
Drink to Your Health – pipes, processing and potable water

Water supply is an essential service; essential for health, environment, economy and development.

South Gippsland Water supplies approximately 4,590ML of potable water per year to 21,570 customers across 21 towns.

South Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Philippe du Plessis explained, "we take water quality seriously; the journey from catchment to tap, from raw untreated water to high quality drinking water, is complex and involves strict regulation to ensure health and secure supply."

With a catchment area totaling 1,234km², South Gippsland Water's reservoirs and river systems supply eight water treatment plants with raw water from the environment. The quality of raw water entering its reservoirs is greatly influenced by weather conditions, volume of run-off, and the activities on private land in the surrounding catchment.

This open catchment system, combined with variables such as reservoir water temperature and water levels, produce conditions that require raw water to be treated for human consumption.

"To ensure drinking water always meets state and national regulations, our water quality and operations staff routinely test and monitor all South Gippsland Water supplies," confirmed Mr du Plessis. "This enables us to adjust the treatment and processing of raw water to meet the changing conditions that can be encountered on a daily basis."

Across the region, South Gippsland Water has 772km of water mains, with sections of pipe and infrastructure ranging from brand new to century-old.

"Key to ensuring a secure water supply is our investment in a sustainable maintenance, renewal and preventative care program," added Mr du Plessis.

"Currently, 100 year-old water mains pipe is being replaced in both Leongatha and Wonthaggi, and each year some systems and sections of pipe are given a thorough clean. Late last year the Agnes River Water Supply System's network of pipes, servicing Toora, Welshpool, Port Welshpool, Barry Beach, Hedley, Port Franklin and Bennison, was the focus."

A program of progressively air scouring and flushing each water supply system to remove mineral and sediment build-up is important and, increasingly, South Gippsland Water is taking advantage of new technologies and processes to assist with effectiveness and cost-efficiencies.

"At the moment contractors Veolia Aquadiag will be performing detailed water quality assessments across Leongatha, Koonwarra, Wonthaggi, Inverloch and Cape Paterson to evaluate network cleanliness," said Mr du Plessis.

"This will assist us in targeting our maintenance programs to ensure minimal disruption to customers as we deliver on their expectations of reliable access to high quality, safe drinking water."



Specialist contractors hook equipment up to the water main to sample and test water quality and cleanliness of pipes. Using this data, South Gippsland Water will plan maintenance and cleaning programs.



Mains flushing and air scouring is conducted regularly to keep pipes clean.

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