



Customers and the Community

National water week poster competition winners

The 2005/2006 Corporate Plan set three goals for Customer and the Community. These goals were:

- Engage and communicate constructively with our customers and the wider community in an open, honest and transparent manner about water and environmental management issues which impact on our region.
- Maintain ongoing constructive relationships with key stakeholders including major customers, State and Federal Governments, local governments and other regional organisations.

- Demonstrate a sense of social responsibility in our business activities and operations

In order to implement and achieve these goals the Authority identified strategic initiatives and targets. These are outlined below including the status as at 30 June 2006.



Create-A-Critta
by Julia Patt - Goulburn Valley Grammar School

Strategic Initiatives and Targets	Status @ 30 June 2006
By October 2005 develop and implement a customer consultation strategy for the Authority, which meets regulatory requirements utilising issues based customer consultative committees and where appropriate existing community representative forums.	A Communications Strategy was approved by the Board in March 2006. This strategy addresses customer consultative committees and community forums. An implementation plan for the strategy has been prepared and actions are being undertaken.
By October 2005 develop and implement a relationship management strategy which identifies key stakeholders and determines appropriate messages and communication forums.	Refer comments on the Communications Strategy above. Stakeholder relationships are specifically addressed in that strategy.
Conduct annual customer research to identify and respond to customer needs and undertake additional targeted customer research activities as required.	A Customer Satisfaction survey was undertaken in June 2006 - see page 27.

Inaugural winners & runners up of the Waterwise Garden Award with CEO Laurie Gleeson



Community Service Obligation

Goulburn Valley Water is required to provide a range of concessions and rebates on behalf of the Victorian Government. In 2005/2006, the combined total of these concessions and rebates was \$2.1 million. The table below outlines the value of the Authority's community service obligations.

Type	2005/2006	2004/2005
Pension Concessions	\$1,924,377	\$1,712,885
Water & Sewerage Rebate Scheme	\$227,185	\$225,157
Utility Relief Grant Scheme	\$950	\$2,612
Life Support Machines	\$214	-
Hardship relief grants	-	-
Water Conservation Assitants Pilot Program	-	-
	\$2,152,727	\$1,940,653

Community Engagement

Goulburn Valley Water is committed to community engagement as it is an integral part of the Authority's business activities. To enhance the community engagement capability of the Authority, key staff members are undertaking a comprehensive training program in Public Participation. In early June 2006, 32 employees, including the CEO, two directors, technical services managers and project managers undertook the first module in a three module training program. Modules two and three will be undertaken by 20

employees during July and August 2006. The identified benefits of this training program include:

- Provides carefully researched and clearly defined process for thinking about, planning and conducting community engagement programs.
- Provides a broad-based learning experience covering all of the concepts required by those who seek to engage communities in decision making.
- Provides helpful tools to make consultation more effective.
- Internationally recognised certificate.

Community Engagement Plans

Goulburn Valley Water develops either a community engagement or communications plan for every major project undertaken and other important areas of operations such as the Water Plan, customer charter, water supply demand strategy and regular maintenance works. Components of a community engagement or communications plan may include:

- Identification of key stakeholders including multi-cultural and indigenous interests;
- The engagement level required with each stakeholder;
- Establishment of a Community Reference Committee to assist with liaison between the Authority and the Community;
- Focus Groups;
- Newsletters/Information Bulletins;
- Open Meetings and Open Days;
- Presentations to Service Clubs; and
- Regular articles in local papers.



Water Supply Demand Strategy Steering Committee

Community Reference Committees

During 2005/2006, Goulburn Valley Water worked with community reference committees for two major projects, the Marysville Reclaimed Water Facility and the Water Supply Demand Strategy Steering Committee.

Marysville Community Reference Committee

The Marysville Community Reference Committee (CRC) was established in 2004 and comprising 11 local residents/business people. The purpose of the group is to review and provide input into potential site selection for a new reclaimed water storage lagoon and irrigation area. In December 2005, the committee and members of the public participated in a one day workshop to determine the social component of the triple bottom line analysis for the options. The result was the identification of an option not previously investigated and this has resulted in a win/win outcome for the Marysville community and the Authority. The next stage of the project is to undertake a design and submit a planning approval application to Council. Prior to submitting the planning approval the proposal will be put to the community for comment via the CRC.

