2023-24 Corporate Plan 2023 to 2028



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Acknowledgement of Country

South Gippsland Water proudly acknowledges Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and the local Traditional Owners, Gunaikurnai and Bunurong, as the original custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

We pay our deepest respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the continued cultural, social and spiritual connections that Aboriginal people have with the lands and waters and recognise and value that the Traditional Owner groups have cared for and protected them for thousands of generations.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we remain committed to working in partnership with local Traditional Owners to ensure their ongoing contribution to the future of the water management landscape while maintaining their cultural and spiritual connections.



This artwork is proudly featured on our Yarram Water Tower. Design: Sandra Patten, Gunaikurnai Elder

1. Message from the Chair and Managing Director

South Gippsland Water is an essential services provider focused on meeting the needs of our customers and communities. This Corporate Plan reflects our priorities, key initiatives, and financial forecasts. It demonstrates our commitment to realising our future vision and aligns to the seven key priority areas in the Minister for Water's *Letter of Expectations* for 2023-24.

A new Managing Director and executive leadership team, with the support of the Board, has brought a revised focus on the key business drivers to deliver our programs for a more efficient and streamlined business.

We are embarking on an organisational transformation program. The organisational shift will be a significant step-change to deliver on the efficiencies committed in our 2023 Price Submission. Three areas of our operations are the focus of this exciting initiative and reinforce our priority projects:

- our people
- our processes and systems
- our facilities.

As we continue to review and revitalise our processes and systems, we will build on the foundations of the organisation and strengthen our core compliance requirements. This will enable us to continue to build resilient and liveable communities.

Our capital investment continues with the programs identified in the 2023 Price Submission to provide long term reliable services and protect the environment in our operations. This Corporate Plan includes several programs and major projects targeted at our high-risk systems in order to progressively reduce risk. A major trade waste asset will be renewed, which will serve our largest customers who are significant regional employers.

Our staff remain committed to demonstrating our Behaviours for Growth and Our Stand on Safety. We are proud and appreciative of the commitment and loyalty shown by staff across the organisation, who understand our customers and prioritise their needs. Our staff are dedicated to deliver exceptional quality services to our customers and the broader community.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the executive team we are pleased to present South Gippsland Water's 2023–24 Corporate Plan.

Philip Clark Chair Robert Murphy

Managing Director

"Contributing to thriving communities and a healthy environment"

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2. South Gippsland Water

The South Gippsland region is located in south-eastern Victoria and comprises of low rolling green hills descending to picturesque coastal areas and townships. The region has two internationally recognised national parks – Tarra-Bulga National Park and Wilsons Promontory National Park – and is a popular tourist destination.

Servicing 21 townships, South Gippsland Water operates eight separate water systems and 11 wastewater treatment plants. Our customers consist of large and small rural industries and a range of farming and horticultural enterprises as well as their associated processing plants.

As a regional service provider, we support our region and customers by providing reliable, environmentally sustainable water and wastewater services with the aim of enabling strong, resilient communities.

The 2023–24 Corporate Plan will be delivering on our first-year 2023 Price Submission commitments. The new regulatory period has provided opportunity to reflect and refresh our commitments to our customers.

Our Vision

Our customers value the services and outstanding experiences proudly delivered by our capable teams.

Our Purpose

We provide sustainable water services that are essential to the prosperity and wellbeing of our communities and natural environments



Community Advisory Committee Tour Tour of Lance Creek Reservoir March 2023

3. Our Services

Our service area covers some 4,000 square kilometres and includes \$442 million of infrastructure. Our operations provided:

Water supply

Connected water customer properties

Residential	18,700
Non-residential	3,100
Annual volume of drinking water supplied	6,000 ML

Wastewater services

Connected wastewater customer properties

Residential	17,300
Non-residential	2,000
Wastewater collected	4,600 ML

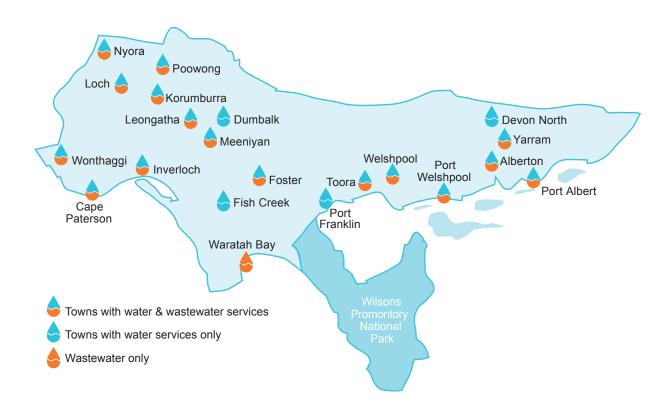


Figure 1. South Gippsland Water region services

[&]quot;Contributing to thriving communities and a healthy environment"

4. Our Customer Focus

We place customers at the centre of our business. Our plans are derived from the areas our customers value most. These customer priorities remain consistent and fall into five areas of focus: safe, clean drinking water, reliable services, wastewater management, a healthy environment and acting with integrity to provide value-for-money.

Delivering on our 2023 Price Submission

	Customer Outcome	Our commitment		
	Water Provide safe, clean drinking water	 Continue to renew and update our water delivery systems across the region Invest to renew aging water treatment plants with a focus on water taste and odour Invest in initiatives to provide long-term water security Continue scheduled maintenance programs for our pipes to prevent discolouration 		
%	Reliability We will plan for the future, be reliable and minimise unplanned interruptions to services	 Continue our infrastructure renewals program for wastewater and water reticulation systems Implement programs for water security Continue to build maturity in our ICT SCADA program Review performance and adapt as required to continue to provide reliable services 		
	Wastewater Provide a safe wastewater service that contributes to the liveability of our communities	 Cater for growth areas and continue our sewer systems upgrade and renewal program Undertake preventative maintenance programs to reduce wastewater blockages and spills to ensure compliance Upgrade wastewater treatment plants and assets 		
	Environment Be environmentally sustainable and adapt to a future impacted by climate variability	Implement our Carbon Neutrality Roadmap Work with industry partners on emissions reduction and environmental programs Promote water efficiency across the region Actively participate in water re-use programs Assist customers to save water through our Community Rebate Scheme		
(Tight)	Integrity We will act with honesty, respect and strive to balance affordability, value-for- money and fairness	Extend our support policy and programs to support residential and non-residential customers Increase proactive engagement with community support agencies Introduction of a new Water Quality Guaranteed Service Level Introduction of a new SMS communication process		

In line with commitments made in our 2023 Price Submission, new regulatory requirements and significant engagement with customers experiencing hardship and vulnerability, we will continue to strengthen our customer supports. We will extend access to our Customer Support Program to small business customers as well as implementing new support programs. Additional methods of communicating with our customers (when something goes wrong) are now in place along with a new Water Quality Guaranteed Service Level – Community Grant. The framework for this grant has been tested by awarding \$10,000 worth of grants to the Inverloch community in 2023.

