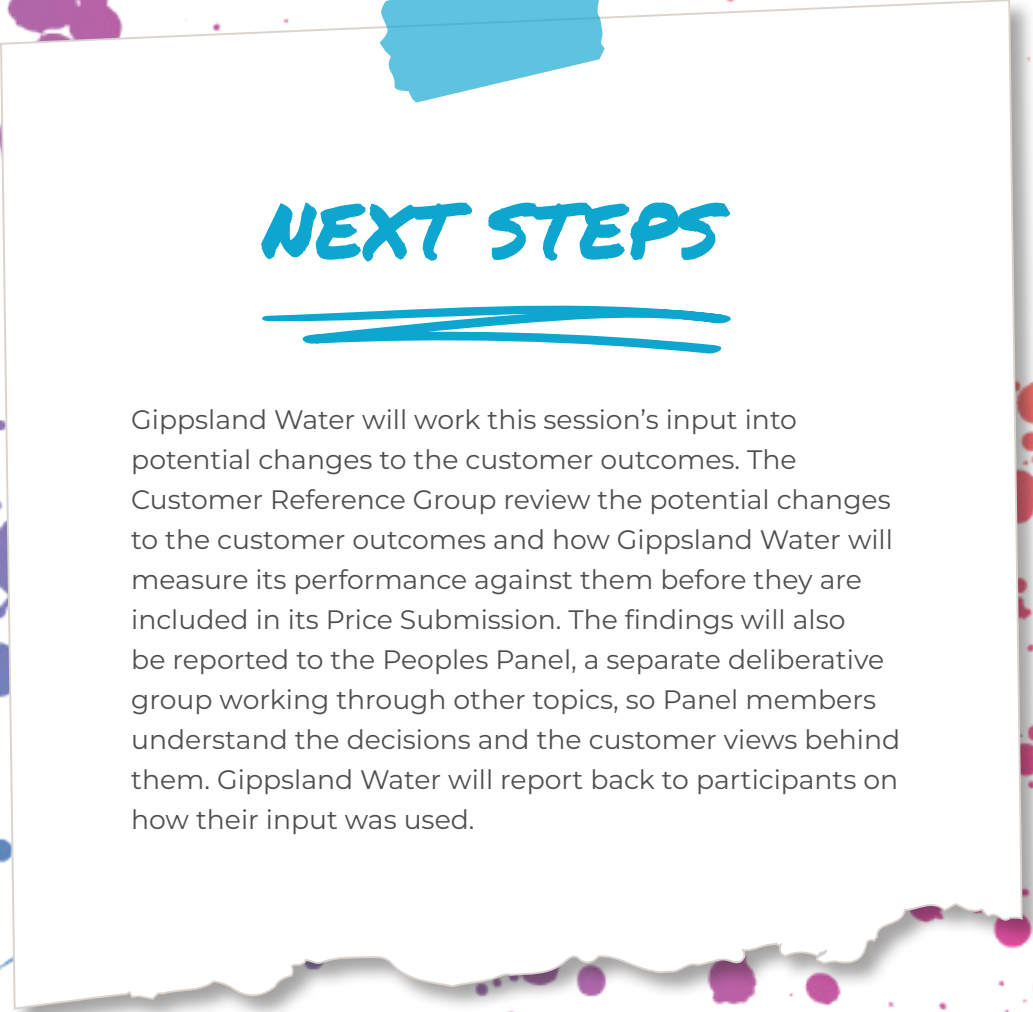
Plan for the future (15 comments): Success includes explaining how data centres will be accommodated in Gippsland in relation to water, and building resilience to population growth and drought. Comments called for early monitoring and planned upgrades, such as replacing worn pipes before they fail, along with recycled water for gardens and compulsory rainwater tanks on new builds.

Be easy to deal with (10 comments): Success is described as publishing measurable performance - issues resolved and time taken - and keeping call centres based in Australia. Comments also sought a dedicated waterquality hotline, advance alerts before major events such as floods, and greater openness and patience with customers in hardship.

Be involved (18 comments): Participants most wanted organised excursions to water treatment plants for the public and school children. Others looked for everyday signs that education is working - fewer people buying bottled water, more public drinking fountains, a presence in schools - and for more transparency on Gippsland Water's financial position and strategy.

REFLECTIONS

What participants liked centred on the format: smallgroup discussion, varied perspectives from across the region, the chance for everyone to speak, and direct access to Gippsland Water's board and leadership. Wishes focused on time and depth - more time in small groups, more indepth discussion with staff, and prereading - alongside some technical frustrations. The dominant wonder, raised by around half of respondents in this category, was how tonight's input will actually be used and whether it will lead to real change.



