Here for you

April - June 2026

Konongwootong Reservoir

Strengthening our sewers

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensure reliable and efficient services, we've been renewing sections of the sewer pipework across the region.

Condition assessments, often using CCTV equipment, show which sections of sewer are reaching the end of their service life and need to be relined.

Technology used in the sewer lining process is non-evasive and trenchless, therefore most of the works can be completed underground from within the existing infrastructure. It avoids the need for large-scale digging, minimising disruptions for residents and businesses.

Using sewer access points, our contractors install a soft liner within the existing sewer. This is cured so it hardens and creates a strong pipe-within-a-pipe. Robotic equipment is then used to cut individual property connections from within the sewer.

People in the nearby area may notice some steam and a resin-like odour while the process is taking place. The odour is safe and dissipates very quickly.

The relining program has many benefits. It improves the structural stability of our sewerage system, prevents leaks and potential blockages, and ultimately delivers better sewerage services.

What are biosolids?

Biosolids are nutrient-rich organic materials that look, smell and feel like dark, rich organic soil.

They're produced as a by-product of the sewage treatment process when naturally occurring bacteria and micro-organisms consume the sewage, breaking down the organic solids and helping remove bacteria.

Treated effluent is then decanted and discharged to the ocean or dams. The remaining material, known as sludge, is removed. It comprises both dead and a small number of active micro-organisms. It also contains inert solids, such as sand. It's not "raw sewage" or "human poo" as some people believe.

The sewage that enters the sewerage system is around 99.6 per cent water with the remainder mostly biodegradable waste from household bathrooms, toilets, kitchens and laundries. It also includes waste from our regional industrial customers.

We transport the semi-dried sludge to our facilities at Camperdown, Hamilton and Portland where it's dried and composted. This takes a few years and satisfies Environment Protection Authority guidelines. It's then known as biosolids, a product ready for beneficial reuse as soil conditioner on farms.

The sludge often smells slightly musty, although some has a stronger odour, mainly when it's being moved and processed into windrows. This isn't harmful to health but may impact people in the nearby area, particularly those who are more sensitive to smells. We carefully monitor any potential odours and adjust our operations to suit wind conditions.

As our region continues to grow, so does the amount of domestic and industrial waste we need to manage. To plan ahead, we're exploring long-term options for handling biosolids in a safe, reliable and sustainable way. That's why we're investigating a new regional biosolids processing facility. But finding the right site and getting approvals will take time. It's an important project, and we want to get it right.

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Thirst aid at the Folkie

We're proud to be recognised as a principal partner of the annual Port Fairy Folk Festival.

Our support allows people to refill their reusable water bottles for free, eliminating single-use water bottles, encouraging recycling, and reducing impacts on the environment from additional waste.

Our Thirst Aid Station and refill points were a popular feature with patrons consuming 11,272 litres of water during the four-day event.

The festival also allows us to promote our Quality Water for Wannon program which will improve the taste of water in Port Fairy, Portland and Heywood over the next few years.

What's happening in your area?

Camperdown, Cobden and Terang Water Treatment Plants - Water quality improvements with ultra-violet disinfection.

Hamilton Water Treatment Plant - Dosing system upgrade.

Portland Sewage Treatment Plant - Flow meter replacement and upgrade.

Sewer main refurbishment - Relining of damaged and ageing sewer mains across the region.

Water meter replacement - More than 5,000 old water meters are being replaced at customer properties.

Warrnambool Sewage Treatment Plant landscaping - First stage of landscaping the coastal area surrounding the site with more than 30,000 native plants.

Wangoom Road water pump station and tank - Servicing Warrnambool's north-east growth area.

Incoming ...

Customer... ***"About 7% of my bill is consumption, the rest is fees. I don't see what these fees support or where the money goes. Is this just a profit grab?.***

An average homeowner pays just $3.40 a day to have quality water readily available in their kitchen, bathroom, laundry and garden - and to have the sewage from their toilet, sink, shower and basin taken away. That's less than one takeaway coffee!

The **water usage charge** is based on the amount of water you use. An average customer uses 142 kilolitres (142,000 litres) of water each year.

We charge $1.761 per kilolitre which covers the cost of treating their water to ensure it's safe to drink and use. Therefore, the average customer pays just over $250 a year for their water.

The **water service charge** is a fixed charge for each property owner. Homeowners pay about $192 in water service charges. This helps us cover the cost of maintaining and upgrading our water supply network and assets.

It also helps us maintain and renew nearly 2,000 kilometres of water mains. If we laid them end-to-end, they'd stretch from our coastline to Mount Isa.

The **sewerage service charge** is a fixed charge for each property owner connected to our sewerage network. Homeowners will pay around $846 a year. This helps us cover the cost of taking away and treating their sewage.

We don't meter our sewerage system, but our figures show this waste would fill the equivalent of 30 big brown bins for the average household each week,

The charge also helps us to maintain and upgrade our sewerage system including pump stations, treatment plants, lagoons and biosolid facilities. And it helps us to maintain and renew more than 1,000 kilometres of sewer mains. If we laid them end-to-end, they'd stretch from our coastline to the Queensland border.

The water and sewerage service charges are based on the services that are available to each property. Even if a **block is vacant** and isn't connected to any of the services, we still need to maintain our networks. These charges are around $192 a year for water services and $254 for sewerage services.

It's worth noting that we did make some changes to our fixed and variable charges following community feedback during our last Price Submission.

We're gradually increasing the variable charge from 18% to 23% by 2028, aiming to **avoid adverse impacts on renters** who only pay the variable charge for the water they use.

And, of course, we'll always **support customers** experiencing financial difficulties.

Want to know more about these types of questions? Visit our Water Whys page...

**A real customer comment from our monthly pulse survey.*