

Water price review 2023

Submission received through Engage Victoria

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Water business: South Gippsland Water

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In December 2022, we began accepting submissions on our 2023 water price review draft decisions via Engage Victoria (www.engage.vic.gov.au). On this website, people were given the option to send us general feedback or respond to questions we provided.

1. What do you think of our draft decision on the prices proposed by your water business?

Overall, i am pleased with the recent 'ESC South Gippsland Water draft decision Water Price Review 30 March 2023' , and very pleased with SGW's engagement with community and the SGW submissions (using our CAG input) . I am pleased i have been involved in several SGW submissions. I can see how State and (perhaps national) legislation and processes enforces all 'town water / wastewater bodies' (public water businesses) , and the ESC, to be very transparent about exactly where/why money is spent - indeed the pricing process continues to reveal to me and my CAG, great detail regards SGW whole structure / projects / forward planning of dealing with complex needs of our low customer base /large land area situation .

2. What do you think of our draft decision on the business performance and their future service commitments?

Regards - future service commitments: I have observed over two decades , South Gippsland Water's accelerating practical and planning work on environmental sustainability , yet the business model is clearly failing (increasingly burdensome borrowings and increasingly strained water supply / wastewater approach) - since we have too much ageing pipes across a large

geography. For yet another pricing period , legislation governing forward period pricing seems to not have enough requirements (and funding methods) for existing public water bodies (like our SGW) to fully and systematically work with homes, farms, etc in each locality , so that our homes, farms, etc can : 1. Take financial and water resources pressure off the ageing SGW network, 2. Be more locally independent/sustainable in water supply / wastewater (= partial self-supply/self re-use). In other words South Gippsland as an area , (like most of Victoria / Australia) will need our local statutory water businesses - SGW and Westernport water - to work much more closely (partnership, share data , share expertise, etc) on 'point of use' water matters to achieve a clearer direction of sustainable water use / minimise wastewater and so on. Research shows that our public water business South Gippsland Water , not just city ones with more profitable models , need to actively and systematically support localised uses of roof rainwater, of stormwater, reuse non-toilet grey-water, low/no water toilets, and so on - so that the overall longer term pressure on SGW supply and treatment is lessened. This lessening of pressure on existing public water businesses, like SGW , has been constantly pointed to, by researchers on natural resource sustainability (and business / economics sustainability) , yet it appears very lost in these periodic pricing submissions I have been part of for many years. I hope the ESC , SGW and all the water bodies as a group , can find time to address this critical need/gap. Thanks Mr Dominic G K Gilligan , Inverloch. PS My Inverloch family (and many in our Bass Coast/Boonwurrung local communities) have practiced taking as much pressure off town water/wastewater systems for decades (not using resoures from SGW so far) . Hopefully SGW can be gently pressured (or legislated) to do annual tours of places like ours (Inverloch and 'water allies' in this area) to see first hand how its own customers are reducing pressures on aging/strained South Gippsland town water/wastewater networks . SGW has been giving us tours , insights on its operations, that's great , but it is time to have reciprocation, with the much needed backing of the ESC / State laws.

3. Is there anything else we should consider before we make a final price review decision?

See above re "future service commitments?"