NEXT STEPS

Gippsland Water will work this session's input into potential changes to the customer outcomes. The Customer Reference Group review the potential changes to the customer outcomes and how Gippsland Water will measure its performance against them before they are included in its Price Submission. The findings will also be reported to the Peoples Panel, a separate deliberative group working through other topics, so Panel members understand the decisions and the customer views behind them. Gippsland Water will report back to participants on how their input was used.

PLEASE NOTE: This report has been prepared by MosaicLab on behalf of and for the exclusive use of Gippsland Water. The sole purpose of this report is to provide Gippsland Water with materials produced at the Customer Outcomes Workshop on 29 July 2026.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services set out by Gippsland Water. In preparing this report, MosaicLab has relied upon the information provided by the participants at the session.

A customised AI tool has also been used to help MosaicLab theme and summarise participant feedback and comments.

Gippsland Water can choose to share and distribute this report as they see fit. MosaicLab accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for or in respect of any use of or reliance upon this report by any third party.

MosaicLab is a Victorian-based consultancy that specialises in community and stakeholder engagement, facilitation, negotiation, strategic planning and coaching.



REPORT PREPARED BY:

mosaicLAB

www.mosaiclab.com.au



GIPPSLAND WATER SOUNDING BOARD

COMMUNITY VALUE AND PARTNERSHIP

Summary report

August 2026



ABOUT THIS SESSION

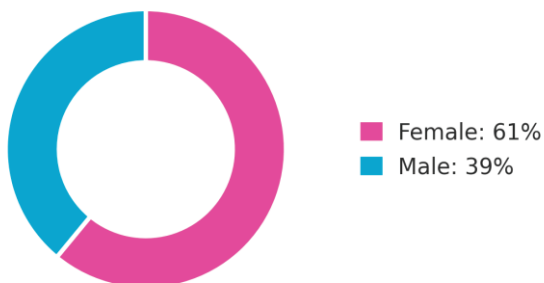
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This Sounding Board session, held online on 5 August 2026, focused on community value and partnerships. It explored where Gippsland Water directs effort and investment beyond the essentials across its community and environmental initiatives, and gathering customer guidance on getting the balance right. This report is a summary of the session; for the full record of the discussion, please refer to the *Gippsland Water Customer Sounding Board – Community Value and Partnerships – What was said report*.