We remain committed to providing value-for-money to our customers and have prioritised activities and programs based on customer outcomes. We use an adaptive planning approach to maximise the use of existing infrastructure to avoid or defer capital investment. Additionally, we implement business transformation goals to improve the efficiency of our business.

5. Our Transformation Goals

To deliver the efficiencies recognised in our 2023 Price Submission, we are embarking on an organisational transformation program.

We are reviewing our operations in three key areas:

- our people
- our processes and systems
- our facilities.

We are investing to transform South Gippsland Water to a more efficient and streamlined organisation, providing a better experience for our staff, stakeholders and customers and to reduce future costs. This investment will enable improvements in customer experience and value, ensuring we can continue to keep our focus on the value we provide to our customers and communities. This will be achieved by growing our customer and community mindset, and investing in our assets that continue to build our connection to our customers, communities and country.

Our people will be supported to thrive and grow, roles and responsibilities will be more clearly defined, and our safety culture will continue to drive the way we work.

Our processes and systems will be streamlined and automated where appropriate. Our people will have access to the right data to enable us to act swiftly and efficiently, which means we can continue to deliver quality services.

Our facilities will be revitalised, providing safe and enjoyable places for our people to work and our community and customers to visit.

A transformation office is being established to oversee and deliver both long-term strategic transformation initiatives and high impact, quick solutions. Some of the key initiatives for focus in 2023–24 include:

- billing and customer service system
- business process reviews
- improving our data and reporting capabilities
- completing our facilities masterplan and delivering minor upgrade works at some of our facilities
- an organisational design review to deliver the South Gippsland Water Vision and Strategy for 2024 and beyond
- a culture and capability assessment and development plan.



Water Main Renewal - Pioneer Street Foster

6. Our Commitments 2023-24

Our Future Vision

South Gippsland Water's core focus is providing quality services to our customers. Our strategic objectives and future vision are aligned with seven key focus areas recognised in the *Water for Victoria* priorities and the Minister for Water's Letter of Expectations. These are detailed below, and explored further in section seven, Our Business Planning Framework.

1	Climate Change and Energy				
2	Customer and Community Outcomes				
3	Deliver Water for Aboriginal cultural, spiritual and economic values				
4	Recognising Recreational Values				
5	Resilient and Liveable Cities and Towns				
6	Leadership, Diversity and Culture				
7	Performance and Financial Sustainability				

Figure 2. SGW core focus areas 2023-24



Community Advisory Committee Tour Lance Creek Solar Installation March 2023

7. Our Business Plan Framework

The business plan sets our priorities, promise and focus for South Gippsland Water for 2023–24.

It has been developed through our new and evolving business planning framework that considers our strategic priorities, our outcomes, our enablers and our risks.

The success of our newly developed business planning framework is underpinned by connection and collaboration. The collaborative process commenced with South Gippsland Water's Board of Directors, our new Executive team and senior leaders. It began with a workshop to identify our strategic objectives and risks for the 2023–24 period and beyond.

The business plan responds to our commitments and obligations in the 2023 Price Submission, including a key business transformation program of works to close our revenue gap and realise our 1.4% efficiency target, as described in Our Transformation Goals (Part 5).

Priorities and actions

The priorities and actions set out in this plan have been developed to achieve outcomes that will have the highest impact.

They include:

- strategic response to our customers
- our community
- resilience and liveability
- the changing climate
- improving our relationship with Traditional Owners
- financial sustainability
- enhancing organisational capability.

The priorities and actions have been considered to ensure we achieve:

- well defined and clear deliverables
- compliance with our obligations to our customers and stakeholders
- executive leadership responsibility for each area
- organisational capability and funding to deliver the priority
- clear goals and measures for tracking performance.



New Drinking Fountain Koonwarra



Figure 3. 2023-24 Business planning process

Priority projects to achieve our strategic objectives and alignment with the Letter of Expectations are demonstrated over the following pages.

Outcome: Climate change and energy

Undertake activities and provide services that reduce exposure to climate risks, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase renewable energy use, adapt to climate change, and demonstrate reasonable progress in integrating climate change adaptation into planning and decision making across the business.

Our priority areas in minimising impacts to the environment:

- We will continue our considerable focus on the environment, with projects to deliver our target to source 100% renewable electricity by 2025 and net zero emissions by 2035.
- We will protect the environment in our operations by producing a General Environmental Duty gap analysis and action plan and by improving our SCADA communications.

Priority	Actions		
Protect the environment in our operations	 Produce GED Gap Analysis and Action Plan to close the gaps Ensure appropriate risk management is in place for biosolid storage and management. 		
Net Zero Emissions	Implement Year 1 actions of the Net Zero Emission plan		
Improve resilience of our water and wastewater technology systems	 We will improve the resilience of SCADA communications, and plan and implement further power supply resilience across our water and wastewater systems. Plan for water supply upgrades for the Lance Creek and Ruby Creek systems 		

Outcome: Customer and community outcomes

Ensure that all aspects of service delivery will be customer and community-centred and will continue to build extensive and effective community engagement and partnerships in planning and implementation of service delivery.

We will continue to progress the customer commitments identified in our 2023 Customer Outcomes, including strengthening our customer support programs. With a higher-risk focus on supporting our two major customers, we will complete trade waste agreements. These agreements are critical to secure funding for the renewal and upgrade of the Venus Bay Outfall (VBO).

The VBO is a dedicated saline-waste pipeline supporting the dairy industry in South Gippsland, and our two largest customers. Upgrade of the Venus Bay Outfall is programmed to commence in 2024–25.