Water Supply Demand Strategy – Steering Committee

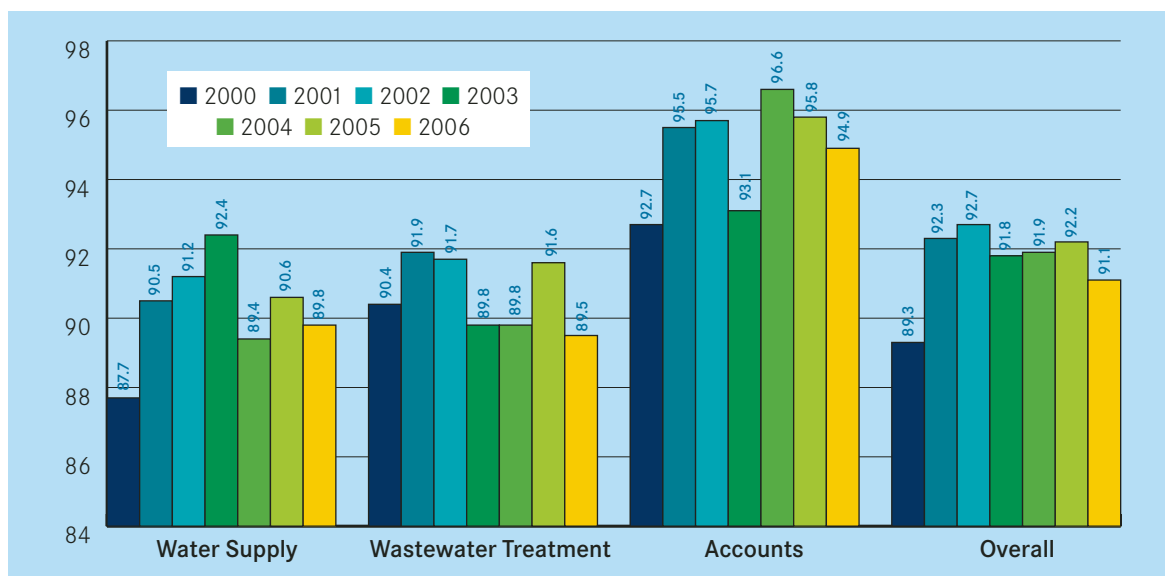
To assist in the development of Goulburn Valley Water's Water Supply Demand Strategy (WSDS) a Steering Committee has been established with representatives from three Councils, (City of Greater

Shepparton, Shire of Murrindindi, Shire of Mitchell), the Ethnic Council, GV Disability Services, two major customers (SPC-Ardmona and Kraft Foods), the Goulburn Broken CMA, Goulburn-Murray Water and the Department of Sustainability and Environment. The role of the steering committee is to *represent the views of a wide range of customers and to provide input from a wide range of perspectives.*

Management of Social and Economic Impacts

The Authority has in place a Hardship Policy and Revenue Officers are trained to encourage customers to inform staff about their personal circumstances surrounding non-payment of accounts. The Officers then discuss the range of payment options available to the individual customer and assist them in working out the best option for their situation. The Hardship Policy is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Goulburn Valley Water operates a 24 hour seven day per week Customer Service Centre. This centre takes all calls in relation to service difficulties and faults. Each call is logged into the Authority's computerised customer service software Hanson and then dispatched to the relevant district office for attention. Once the service is rectified the field staff complete a form and this is returned to the customer service centre for logging into Hanson and closing the file. This process was recently reviewed as part of the Essential Services Commission's audit program.



Customer Satisfaction Survey

Each year Goulburn Valley Water undertakes a customer satisfaction survey which is designed to:

- Quantify gaps which may exist between customer's rating of importance of services attributes and their perception of the Authority's performance on each service attribute.
- Measure the Authority's performance against benchmarks established in the previous customer satisfaction studies.

The results for 2006 are based on responses to a telephone survey of 312 customers located throughout Goulburn Valley Water's region. The overall 2006 customer satisfaction rating of 91.1 is down marginally from 92.2 in 2005. The past six years results in the key areas of water supply, wastewater treatment and tariffs are shown in table below.

Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria)

The Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) (EWOV) is an independent body, funded by the member utilities, to assist customers who are dissatisfied with some aspect of the service or interaction with utilities around the state.

The number of contacts to EWOV for 2005/2006 for Goulburn Valley Water and all Regional Water Authorities are set out in the table below.

