

Future Facilities for Growth and Service

SUMMARY

- **Preparing for the next 25 years**

South Gippsland Water is looking to the future when it comes to business operations, customer service and workplace suitability; a focus on best serving customers, community and the corporation over the coming 25 years.

- **Current facilities**

South Gippsland Water's current accommodation is a legacy of the amalgamation of a number of smaller authorities in 1995. South Gippsland Water operates out of many work spaces and depots across the region that are ageing and not ideal for new technologies, efficient work practices, workplace safety, and a productive and flexible workforce.

Significant investment is required to repair and renovate existing infrastructure across the region. This realisation triggered a thorough review of the location, configuration and number of existing facilities and the current situation has been deemed inefficient and, in some cases, presents safety issues.

- **Review process**

With a view to best serving the region's townships over the long-term, the review process takes into account existing and future options relating to workplace practices, travel times for current and future employees, as well as serving customers, and location of infrastructure.

It is important for South Gippsland Water to carefully investigate all options when it comes to space, location, building standards, logistics, health and safety regulations, and productivity.

South Gippsland Water's commitment is to ensure any options under consideration are based on sound data and cost/benefit analysis and consider future regional growth trends and best business outcomes for the long-term.

- **Informed decisions**

It is anticipated that studies commissioned by South Gippsland Water will provide a sound basis for decision making and will guide the direction toward a preferred set up and locality for the Corporation's offices and depots.

Any potential change needs to generate efficiencies over the long-term. Impacts on current staff, businesses and local communities are also being assessed to ensure any future changes are well founded and supported.

The principle of centralised facilities for the majority of SGW employees, with supporting depots, continues to underpin current work. No changes are currently proposed to water and wastewater treatment plants.

- **Project timeline**

Reports associated with the review process are due for completion during May/June 2019. The final site location is expected to be identified by the end of June 2019. Once site location is confirmed, it is estimated consolidation and relocation to a new facility will occur within a two-year period.

- **Project Progress**

Staff, customers, communities and stakeholders will be kept informed as the project progresses.

Frequently Asked Questions

LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT FACILITIES

1. Why does South Gippsland Water need new facilities?

- Current accommodation is a legacy of the creation of South Gippsland Water through the amalgamation of smaller authorities in 1995 and, as such, is dispersed across multiple sites.
- Existing facilities do not provide the accommodation necessary to support a contemporary highly productive workforce.
- The facilities are generally of a poor standard with maintenance that has been deferred and risks that have been accumulating for a number of years.

2. Why can't things stay as they are?

- The repair of existing infrastructure (across multiple sites) will require significant investment.
- 72% of South Gippsland Water customers are in the western part of the region (Wonthaggi, Inverloch, Korumburra and Leongatha).
- Work activity analysis shows the average works location within the region during the 2018 period was between Leongatha and Inverloch.
- To best serve staff, customers, community and business obligations over the coming 25 years, South Gippsland Water must consider its options regarding facilities, including potential for new centralised facilities for the majority of employees closer to where the majority of the corporation's customer-related work occurs.

REVIEW AND EXPLORING OPTIONS

3. How are location decisions being made?

- Currently, an independent property advisory consultant, Charter Keck Cramer, is analysing the long-term facilities options available to South Gippsland Water for both the centralised facility and satellite depots.
- Decisions regarding the structure and location of South Gippsland Water's facilities will be based on a sound understanding of the business. This includes future customer service needs, a range of data from solid sources, cost/benefit analysis and considers future regional growth trends and best business outcomes for the long-term.

4. Why can't we just keep/renovate/expand the Foster offices and existing depots?

- Renovations required to upgrade existing buildings would be substantial and expensive and would be very disruptive to day to day business functions.
- The Foster offices would require permits that include structural improvements to bring the building up to contemporary building, safety and accessibility standards.

- The works required for Foster, and many of the other smaller office spaces scattered around the region, would require at a minimum: hallway and doorway widening; larger and more accessible toilet facilities; the updating of electricals, roofing, ceilings, windows, parking, and entry/exit paths. Buildings such as Foster and Wonthaggi would need to be completely gutted to leave a shell before renovations could start.
- Renovations would be extremely invasive and ensuring business continues efficiently and effectively during the works period would be unfeasible.

INFORMED DECISIONS

5. What will new facilities be like?

- The vision is of safe, accessible, and uplifting contemporary workspaces, fit-for-purpose for a multitude of teams and functions across all parts of the organisation. Spaces will enable both private and group work, and flexible design to accommodate staff across varied roles and space requirements including field-based staff.
- The process will include an all-staff consultation process, which will then inform the final workspace design.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

6. When can we expect a site announcement for the centralised facility and depot locations?

- Recommendations from Charter Keck Cramer (property advisory consultant) are due to South Gippsland Water during May 2019.
- An announcement regarding the location of South Gippsland Water's centralised facility may be influenced by negotiations that stem from whether land is owned by the Corporation or requires purchasing.
- Final depot locations will become available with the announcement of the final centralised facility location.
- As soon as definitive information emerges, South Gippsland Water will keep you updated. It is estimated this will be by the end of the 2018/19 financial year.

7. What is the timeframe for moving to a new location for those staff who will be required to work from the centralised facility or a depot site?

- If a final site location has been identified and secured by the end of this financial year, estimates are that South Gippsland Water would relocate and consolidate into a new facility within a two-year period.
- There are many variables that could affect this timeframe, but it is quite conservative and does include some allocated delay time.
- Decommissioning of redundant offices and depots will occur over the twelve months following the move into a new facility.