

Repairs to Tower Before Crowning Glory

In February South Gippsland Water will begin works to give Yarram's water tower a facelift. 'This year marks the tower's 60th year of service, officially opened in 1963. The water tower has long been a local landmark but is starting to show its age with wear and tear on the concrete façade.

After 60 years of dedicated service, South Gippsland Water will repair the concrete façade ensuring the tower is well prepped to receive her crowning glory, for Yarram's Friends of Heesco Town (FoHT) to paint the town's 25th Heesco mural.

With the mural painting project gaining momentum last year, South Gippsland Water has engaged contractors Universal Blasting to undertake repairs and maintenance of the tower.

South Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Robert Murphy said, "These works are a necessity regardless of the mural project; however, we are looking to time our repairs so that mural painting can follow straight after. So, whilst funding of the mural is being done by Friends of Heesco Town, South Gippsland Water is providing in-kind support and ensuring the tower is in good condition to receive a new paint job."

South Gippsland Water hope to commence the tower repairs by late February which will involve pressure washing the tower and removal of any loose or degraded concrete, concrete repair and then painting the tower with an acrylic weather protectant coating. These works are integral for the on-going safe operation and structural integrity of the tower.



Figure 1 Artists Impression Water Tower Mural

In 2018 South Gippsland Water's management gave in-principal support for a mural to be painted on the Yarram Water Tower. One stipulation from South Gippsland Water was that the local Traditional Owners, the Gunaikurnai be given the opportunity to input into the mural process.

Robert Murphy went onto say, "We are pleased to see this mural coming to fruition following much dedicated work by the Friends of Heesco Town. The involvement of talented artists Heesco Khosnaran, Wayne Tindall and Traditional Owner and Gunaikurnai Elder Sandra Patten has been a wonderful collaboration and the striking design will be an excellent addition to the tower and the Yarram skyline".

Recently the Friends of Heesco Town have released the final approved mural designs. The tower will showcase 2 separate designs, with both being painted by Heesco:

Top water tank: Design by Heesco and Wayne Tindall

This design features local flora and fauna and showcases some of the region's top tourist destinations including Agnes Falls, the Tarra Valley National Park suspension bridge and Port Welshpool Long Jetty.



Tower column: Design by Sandra Patten and Wayne Tindall

It features the 5 shields of the Gunaikurnai clans and representation of country, water, food, shelter and tracks in the various elements. The 'sea of hands' are welcoming and symbolic of reconciliation.



Robert Murphy said, “South Gippsland Water needs to undertake repairs of the tower’s concrete, regardless of the mural project. However, South Gippsland Water, our repair contractor Universal Blasting and the Friends of Heesco Town have all been working together to help facilitate the mural. With Universal Blasting and South Gippsland Water offering thousands of dollars of in-kind support”. South Gippsland Water hope to commence the tower repairs in February, immediately following, the mural painting process will begin and is anticipated will take approximately 3 weeks.

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