Type of Contact	Goulburn Valley Water	Regional Water Authorities
Enquiries	2	164
Enquiries referred to Provider	9	104
Complaints referred to higher - level contact	5	108
Level 1 Complaint (Full Investigation)	6	78
Level 2 Complaint (Full Investigation)	0	1

Community Support

The Goulburn Valley Water Staff Charity Fund raises thousands of dollars through staff payroll deductions and other fund raising efforts to assist charities throughout the region. During this financial year the fund, which is administered by a Committee of staff members, has donated a total of \$6,889.24 to the following recipients:

Debra Perkins Memorial Trust.....	\$600.00
Kerrie Lesire Appeal.....	\$200.00
Relay for Life.....	\$105.00
Tanya Calley Cancer Appeal	\$500.00
K Mart Wishing Tree	\$1,384.24
Salvation Army Food Hampers.....	\$1,200.00
Vabalevious Family Trust.....	\$200.00
Community Fund	\$1,500.00
Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal.....	\$500.00
Cyclone Larry	\$250.00
Gowrie St School Breakfast Program.....	\$200.00
Typo Station	\$250.00

Goulburn Valley Water staff also make donations to the community in non-monetary ways by giving blood to the Australian Red Cross and participating in monthly meals-on-wheels deliveries.

Community Inclusiveness

Goulburn Valley Water is mindful of the State Government's Multicultural Policy and shares its commitment to promoting programs and strategies aimed at delivering culturally appropriate services. The Board endeavours to ensure that our systems and staff are sensitive to cultural and language diversity within our customer base and regional community.

Cultural Diversity

Goulburn Valley Water offers interpreting services for all non-English speaking customers and the Authority's Customer Charter has been translated into the five main languages for the Goulburn Valley Region, Greek, Italian, Turkish, Arabic and Albanian. The Authority also invites a representative from the Ethnic Council to participate in community consultative processes, eg. the Water Supply Demand Strategy Steering Committee.

Young People

The Waterwatch Education Program is offered to all schools in our region each year. 90 schools participated in some of the many activities during 2005/2006. The program is a practical science-oriented program that is easily accessible to all students, including those who may not excel at the more academic school curriculum. Waterwatch is promoted to schools as an activity that fits well in vocational education curriculum and alternative community-based programs. In addition, a School Holiday Program is being developed and offered to all students from year 3 to year 8.

Goulburn Valley Water works with agencies and community organisations such as Landcare to offer programs designed to broaden the experience of young people in environmental and resource-based issues.

Indigenous People

Goulburn Valley Water has for many years worked closely with the Indigenous Communities across the region. In 2000 Goulburn Valley Water and the Yorta Yorta Community negotiated an agreement for a pipeline from Mooroopna to Shepparton. In 2002 the Authority worked with the Cummeragunja Community in NSW to provide treated water from across the Murray River at Barmah. Goulburn Valley Water encourages Indigenous representation in community consultation processes to ensure that culturally significant areas are recognised.

In addition to the above the Authority includes "Welcome to Place" in all major community activities sponsored by Goulburn Valley Water. Last year during National Water Week a local dance company, Wolithica Indigenous Dance Company, was featured at the Goulburn Broken Awards Ceremony and Indigenous Communities and their relationship with natural resources (specifically water) is promoted in the "Catchment Capers" Community Education Project.



Create-A-Critta
by S Carr - Euroa SC

Women

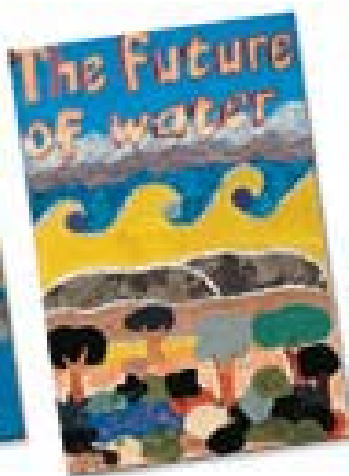
Goulburn Valley Water embraces "best practice" recruitment and management principles and supports the employment and development of females in non-traditional roles. Goulburn Valley Water has participated in the EWOV workshop on women prisoners and offenders; the Authority's Manager - Revenue is the contact for this program and handles all contacts in a confidential manner. The Authority also encourages female employees to participate in water industry groups such as VicWater, AWA and IWA. The Public Relations Officer for Goulburn Valley Water initiated and chaired the VicWater working group for the development of the Guidelines for Water Restriction in Victoria.

Education

The community education program at Goulburn Valley Water continues to develop from the relatively focussed Waterwatch community water quality monitoring program, introduced into the Goulburn Broken catchment thirteen years ago to a broader education program across the region. Goulburn Valley Water works closely with education officers from other authorities, government departments and local shires to implement the Goulburn Broken Waterwatch Program. Organisations involved include the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Goulburn Murray Water, Department of Primary Industries, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Parks Victoria, Local Government (City of Greater Shepparton, Benalla, Campaspe, Mansfield, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi and Strathbogie) and the Goulburn Murray Landcare Network.

