

East Gippsland Water – Outcomes – 2018–2023

In this document, the water business provides a summary report of its actual performance against each of its outcome commitments for the 2019-20 reporting year. The business has given itself a “traffic light” rating (green = met target, yellow = close or largely met, red = not met) for its performance on each measure, outcome and an overall rating. The business has provided its own comments about its performance on each outcome and overall.

Summary table

Outcome	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
1. Current levels of water and sewerage services maintained	Green	Yellow			
2. Safe, high quality drinking water supplies delivered	Green	Green			
3. No increase in the average customer bill	Green	Green			
4. Supporting environmental sustainability	Yellow	Red			
5. Enhanced liveability and resilience in our region	Green	Green			
Overall	Green	Yellow			

Business comments

This is the second year we have rated ourselves against five key outcomes that our customers told us they valued most. These outcomes were determined through extensive engagement with our customers in the lead up to our 2018-23 price submission.

This year we have rated our overall performance yellow because we met three of the five outcomes. The traffic light scores for each outcome were workshopped with our Executive Team and then approved by our Customer Committee. While the majority of the outcomes were met, we have taken time to deeply understand and analyse our performance. This will allow us to put measures in place to address any deficiencies and ensure we continuously strive to meet our commitments to customers.

The 2019-20 financial year presented significant challenges for our region and our business. The summer bushfires that followed three of the region's driest years on record were devastating for local communities. The ongoing challenges associated with responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic have also compounded recovery efforts. We are proud of our response to these extreme events; particularly as our staff have been, and continue to be, personally impacted by both. Throughout the 2019-20 financial year we have prioritised the continuity of essential services and the provision of bespoke support solutions for our customers. However, we have also managed to deliver one of our largest capital investment programs in order to maintain the high levels of service our customers expect of us.

Outcome 1: Current levels of water and sewerage services maintained

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Customers experiencing no unplanned water supply interruptions each year	Percentage	Target	–	N/A	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%
		Actual	95%	93%	94%	89%			
b Average time to restore unplanned water supply interruptions	Minutes	Target	–	75	75	75	75	75	75
		Actual	92	76	72	169			
c Average time taken for sewer spills and blockages to be rectified	Minutes	Target	–	45	45	45	45	45	45
		Actual	34	33	38	32			
d Total Customer Complaints	Number	Target	–	94	94	94	94	94	94
		Actual	95	87	88	81			

e Customers receiving bills by email	Percentage	Target	–	N/A	12%	13%	14%	16%	18%
		Actual	7%	9%	17%	23%			
f Percentage of customers aware of our financial assistance program (via survey)	Percentage	Target	–	N/A	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
		Actual	N/A	57%	63%	64%			

Overall outcome 1 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

We committed to maintaining current levels of service and have rated our performance for this outcome as yellow, with the majority of our targets achieved.

Outputs 1a and 1b were impacted by three significant unplanned events that were challenging to resolve and impacted a large number of customers.

In 2019-20 staff across the business continued to work towards a step-change in our systems to allow us to better manage our assets into the future. This is driven by the need to ensure we maintain current levels of service and realise the best value from our assets for our customers.

We continue to actively promote e-bills and our financial assistance program to customers through our quarterly bill inserts and via a monthly public information page in our local papers. Customer complaints are actively monitored and where possible they are investigated to ensure they do not re-occur in the future. We are pleased with our improved progress against these targets during a particularly challenging year.

Outcome 2: Safe, high quality drinking water supplies delivered

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Number of Safe Drinking Water Act non-compliances (water sampling and audit)	Number	Target	–	N/A	0	0	0	0	0
		Actual	0	0	0	0			
b Number of water quality complaints	Number / 1000 customers	Target	–	NA	≤3	≤3	≤3	≤3	≤3
		Actual	3	2.1	2.4	2.7			

Overall outcome 2 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

We rated our overall performance for Outcome 2 as green because we achieved all targets. The quality of our drinking water consistently performs well against the 2015 Safe Drinking Water Regulations, with all drinking water supplied to our customers fully compliant during 2019-20. Regulatory audits are undertaken by certified auditors appointed by the Department of Health and Human Services. The next audit is scheduled to be completed during the 2020-21 financial year.

Notably, in the 2019-20 financial year significant progress was made towards the construction of a 36ML concrete tank at Wy Yung that will help ensure safe drinking water to 24,000 of our customers into the future.

Some other projects to improve water quality completed in 2019-20 include:

- Commissioning of a pre-treatment system at Woodglen water treatment plant to reduce the risk of taste and odour from algal contamination, should this arise in the future.
- Installation of pre-treatment units (lamella clarifiers) at a number of water treatment plants to manage high turbidity levels (murky water) within catchments post-bushfires.
- Installation of turbidity meters at river offtakes to improve the ability to harvest when water quality is good.