Priority	Actions
Communication and stakeholder engagement	We will strengthen our public programs with a focus on opportunities for open days, supporting community events with our water fountain, sponsorships and school visits.
Supporting our major customers	We will secure our major customers' trade waste agreements to guarantee business certainty for our trade waste customers and South Gippsland Water.

Outcome: Deliver water for Aboriginal cultural, spiritual, and economic values

Promote self-determination of Traditional Owners, including by supporting the Treaty process as required. Support the implementation of Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap by enabling increased access to water entitlements under current frameworks and increased cultural benefits from the way we store, deliver, and use water.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we remain committed to working in partnership with local Traditional Owners to ensure their ongoing contribution to the future of the water management landscape while maintaining cultural and spiritual connections. We have commitments to improve our relationships with the two Traditional Owner groups, the Gunaikurnai and Bunurong peoples, as the original custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

Priority	Actions		
Improving our relationships with Traditional owners	Develop a Reconciliation Action PlanDevelop a Memorandum of Understanding with Bunurong		



A commemorative service to honour Tunnerminnerwait and Maulboyhenner with Bass Coast Reconciliation Network



SGW Managing Director Robert Murphy and Strategic Communication Coordinator, Amy Van Kuyk meet with grant recipients from Disabled Surfers Association Bass Coast



Our community water trailer supported the Meeniyan Garlic Festival 2023

Outcome: Resilient and liveable cities and towns

Contribute to healthy communities by supporting safe, affordable, high-quality services and resilient, liveable environments, and recovery from emergency events that builds back with improved resilience against future risks.

Three priorities guide our commitment to support resilient and liveable townships. These are: protecting the environment in our operations, providing services to support the communities, and building our circular economy maturity.

Priority	Actions		
Protect the environment in our operations	Invest in reducing and investigating inflow and infiltration to protect the environment, prolong the life of our assets and reduce containment issues		
	 Progress the Wonthaggi Wastewater Treatment Plant major upgrade, planned for the late 2020's, by progressing environment studies, investigating re-use and resource recovery opportunities, and engagement with our community and stakeholders 		
	Upgrade sewers and pump stations in Korumburra and Wonthaggi to assist in reducing infiltration and ensure a reliable service		
Building our Circular Economy commitment	Build our maturity and understanding of circular economy practices by commitment to and attendance at the DEECA working group		
Providing services to support a growing population	Plan and initiate a feasibility study for the Wonthaggi resource recovery facility to incorporate a holistic recycling facility into our planned upgrade for the Wonthaggi Wastewater Treatment Plant		



Yarram Water Tower Murals

During 2022–23 we have supported the Yarram Community Town Mural project. Under the partnership, we have provided in-kind support and significant investment (~\$110K) to refurbish the Yarram Water Tower façade and extend Yarram's street art precinct.

The murals, painted by celebrated artist Heesco Kosraean, are scheduled for completion in April 2023 and feature local tourism highlights, local fauna, along with a piece by Gunaikurnai Elder Sandra Patten.

The feature is of five shields of the Gunaikurnai clans and represent country, water, food, shelter and tracks in the various elements. The 'sea of hands' are welcoming and symbolic of reconciliation.

This project is in line with our commitment to the key focus areas and the Minister's Letter of Expectations outcomes of Recreational Values and Traditional Owner Engagement via a collaboration process across community, industry, local government and with Traditional Owners.

These murals will play an important role as both a tourism drawcard and a symbol of reconciliation for all peoples of South Gippsland.

Outcome: Recognise recreational values

Support the wellbeing of communities by considering recreational values in water management. Where appropriate, support planning for the delivery of the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games.

We will continue to look for opportunities for communities to use our reservoirs. Existing programs include Coalition Creek Reservoir. Located adjacent to the Korumburra golf course, this open site is solely used to provide irrigation water to the fairways and greens. Angling clubs access Leongatha and the Korumburra Reservoirs for recreational activities.

Outcome: Leadership and culture

Reflect the needs of our diverse communities and develop strategies and goals that will increase cultural diversity in workforce and gender equity in both executive leadership and throughout the organisation, including requirements under the Gender Equality Act 2020.

We recognise that our people and culture are our most important assets.

Priority	Actions
Gender Equality Action Plan Equity, Inclusion and	Embed our Gender Equality Action Plan/ Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Plan by commencing year 1 actions
Diversity Plan	As part of the business transformation program, develop a plan to improve our culture and ability to attract, retain and grow skills and knowledge for now and the future
SGW Strategy refresh	Develop a South Gippsland Water Vision and Strategy for 2024 and beyond
OHS Strategic Plan	Continue our commitment and deliver the actions and outcomes associated with the Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Plan

Outcome: Performance and financial sustainability

Improve efficiency and consistency in reporting performance while delivering safe and cost-effective water and wastewater services in a financially sustainable manner.

This year will see the initial stages of transformation to our future vision and deliver a path to improve efficiency and performance across the organisation.

Priority	Actions
Compliance – Victorian Government Procurement Board	Uplift in Victorian Government Procurement Board compliance including a focus on social procurement
Implement our Business Transformation Program	Year 1 delivery of our Business Transformation program Progress the replacement of our billing system Complete our Facilities Master Plan
	Commence a program of minor improvements to facilities

8. Key Business Drivers

At a glance

This Corporate Plan represents the first year of the Essential Services Commission Regulatory Period Five, 2023–24 to 2027–28. The 2023 Price Submission continues our long-term plan to secure the future of our services, our region, our environment, and the resilience of our communities and business.

A new executive leadership team has brought a revised focus on the key business drivers in delivering our programs for a more efficient and streamlined business.

Our operating environment is changing, with increased uncertainty in economic activity and climate impacts. This means we may experience some shift in our budget allowances in volatile areas, and we will have ongoing future challenges to meet customer and stakeholder expectations. Consequently, we need to increase our baseline expenditure and capital investment. We have proposed a price increase of 2% (real) this financial year and the following year and then increases of 3% each year for the subsequent three years of the Corporate Plan period. This is pending ESC's approval of the submission.