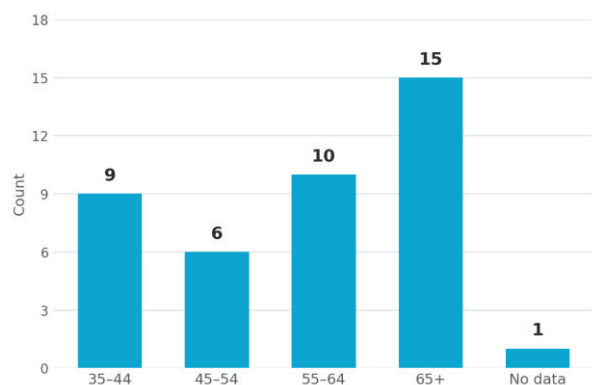
WHO TOOK PART

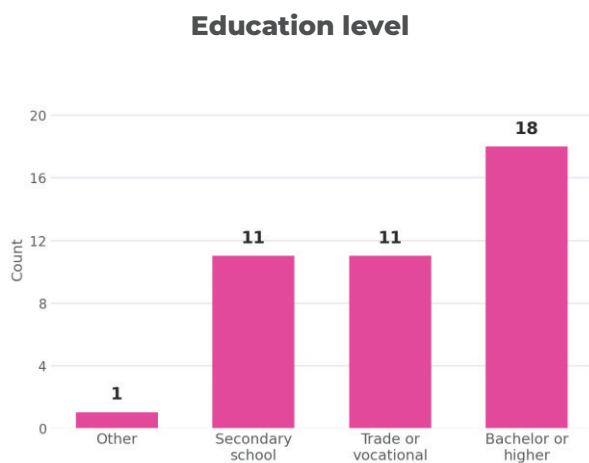
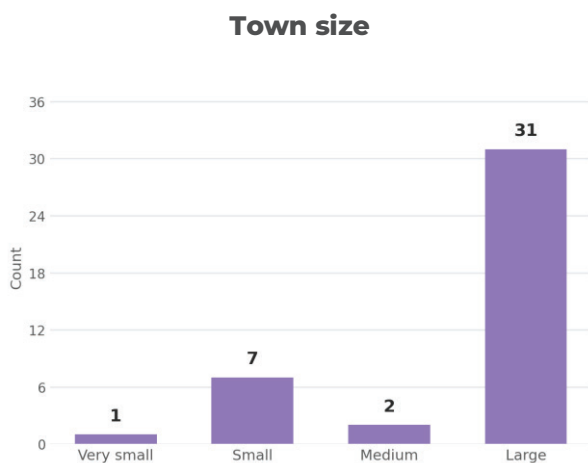
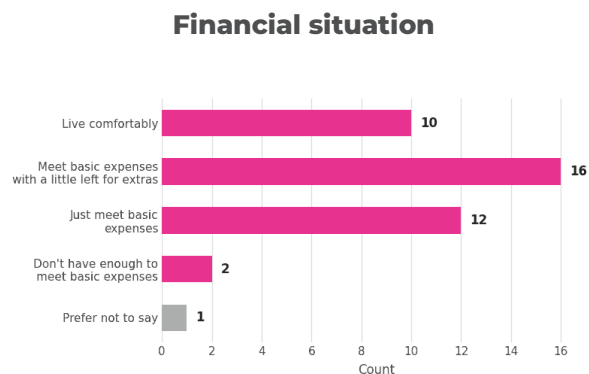
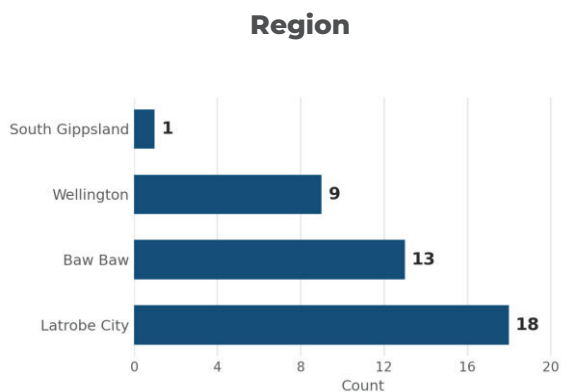
Fortyone Gippsland Water customers from across the region took part. Latrobe City had the largest share, followed by Baw Baw, Wellington and South Gippsland. Sixtyone per cent identified as female and 39 per cent as male, and the largest age group was 65 and over. Financial circumstances ranged from living comfortably to not having enough to meet basic expenses, and around threequarters lived in large towns.

Gender



Age range





KEY THEMES ACROSS THE SESSION

The **environment** generated the most comments and the **most divided views** of the evening. Participants broadly agreed on wanting Gippsland Water to keep prioritising **sustainability and waterway protection** over the long term, but there was uncertainty on how far to go and who should pay, with some keen to see more investment even at a modest cost to bills and others wanting new environmental costs minimised or deferred given Gippsland Water's existing debt and cost of living pressures. **Communication and transparency** were prominent throughout: participants want to know where community and environmental spending goes and confidence that initiatives reflect genuine values rather than compliance. **Continued community engagement** (forums like this one continuing, more visibility on social media) was a recurring wish, and education drew strong, largely positive comment across the session.

WHAT WE HEARD

EXPECTATIONS OF A WATER CORPORATION

Before hearing from Gippsland Water, participants shared what they expect from a water corporation on community value and partnerships. Transparency and honesty came up most, including being upfront about water quality issues such as PFAS and chemicals, and ensuring vulnerable customers are not cut off from water regardless of circumstance. Education, particularly in schools, and closer engagement with the community and with environmental groups were also common threads. A couple of participants referenced past Sounding Board engagement sessions, on topics such as an app and the taste of drinking water, and were curious what became of them.

QUESTIONS ABOUT COMMUNITY VALUE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Participants' questions reflected genuine surprise at the scope of Gippsland Water's existing community work; several said they hadn't realised how much was already happening and wanted to see these achievements better celebrated and promoted, including on customer bills. Common questions included how sponsorship decisions are made (whether organisations are chosen or need to apply), how Gippsland Water's community investment compares with other water authorities, and practical questions about the Community Emergency Support Program, education partnerships and public drinking fountains.

HAVE WE GOT THE BALANCE RIGHT?