During the summer bushfires, Boil Water or Do Not Drink Tap Water notices were issued for our Omeo, Buchan and Mallacoota water supply networks. These notices were issued in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services with the intent to ensure that there was as much continued flow of water into communities as possible during times of extremely high water usage.

Outcome 3: No increase in the average customer bill

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Average annual residential customer bill (based on 146 kilolitres usage per annum and CPI 1.9%)	Dollars (\$)	Target	–	N/A	1,184	1,207	1235	1263	1292
		Actual	1,189	1,195	1,184	1,207			

Overall outcome 3 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

In the 2018-23 price submission we committed to maintaining current levels of service, with no increase in the average customer bill except for inflation.

In response to the summer bushfires, we waived all charges for properties that were destroyed by fire for a period of 12 months. A \$50 rebate was also applied to the accounts of all customers directly impacted by the bushfires.

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we have committed to maintaining tariffs without applying consumer price index for a period of six months from July 2020. Increases in tariffs, approved by the Essential Services Commission, will therefore apply from the 1st January 2021 instead of 1st July 2020.

Outcome 4: Supporting environmental sustainability

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Value of grants issued under our Native Vegetation Fund	Dollars (\$)	Target	–	NA	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$90,000
		Actual	N/A	N/A	\$65,583	\$60,429			
b CO ₂ emission targets en-route to our pledge of ≤6,496 tonnes by 1/7/2025	CO ₂ e tonnes	Target	–	NA	8,405	8,315	8,240	7,900	6,870
		Actual	8,557	8,348	8,872	8,335			

Overall outcome 4 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

Supporting environmental sustainability is important to us and our Customer Committee. Our Customer Committee work conscientiously throughout the year to assess and issue grants through our Native Vegetation Fund. Output 4a has been assessed based on the value of invoices processed against our native vegetation grant budget during the reporting period. We invoiced \$60,429 in the 2019-20 financial year however the Customer Committee have approved \$234,300 worth of projects during the same period. We are expecting the value invoiced each year to fluctuate, but we are committed to spending \$450,000 in total across the five years on native vegetation grants.

Our whole of business CO₂-e emissions for 2019-20 was slightly over target and has been rated as red. The year's performance is difficult to compare to other years, due to significant variations as a result of the summer bushfires and reduced tourism as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Three new solar systems totalling approximately 30kW were commissioned at various East Gippsland Water facilities - including Buchan, Bemm River and Swifts Creek water treatment plants. These additional systems mean we now have 224kW of solar systems installed. Taking into consideration the combined heat and power unit at our Bairnsdale wastewater treatment plant, we are now generating approximately five per cent of our overall energy needs through behind-the-meter renewable energy initiatives.

Significant progress was also made towards reducing infiltration into our sewer networks through our relining program (leading to less intensive treatment and pumping needs).

Outcome 5: Enhanced liveability and resilience in our region

Output	Unit		16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
a Drinking fountains installed per annum	Number	Target	–	N/A	3	3	3	3	3
		Actual	3	1	2	3			
b Value of bill rebates provided to not-for-profit recreation groups	Dollars (\$)	Target	–	N/A	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
		Actual	NA	0	\$6,985	\$5,960			
c Moderate water restrictions (stages 1 and 2) will occur no more than one in 10 year frequency	Pass/Fail	Target	–	N/A	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
		Actual	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass			
d Severe water restrictions (stages 3 and 4) will occur no more than one in 15 year frequency	Pass/Fail	Target	–	N/A	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
		Actual	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass			

Overall outcome 5 performance for the regulatory period so far:



Business comment

We rated our overall performance for Outcome 5 as green because we achieved the majority of our outcomes.

Output 5a was rated as yellow as we met the financial year target, but still remain behind our cumulative target of six drinking fountains installed by June 30 2020.

Bill rebates were provided to all eligible outdoor, community run, not-for-profit recreation groups, which totalled \$5,960 for the reporting period. Despite not meeting the \$6,000 target, Output 5b was rated green because the target was only narrowly missed and reflective of reduced water usage over the period by the groups.

Our performance against Outputs 5c and 5d is measured as the average frequency of water restrictions in each of our nine supply systems over a long term period. Due to the region experiencing three of the driest years on record, our Mitchell and Buchan water supply systems both experienced Stage 2 water restrictions during 2019-20, but the result remains within the target occurrences. We reviewed our water restriction trigger levels and engaged with customers prior to implementing water restrictions over the summer. We were able to determine that most customers agreed that townships should be on water restrictions if local farmers were unable to pump from the river. Customers also wanted restrictions to be implemented early and gradually. We were responsive to our customers' views and adapted our water restriction trigger levels accordingly.