A summary of key business drivers proposed is listed below. South Gippsland Water carries the risk should unfavourable performance be realised in one or all of these areas:

- Approval of 2%, 2%, 3%, 3%, and 3% real increases in tariffs over the Corporate Plan period (subject to regulatory assessment)
- 1.80% per annum water and wastewater residential customer growth
- Non-residential property connection growth of 0.53% per annum for water and 0.37% per annum for wastewater
- Average annual household water consumption of 121 kL
- Wage inflation of 2.0% per annum
- 0.5% annual increase in the superannuation guarantee 2022–23 to 2025–26
- Borrowing forecast rates include 1.11% weighted average for the Financial Accommodation Levy (FAL), plus an escalating interest rate in line with Treasury Corporation Victoria forecast.

Our capital program

The 2023–24 capital program is building on programs identified in the 2023 Price Submission. The proposed capital expenditure in comparison to the 2023 Price Submission is listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Capital expenditure comparison 2023-24 Corporate Plan vs 2023 Price Submission

	2023-24	2024-25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	Total
Corporate Plan	\$35.7 M	\$39.5 M	\$29.6 M	\$17.0 M	\$18.5 M	\$140.3 M
Price Submission	\$36.2 M	\$38.5 M	\$20.9 M	\$19.6 M	\$17.9 M	\$133.1 M

Amendments to the capital program included in the 2023–24 Corporate Plan are primarily a result of carry-forward amounts from the 2022–23 year where project and investment have been delayed from 2022–23:

- Bena Road Branch Sewer construction, \$1.4 M
- Inverloch Sewer Pumps Stations upgrade, \$0.9 M
- Wonthaggi Wastewater Treatment Plant Emergency Storage Lagoon, \$1.9 M
- Some projects planned for late in the 2023-28 period have been reprioritised and deferred based on updated information, -\$1.5M
- Updated project investment schedules where timing has been amended due to external delays, for example the Venus Bay Outfall Project
- Preparing to deliver on the first stage of our facilities transformation commitment, with additional development costs of \$0.23 M, taking the total for the year to \$0.43 M.

8. Key Business Drivers CONTINUED

Planned investment over the 2023 - 28 period has increased by \$7.2 M relative to the 2023 Price Submission as a result of carry-forwards from 2022-23 (\$4.2M of contracted work that will not be complete until early 2023–24), \$4.5 M of investment brought forward from the 2028 – 33 period for facilities upgrades and \$1.5 M of deferrals until the 2028 - 33 period.

Investment in some major projects, including renewal and upgrade of the Venus Bay Outfall and construction of a new Clear Water Storage at Lance Creek Water Treatment Plant have been rescheduled within the 2023 - 28 period, increasing planned expenditure in 2025/26 in particular.

Planning assumptions

Demand, water allocation and supply availability

The demand analysis recently completed for our 2023 Price Submission has been generally adopted for the 2023–24 Corporate Plan and has been captured in Key Business Drivers (Part 8).

Residential water consumption of 121 kL per year (reflecting the 10-year average) has been forecast to continue. Consumption has fluctuated over recent years, dropping to a low of 116 kL/pa in 2021–22. South Gippsland Water's historic residential water consumption is consistently amongst the lowest in the state. This is due to the number of holiday homes and higher rainfall.

The recent volatile nature of the economic environment has added considerable risk to demand forecasting. Our major customers' water consumption has been tested against recent trends and direct customer data. Forecasts for our largest customer in Leongatha are a moderate 807 ML for the 2024 to 2028 price period. This was at the top end of their long-term historical consumption and reflective of the three-year trend. Actual usage in the quarter to January 2023 has seen consumption marginally drop 14% compared to budget, to an average of 72 kL per month. We will monitor fluctuations closely. A continuation of this trend would have a significant impact on our planning assumptions for future years.

Customer bills

During Price Submission engagement we tested our proposed price path and bill impacts with customers. Customers and their advocates, particularly those already experiencing financial hardship, preferred a gradual price increase rather than a step change in pricing. We adopted this approach in our 2023 Price Submission, adopting a price path of 2%, 2%, 3%, 3%, 3% for 2024 to 2028 price period.

The current economic climate continues to put pressure on household spending. This, combined with our bills increasing, means that strengthening supports for customers experiencing vulnerability is vital. Building on our existing programs, in 2023–24 we will extend the Customer Support Program to non-residential customers and small businesses. We will increase our proactive engagement with community support agencies and will provide additional funds for the Community Rebate Scheme. A co-payment program will commence that will aim to re-engage customers with outstanding debts and assist them to get back on track.



Training and certification – Poly welding

9. South Gippsland Water assessing risk

We have completed an extensive review of our strategic risk set during 2022–23. The review is closely aligned with our strategic planning process and project delivery roadmap that informs this Corporate Plan.

Timing horizons, with respect to internal and external influences, the maturity of our programs, and major risks to consider in the next 12 months and beyond, are also factored into our risk identification.

Of our 10 strategic risks, four have been identified as a particular focus for the 2023–24 Corporate Planning period and are listed below.



Climate change

Failure to prepare and act for **climate change** results in the inability to deliver safe, reliable, and environmentally sustainable services.

- Our region has experienced more extreme events in recent years. Storms, floods, dry conditions, and heatwaves impact the delivery of our services. Climate science indicates this will continue in the coming decades.
- Our analysis includes potential impacts of climate change on our systems. Potential storm events have
 a wide-ranging impact on water and wastewater systems. Above average rainfall results in increased
 inundation and infiltration, and pushes our wastewater systems to capacity, with the risk of impact to the
 surrounding environment.
- We are also preparing for lower rainfall, alongside the increase in population and industry across the region.
- Of our eight water systems, the majority are annual fill and spill systems. The urgency of augmentation timing for the two systems that require upgrade (under medium climate change), Lance Creek and Leongatha, varies depending on the climate change scenario.

Our Corporate Plan includes programs to reduce our impact on the environment. These are business as usual renewals programs, and priority areas such as our Net Zero Emissions action plan and building on our circular economy commitment.

Asset planning and investment

Inadequate **asset planning and investment** causes an inability to deliver safe, reliable and environmentally sustainable assets.