Beyond its core water service, Gippsland Water already invests in three areas: the Community Emergency Support Program, education and sponsorship. In the environment, the organisation currently focuses on what regulation requires, but is considering going further, having heard through customer surveys that there is an appetite for more. To ground that part of the discussion, Gippsland Water presented three potential new environmental initiatives (recreation, environmental education and a landholder sponsorship fund) with their estimated cost. Participants then considered whether Gippsland Water has the right balance of effort and investment across all four areas, including where it should do more or less. They were broadly positive about the current initiatives, but views differed on how far to go on the environment, and on who should pay.

Environment (35 comments): Attracted the most comments and the most mixed views. Many participants questioned who should pay for new initiatives and how much, wanted proof that any extra spending delivers genuine outcomes rather than compliance or “greenwashing”, and called for stronger partnerships with farmers and Landcare to protect waterways.

Education (19 comments): Participants welcomed the schoolbased programs and want them extended to adults and older residents, with more visibility through bills and updated resources for teachers.

Community Emergency Support Program (12 comments): Drew strong support, especially for its value in remote areas, though some wanted clearer reporting on its impact and closer coordination with other emergency services.

Sponsorship (8 comments): Participants were generally supportive of the current approach but wanted clearer eligibility criteria, particularly around funding for young people and those most in need, and more visibility of which community groups receive support.

YOUR VIEW: OTHER THINGS GIPPSLAND WATER COULD BE DOING

Education and awareness (21 comments): Participants want continued and expanded education, from school programs to adult learning, delivered through videos, bills and community events.

Environmental partnerships and action (19 comments): Comments called for stronger partnerships with Landcare, farmers, universities and local government to protect waterways and reduce chemical use.

Communication, transparency and reporting (16 comments): Participants want more transparency about where money goes and what Gippsland Water is achieving, advance notice of planned works, and confidence that initiatives reflect genuine values rather than compliance or “greenwashing”.

Community engagement, events and feedback (16 comments): Many wanted more visible, ongoing engagement, through open forums, social media and regular feedback opportunities.

Sponsorship and support for community groups (4 comments): Comments called for clearer criteria for community groups requesting support.

Public amenity and water quality (3 comments): Participants raised public amenities such as water fountains and access to Moondarra dam.

Digital services and account access (3 comments): A few comments called for easier online account access.

Affordability and financial hardship (1 comment): One comment cautioned that new initiatives should wait until existing affordability pressures ease.

YOUR VIEW: WHAT SHOULD GUIDE FUTURE CONTRIBUTIONS

Community engagement, feedback and inclusivity (22 comments): The most common view was that Gippsland Water's future contributions should be guided by ongoing, genuine engagement: continuing forums like the Sounding Board, seeking feedback from a wide and diverse range of customers, and being honest, caring and trustworthy in how decisions are made.

Sustainability and environmental stewardship (20 comments): This was the next most common guide participants named, particularly wanting Gippsland Water to work in partnership with farmers or third parties to rehabilitate land and protect waterways from pesticides and PFAS, and continue building on its progress toward renewable energy.

Financial responsibility and value for money (12 comments): Spending that is evidencebased and costeffective, doesn't add unfairly to bills during a costofliving squeeze, and is reported on transparently.

Transparency, evidence and accountability (9 comments): Comments called for clear performance measures and wellconsidered, evidencebased decisions rather than shortlived initiatives.

Genuine values: honesty, care and trust (7 comments): Comments emphasised friendly, knowledgeable and trustworthy people as central to how Gippsland Water should operate.

Longterm thinking for future generations (6 comments): A longterm view that protects water resources for future generations.

Selecting the right partners (5 comments): Comments called for careful selection of partner organisations aligned with Gippsland Water's values.

Education and youth focus (5 comments): A continued focus on educating young people.



NEXT STEPS

This input will go to Gippsland Water's Customer Reference Group and Leadership Team, to help refine its Community Value and Partnerships Program for the 2028-33 price submission. Gippsland Water will report back to participants on how their input was used.



PLEASE NOTE: This report has been prepared by MosaicLab on behalf of and for the exclusive use of Gippsland Water. The sole purpose of this report is to provide Gippsland Water with materials produced at the Community Value and Partnerships Workshop on 5 August 2026.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services set out by Gippsland Water. In preparing this report, MosaicLab has relied upon the information provided by the participants at the session.

A customised AI tool has also been used to help MosaicLab theme and summarise participant feedback and comments.

Gippsland Water can choose to share and distribute this report as they see fit. MosaicLab accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for or in respect of any use of or reliance upon this report by any third party.

MosaicLab is a Victorian-based consultancy that specialises in community and stakeholder engagement, facilitation, negotiation, strategic planning and coaching.



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