- Our asset planning risk analysis process considers impacts to the environment, our customers and stakeholders, service longevity and cost. To deliver reliable services now and into the future, we develop and test long-term and short-term plans such as the Urban Water Strategy and annual drought response plans. These plans analyse the impacts of growth, climate change, and the resilience of our systems.
- The capital program is developed with a considered approach to these documents and the timing of delivery to reduce higher risk areas. This corporate planning period includes significant projects such as the Wonthaggi Wastewater Treatment Plant – Baxter Beach Upgrade and the reticulation sewer replacement/ rehabilitation allocation.
- Increase in construction costs in excess of CPI is a key risk and is being monitored. We have updated cost estimates for 2022 to underpin the Price Submission. Advice from independent cost engineering consultants indicated costs had increased 22% between 2020 and 2022. Medium-term forecasts of construction material costs suggest a levelling out in 2023, however, the risk of escalation above CPI remains.

We will continue to review our long-term and short-term plans and have an adaptive approach to delivering our capital program. A capital investment sensitivity analysis has been completed as part of our planning process if construction costs escalate above 5% in the coming years.

9. South Gippsland Water assessing risk CONTINUED

Failure to evolve, innovate and keep pace

Failure to **evolve**, **innovate and keep pace with** external drivers required to deliver on our strategic priorities results in sub-optimal and/or inefficient delivery of safe, reliable and environmentally sustainable services.

Recent years have seen: a step change in the way we work, efficiencies gained from advances in technology, and threats from cyber attackers. Evolving customer and stakeholder expectations have led to growth in our quality of services and compliance understanding. Recent years have demonstrated the importance of robust systems and people. If we don't prioritise innovative processes and programs and keep aware of external changes and forces, it could create significant negative impacts on our reputation, financial security, and services

The Corporate Plan includes a considerable focus on progressing the core requirements of changing regulations in cyber maturity. It also focuses on Victorian Government Procurement Board compliance as well as our social procurement activities.

We have our eye on the future and delivering improved processes, systems and facilities via our priority projects, particularly the Business Transformation program.

Financial sustainability

Failure to maintain **financial sustainability** results in an inability to fund the delivery of safe, reliable and environmentally sustainable services.

- The 2023–24 Corporate Plan represents the first year of the 2023
 Price Submission. In this rapidly changing landscape, we recognise there will be an increase in expenditure largely driven by labour, chemicals, repairs and maintenance, and financial costs.
- Revenue from water consumption has dropped. Recent wet weather
 has seen residential consumption drop to 116 kL. The predicted 121 kL
 may or may not come to realisation for the period.
- Non-residential water usage equates to approximately 30% of South Gippsland Water's water consumption. SGW's two largest major customers alone make up approximately 25% of total demand.
 Our Price Submission recognised a key risk around the forecasted demand assumptions for our major customers.

Over the past months, we have seen a shift in major customer usage. We maintain a close relationship with major customers to understand and respond to their needs. The volatile nature of the external environment adds considerable risk to demand forecasting and recovery of capital investment.

A major project to upgrade the Venus Bay Outfall is progressing. This will secure industry for the region and mitigate potential environmental impacts as a result of failing infrastructure. Commercial negotiations are continuing to renew trade waste agreements for the Venus Bay Outfall upgrade.



Communication Team Leader, Miranda Schooneveldt and General Manager Service Delivery, Clare Gibson with a newly installed drinking fountain at Wonthaggi Guide Park.

10. FINANCIAL DETAILS AND PERFORMANCE

Material changes from previous 2022–23 Corporate Plan:

Material changes from the previous 2023 Corporate Plan for the five-year period from 2023–24 to 2027–28:

Revenue

- An increased CPI uplift of 6.7% for 2023–24 has been assumed, in line with the Reserve Bank of Australia's February CPI forecast for the 12 months to June 2023. This is a material change from the 2022–23 Corporate Plan assumption of 2.1% CPI uplift, resulting in a \$1.6M increase in revenue in 2022–23, and approximately \$9.5M for the five-year period (assuming 3% CPI uplift from 2024–25 to 2027–28).
- 2022–23 consumption for our largest customer has been tracking consistently below budget to date and the latest 2023–24 forecast of 807 ML has further reinforced this subdued position. For the 2023–24 budget we have assumed this more conservative outlook, resulting in a 18% reduction in annual volumes as compared to the 2022–23 Corporate Plan and Price Submission. The corresponding reduction in revenue is \$0.5 M in 2023–24 and \$2.6 M over the five-year forecast period.
- SGW is expecting \$2.1 M in additional capital income from gifted assets over the forecast period as a result of updates to developers' plans for water and sewer asset construction on new subdivisions, in particular, plans for a new sewer pump station.

Operating Costs

- Operating costs are higher with above-CPI cost increases anticipated for repairs and maintenance and chemicals. 2022–23 has seen numerous vendors pass through materials increases via their maintenance fees, averaging a 30% increase. This has driven a \$0.7M increase in total repairs and maintenance over the five-year period. Similarly, chemicals have seen an average increase in unit prices of 10% in 2022–23 from our key supplier. This is assumed to reduce slightly in 2023–24 to 7.5%, adding \$1.7M in cost over the period.
- Other operational cost increases in 2023–24 include higher technology costs driven by increased cyber security capabilities (\$0.2M), additional non-BAU transformation program costs of \$0.5M and higher utilities costs (\$0.1M).
- The Melbourne Bulk Water entitlement in 2023–24 has been reduced to 1GL, down from 3GL assumed in the 2022–23 Corporate Plan, as the additional requirement from the Melbourne system has been pushed out to 2024–25. This has resulted in a \$0.8M reduction in 2022–23 opex and a \$1.5M reduction over the period (after also allowing for a slightly reduced, more realistic variable allocation).
- Financing costs are forecast to increase by \$2M due to increased debt and higher interest rates over the forecast period, with 2027–28 debt rising from \$191M to \$211M
- Depreciation is forecast to rise by \$5.3 M due largely to an increase in capital investment of \$51 M relative
 to the 2018 23 period. Increased capital investment has been driven by the need to upgrade and upsize
 existing assets to support growth in the region. In addition, the development and implementation of
 systematic capital renewal programs during 2018 23 has seen an increase in capital investment.

Operating Statement

The table below details the projected operating statement for 2023–24 to 2027–28. Refer to Appendix A for a quarterly breakdown of the 2023–24 financial year.

Table 2: SGW Operating Statement 2023–24 to 2027–28

	FY22/23 Forecast					
	Nov	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26	FY26/27	FY27/28
		•				
Service charges	18,630	20,531	21,953	23,705	25,529	27,494
Volume charges	10,866	11,807	12,531	13,430	14,376	15,388
Trade waste	4,109	4,374	4,496	4,704	4,924	5,156
Capital income	4,486	4,720	5,747	5,853	5,605	5,141
Other	980	1,109	1,146	1,184	1,222	1,262
TOTAL REVENUE	39,070	42,540	45,874	48,876	51,656	54,441
Salary and on-costs	12,629	13,572	13,979	14,399	14,381	14,812
Financing costs	3,956	4,873	6,444	7,508	8,203	8,874
Depreciation	15,465	15,982	17,032	17,435	17,680	18,186
Other expenses	13,003	13,724	14,890	15,298	15,404	15,816
TOTAL COSTS	45,053	48,151	52,346	54,640	55,668	57,688
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	(5,983)	(5,611)	(6,472)	(5,764)	(4,012)	(3,247)
Tax expense	1,496	1,403	1,618	1,441	1,003	812
NET PROFIT / (LOSS) AFTER TAX	(4,487)	(4,208)	(4,854)	(4,323)	(3,009)	(2,435)

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Cash Flow Statement

Table 3: SGW Cash Flow Statement 2023–24 to 2027–28

CASHFLOW \$'000	FY22/23 Forecast Nov	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26	FY26/27	FY27/28
,						
Total cash receipts from operations	40,704	44,991	48,707	50,865	51,796	55,210
Total cash payments from operations	(32,638)	(33,134)	(36,830)	(38,920)	(39,175)	(40,692)
Net cash provided/(used) by operating activities	8,066	11,857	11,878	11,945	12,621	14,517
Proceeds from sale of assets	83	55	55	55	55	55
Payments for non-current Assets	(24,852)	(39,082)	(45,512)	(36,588)	(22,550)	(23,356)
Net cash provided/(used) in investing activities	(24,769)	(39,027)	(45,457)	(36,533)	(22,495)	(23,301)
Proceeds/(repayments) from borrowings	14,500	27,036	33,536	24,670	10,034	8,735
Proceeds from Government Equity contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contractors deposits	(1,603)	127	51	(96)	(131)	23
Net Cash provided/(used) from financing activities	12,897	27,163	33,587	24,574	9,903	8,758
Net increase / (decrease) in cash	(3,806)	(7)	8	(14)	28	(26)
Beginning cash	4,282	476	469	477	463	491
ENDING CASH	476	469	477	463	491	465

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Balance Sheet

Table 4: SGW Balance Sheet Statement 2023-24 to 2027-28

	FY22/23					
BALANCE SHEET \$'000	Forecast Nov	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26	FY26/27	FY27/28
Cash and bank	476	469	477	463	491	465
Receivables	2,018	2,204	2,338	2,508	2,686	2,878
Other current assets	3,649	3,915	4,061	4,242	4,428	4,631
Total current assets	6,143	6,587	6,876	7,213	7,606	7,974
ZEW investment	5	5	5	5	5	5
Receivables-long term	211	181	151	121	91	61
Fixed assets	493,925	513,315	540,338	559,301	565,754	570,431
WIP	5,778	9,377	9,380	7,459	4,690	5,461
Deferred tax assets	21,763	23,165	24,783	26,224	27,227	28,039
Total Non-Current Assets	521,682	546,043	574,657	593,111	597,767	603,997
TOTAL ASSETS	527,825	552,630	581,533	600,324	605,372	611,971
Loans - current	6,893	6,893	6,893	6,893	6,893	6,893
Provisions	4,723	4,723	4,323	3,757	3,757	3,757
Other payables	3,920	5,475	6,074	5,063	3,630	3,923
Total current liabilities	15,536	17,091	17,290	15,713	14,280	14,573
Loans - non-current	101,300	128,336	161,872	186,542	196,576	205,311
Provision - non-current LSL	574	996	1,017	1,038	494	500
Deferred tax liabilities	79,984	79,984	79,984	79,984	79,984	79,984
Total non-current liabilities	181,858	209,316	242,873	267,564	277,054	285,795
TOTAL LIABILITIES	197,394	226,407	260,163	283,277	291,335	300,369
NET ASSETS	330,432	326,223	321,370	317,047	314,037	311,602
Government equity contributions	95,333	95,333	95,333	95,333	95,333	95,333
Asset revaluation reserve	190,140	190,140	190,140	190,140	190,140	190,140
Accumulated funds (losses)	44,959	40,750	35,897	31,574	28,564	26,129
TOTAL EQUITY	330,432	326,223	321,370	317,047	314,037	311,602

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Financial Performance Indicators

Table 5: Key Performance Indicators 2023–24 to 2030–31

KEY RATIOS	FY22/23 Forecast Nov	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26	FY26/27	FY27/28	FY28/29	FY29/30	FY30/31
Current ratio	0.40	0.39	0.40	0.46	0.53	0.55	0.49	0.47	0.54
Quick ratio	0.70	0.54	0.51	0.65	0.97	0.94	0.62	0.53	0.69
Gearing ratio	20.5%	24.5%	29.0%	32.2%	33.6%	34.7%	37.4%	41.3%	44.0%
Internal financing ratio	32.6%	30.4%	26.1%	32.7%	56.1%	62.3%	38.9%	31.7%	39.1%
Interest cover (EBIT)	(0.51)	(0.15)	(0.00)	0.23	0.51	0.63	0.67	0.70	0.74
Interest cover (Cash)	3.04	3.43	2.84	2.59	2.54	2.64	2.67	2.52	2.31
Debt / equity	33%	41%	53%	61%	65%	68%	77%	91%	102%
Return on assets	-0.4%	-0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.7%	0.9%	1.1%	1.3%	1.5%
Return on equity	-1.3%	-1.3%	-1.5%	-1.4%	-1.0%	-0.8%	-0.8%	-0.9%	-0.9%
EBITDA margin	34.4%	35.8%	37.0%	39.2%	42.3%	43.7%	45.3%	46.9%	48.5%

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Operational Performance

Table 6: Service Standards 2023–24 to 2027–28, subject to 2023 Price Submission approval by the Essential Services Commission

Water and Sewerage Network Reliability	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
Water Service – minutes off supply (planned and unplanned) how many minutes on average a customer was without water supply during a year	110	110	110	110	110
Unplanned water supply interruptions percentage of customers receiving (5) unplanned interruptions in the year	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sewerage Service – sewer blockages number of sewer blockages reported per 100 kilometres of sewer main	18	18	18	18	18
Sewerage Service – sewer spills number of sewer spills reported per 100 kilometres of sewer main	28	28	28	28	28
Sewerage Service - containment of sewer spills Sewer spills from reticulation and branch sewers contained within 5 hours	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Customer Responsiveness	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
Water bills – customers on flexible payment plans No. of customers with instalment plans	600	620	640	660	680
Water bills – customers awarded hardship grants No. of customers awarded hardship grants	20	20	20	20	20
Customer Responsiveness - water quality complaints No. of complaints per 100 customers	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Customer Responsiveness – number of payment issue complaints No. of complaints per 100 customers	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Customer Responsiveness - total complaints No. of complaints per 100 customers	2	2	2	2	2
Water Reuse	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
Recycled water – effluent treatment and reuse proportion of water recycled as a percentage of the volume of effluent produced	4%	4%	4%	4.5%*	4.5%

^{*}Completion of planned works Foster Wastewater Treatment Plant 2025–26

Table 7: Customer Tariff Schedule 2022–23 to 2027–28, subject to 2023 Price Submission approval by the Essential Services Commission

Tariffs are expressed in	Frequency	Approved			Proposed		
nominal \$	of charge	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26	FY26/27	FY27/28
1.1 Water access fees (per annum)							
Access fee – Developed	Tri-annual	348.52	379.31	398.50	422.77	448.52	475.83
Access fee – Undeveloped	Tri-annual	348.52	379.31	398.50	422.77	448.52	475.83
Access fee – Agreements	Tri-annual	313.70	341.41	358.69	380.53	403.71	428.29
Access fee – Concessional	Tri-annual	279.56	304.25	319.65	339.12	359.77	381.68
1.2 Water usage charges (per kL)							
Volumetric fee – Saputo	Monthly	2.65	2.88	3.03	3.21	3.41	3.61
Volumetric fee – Other Majors	Monthly	2.18	2.38	2.50	2.65	2.81	2.98
Volumetric fee – All others	Tri-annual	2.18	2.38	2.50	2.65	2.81	2.98
1.3 Sewerage access fees (per ann Residential and non-residential	um)						
Access fee – Developed	Tri-annual	540.89	588.67	618.46	656.12	696.09	738.47
Access fee – Undeveloped	Tri-annual	306.03	333.06	349.92	371.23	393.84	417.82
1.4 Cistern access fees (per annum	n)						
1-2 Cisterns	Tri-annual	184.16	200.43	210.57	223.39	237.00	251.43
3-5 Cisterns	Tri-annual	484.48	527.27	553.96	587.69	623.49	661.45
6-10 Cisterns	Tri-annual	938.18	1,021.05	1,072.72	1,138.05	1,207.37	1,280.89
11-15 Cisterns	Tri-annual	1,502.24	1,634.94	1,717.67	1,822.27	1,933.28	2,050.99
16-20 Cisterns	Tri-annual	2,504.86	2,726.12	2,864.06	3,038.49	3,223.58	3,419.85
21-26 Cisterns	Tri-annual	3,585.14	3,901.82	4,099.26	4,348.91	4,613.82	4,894.75
27-35 Cisterns	Tri-annual	4,394.33	4,782.49	5,024.49	5,330.49	5,655.19	5,999.53
36-Greater Cisterns	Tri-annual	5,021.24	5,464.77	5,741.30	6,090.95	6,461.98	6,855.44
1.5 Volume charge – (per kL)							
Volume charge	Tri-annual	2.19	2.39	2.51	2.66	2.82	2.99
1.6 Minor trade waste fees Application fees (per application)							
Category 1	Tri-annual	140.35	149.75	154.24	158.87	163.64	168.54
Category 2	Tri-annual	223.89	238.89	246.06	253.44	261.04	268.88
Category 3	Tri-annual	409.87	437.33	450.45	463.96	477.88	492.22
Access fees (per annum)							
Access fee – Category 1	Tri-annual	747.55	813.58	854.75	906.81	962.04	1,020.62
Access fee – Category 2	Tri-annual	993.02	1,080.74	1,135.42	1,204.57	1,277.95	1,355.76
Access fee – Category 3	Tri-annual	1,231.88	1,340.69	1,408.54	1,494.32	1,585.34	1,681.87
Volumetric fees (per kL)							
All categories	Tri-annual	1.05	1.14	1.20	1.27	1.35	1.43
Quality fees (per kg)							
BOD	Tri-annual	0.77	0.83	0.85	0.88	0.90	0.93
SS	Tri-annual	0.73	0.78	0.80	0.83	0.85	0.88
Nitrogen	Tri-annual	3.27	3.49	3.59	3.70	3.81	3.93
Phosphorus	Tri-annual	18.63	19.88	20.47	21.09	21.72	22.37
Additional sampling (per sample)							
			At cost				

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Tariffs are expressed in	Frequency	Approved	Proposed					
nominal \$	of charge	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26	FY26/27	FY27/28	
Exceedance fees (per kg)								
Oil & grease	Per occasion	0.12	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.14	
Sodium	Per occasion	0.12	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.14	
TOS	Per occasion	0.83	0.89	0.92	0.94	0.97	1.00	
Asset protection fee		T	1		,			
Alternate annual fee available to customers that do not elect to install a grease trap (cost prohibitive).	Per annum	1,638.10	1,747.85	1,800.28	1,854.29	1,909.92	1,967.22	
Treatment violation fee								
Fee imposed for customers that do not fill in a trade waste application; or do not maintain their pre- treatment apparatus (e.g. do not pump out their grease trap.)	Per occasion	335.80	358.30	369.05	380.12	391.52	403.27	
1.7 New customer contributions (g	per service)							
Water & sewer (all customers)		2,517.58	3,170.89	3,266.02	3,364.00	3,464.92	3,568.86	
1.8 Miscellaneous fees and charge	s							
Property information statements								
Fee imposed for providing a certificate issued in accordance with Section 158 of the, Water Act 1989.		62.69	66.89	68.90	70.96	73.09	75.29	
Special meter readings								
Fee imposed for providing a certificate which indicates water usage charges up to a specified date. Generally provided, on application, for property sales.		48.19	51.42	52.96	54.55	56.19	57.87	
As constructed charge		1	ı					
As constructed charge		78.66	83.93	86.45	89.04	91.71	94.46	
20mm Tapping fee		I.	I.	I.	J.	I.	I.	
Fee imposed for meter and labour associated in providing a tapping to the water main.		433.34	462.37	476.24	490.53	505.25	520.41	
Plumbing Industry Commission (P	IC) fee							
Fee imposed for providing sewer plans and processing applications to connect or modify plumbing.		243.29	259.59	267.38	275.40	283.66	292.17	
Standpipe water sales (per kL)								
Fee imposed for the sale of water via a metered standpipe.								
- Registered Users		7.08	7.71	8.10	8.59	9.11	9.67	
- Unregistered Users		9.44	10.28	10.80	11.45	12.15	12.89	
Septic tank waste receival (per kL)			i		1			
Fee imposed on septic tank waste carters, for the disposing of sewage and/or other acceptable waste.		29.64	31.62	32.57	33.55	34.55	35.59	
Non core miscellaneous services								
Non core miscellaneous services		At cost						

APPENDIX A - SUPPORTING FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Urban bill reporting requirements

Table 8: Customer Pricing Impacts

Indicators	\$ 2022/23 (real)	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Residential bill – owner occupier								
Annual expected occupier with ave	bill for an owner- erage 121kL water use	\$1,153	\$1,177	\$1,200	\$1,236	\$1,273	\$1,311	\$1,340
Percentage Incre	ase from prior year		2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%
Residential bill – tenant								
Annual expected average 121kL wa	bill for a tenant with ter use	\$264	\$269	\$275	\$283	\$291	\$300	\$307
Percentage Incre	ase from prior year		2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%
Non-residential l	oill – business							
Annual expected using 3 ML per ar		\$6,900	\$7,038	\$7,178	\$7,394	\$7,616	\$7,844	\$8,018
Percentage Incre	ase from prior year		2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%

Table 9: 2023–24 Operating Statement - quarterly breakdown

PROFIT AND LOSS \$'000	Q1 FY23/24	Q2 FY23/24	Q3 FY23/24	Q4 FY23/24	Total FY23/24
Service charges	5,100	5,116	5,141	5,174	20,531
Volume charges	3,463	3,679	4,003	3,418	14,563
Trade waste	404	404	404	404	1,618
Capital income	1,180	1,180	1,180	1,180	4,720
Other	278	280	279	272	1,109
TOTAL REVENUE	10,424	10,660	11,007	10,449	42,540
				•	
Salary and on-costs	3,421	3,421	3,347	3,384	13,572
Financing costs	1,170	1,170	1,271	1,271	4,882
Depreciation	4,028	4,028	3,941	3,984	15,982
Other expenses	3,424	3,459	3,430	3,410	13,724
TOTAL COSTS	12,044	12,079	11,988	12,049	48,160
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	(1,620)	(1,419)	(981)	(1,600)	(5,620)
Tax expense	405	355	245	400	1,405
NET PROFIT / (LOSS) AFTER TAX	(1,215)	(1,064)	(736)	(1,200)	(4,215)

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Table 10: 2023–24 Cash Flow Statement – quarterly breakdown

CASHFLOW \$'000	Q1 FY23/24	Q2 FY23/24	Q3 FY23/24	Q4 FY23/24	Total FY23/24
Total Cash Receipts from Operations	11,459	7,745	12,331	13,454	44,991
Total Cash Payments from Operations	(8,424)	(8,031)	(8,421)	(8,266)	(33,143)
Net Cash provided/(used) by Operating Activities	3,035	(286)	3,910	5,188	11,848
Proceeds from Sale of Assets	14	14	14	14	55
Payments for Non-Current Assets	(9,747)	(9,819)	(8,579)	(10,936)	(39,082)
Net Cash provided/(used) in Investing Activities	(9,734)	(9,805)	(8,565)	(10,922)	(39,027)
Proceeds/(Repayments) from Borrowings	6,600	10,300	4,650	5,956	27,036
Proceeds from Government Equity Cont.	0	0	0	0	0
Contractors deposits	32	32	32	32	127
Net Cash provided/(used) from Financing Activities	6,632	10,332	4,682	5,987	27,163
	(5.5)	0.10		055	(4.5)
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash	(66)	240	27	253	(16)
Beginning Cash	476	409	650	676	476
ENDING CASH	409	650	676	929	460

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Table 11: 2023–24 Balance Sheet – quarterly breakdown

BALANCE SHEET \$'000	Q1 FY23/24	Q2 FY23/24	Q3 FY23/24	Q4 FY23/24	Total FY23/24
	'				
Cash and Bank	409	650	676	460	460
Receivables	4,688	2,994	3,210	2,226	2,226
Other current assets	2,864	2,636	5,496	3,892	3,892
Total Current Assets	7,962	6,280	2,962	6,578	6,578
Receivables-Long term	209	201	194	186	186
Fixed Assets	503,173	509,743	512,398	513,315	513,315
WIP	4,553	6,875	15,081	9,377	9,377
Deferred Tax Assets	21,358	21,003	20,758	23,168	23,168
Total Non-Current Assets	529,292	537,822	548,430	546,045	546,045
TOTAL ASSETS	537,254	544,102	551,391	552,624	552,624
Loans - Current	6,893	6,893	6,893	6,893	6,893
Provisions	3,421	3,799	3,824	3,757	3,757
Other payables	9,796	6,583	9,808	6,441	6,441
Total Current Liabilities	20,110	17,275	20,525	17,091	17,091
Loans - Non-Current	107,900	118,200	122,850	128,336	128,336
Provision - Non-Current LSL	310	310	310	310	310
Deferred Tax Liabilities	79,984	79,984	79,984	79,984	79,984
Total Non-Current Liabilities	188,458	198,758	203,408	209,316	209,316
TOTAL LIABILITIES	208,567	216,033	223,932	226,407	226,407
NET ASSETS	328,686	328,069	327,459	326,217	326,217
TOTAL EQUITY & RESERVES	328,686	328,069	327,459	326,217	326,217

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