Working with Schools

Goulburn Valley Water continued its strong focus on education in 2005/2006. The Authority worked with a total of 105 schools undertaking programs such as Waterwatch, Catchment Capers, Saltwatch, and organising a range of water related activities during National Water Week. In 2006 Goulburn Valley Water is trialling a new schools program called WaterWisdom.



Create-A-Critta
by Brandon Kay and Winning & Highly Commended
murals & posters, for 2005 National Water Week.



Waterwatch

Waterwatch is still proving to be a most successful mechanism for introducing water issues into the school curricula. The program provides schools with the tools to incorporate water activities, especially water quality monitoring, into their curricula. Across the Goulburn Valley region 73 schools participated in the Waterwatch Program in 2005. Activities undertaken included water quality monitoring, aquatic invertebrate sampling and habitat surveys.

In addition to the school Waterwatch program Goulburn Valley Water also works closely with community to monitor waterways in the catchment. The program monitors many waterways that have been identified in the River Health Strategy as being *Waterways of High Environmental Significance*. In 2005, 75 Waterwatch volunteers monitored water quality at sites across the Goulburn/Broken catchment. The volunteers monitor their local waterway for parameters including turbidity, salinity, nutrients and *E-coli*. The monitors are part of sub-catchment networks which meet regularly to discuss results and initiate community action to improve the health of the catchment.

Saltwatch

Salinity is a major issue in the Goulburn region and it is important that students understand the impact

that salinity has on the land and rivers. In 2006 875 students, from 22 schools attended special salinity awareness days, called "A Matter of Salt". Students participated in salty activities including *Edible Aquifer*, where students made an aquifer from ice cream, lemonade and lollies; *Salty Soils*, where students were required to test soil samples for salt and a *Taste of Salt* tested students' sensitivity to salt in water. Students then participated in Saltwatch Sports which involved six races with a salinity theme.

Catchment Capers

Catchment Capers is an integrated catchment-wide project developed for upper primary and lower secondary students. It is based on the Waterwatch program, but contains additional activities that deal with water, land and catchment flora and fauna issues, such as habitat surveys, water conservation, water quality and Frog watch. Each month, students monitor a local waterway for turbidity, salinity, dissolved oxygen and temperature and participate in other associated activities that complement the monitoring program. In 2006, 32 schools registered for the Catchment Capers Program. A dedicated website has been developed for Catchment Capers Schools, which provides information for teachers and students about the project, student worksheets, news and events and additional training resources for teachers.



Students participating Saltwatch Activities

WaterWisdom In Schools

Water conservation is a real life issue that is increasing in importance year by year. WaterWisdom in Schools facilitates a change in students' behaviour towards their use of water so that they become responsible adults, able to make informed decisions about water usage and protection.

The WaterWisdom Program aims to educate students, their families and wider communities about the need to value, protect and conserve our precious water resources.

The program is a long-term, whole-of-school approach to water education. Schools are encouraged to include water education across all major learning areas in their curriculum.

Goulburn Valley Water will work with schools to organise and fund water assessments/audits for participating WaterWisdom Schools each year and help them to implement a water management plan.

The objectives of Water Wisdom in Schools is to:

- Increase student's understanding of water use issues;
- Improve the school's water systems where appropriate;
- Encourage the use of water saving practices by the whole school population;
- Educate the wider community about water conservation through students; and
- Reduce water consumption in the school.

The program is currently being trialled at three schools in the region and it is anticipated that each year other schools will be added to the program.

Working with the Community

Goulburn Valley Water recognises the importance of providing the community with opportunities to learn about water conservation, water treatment, wastewater management and reuse, and the roles and responsibilities of the Authority. The Authority delivers its community education through a range of activities including:

- tours of facilities;
- presentations to local service clubs;
- stands at exhibitions;
- brochures;
- customer newsletters; and
- Goulburn Valley Water website.

Facility Tours and Presentations

During 2005/2006 over 370 people visited Goulburn Valley Water's facilities on organised tours. The community visited water treatment and wastewater management facilities at Euroa, Shepparton, Tatura, Kyabram, Kilmore and Cobram. Goulburn Valley Water's employees, also gave talks at Rotary, Probus and other Service Clubs across the region including, Cobram, Alexandra, Seymour, Shepparton, Tatura and Numurkah.

Exhibitions

Goulburn Valley Water participated in three regional events in 2005/2006. In February 2006, the Authority set up a display at the Seymour Alternate Farming Expo to provide the community with information on reclaimed water reuse, biosolids reuse and water conservation. In late February, a water conservation

exhibition was manned at the Shepparton Bush Market Day. In April Goulburn Valley Water displayed water quality and conservation information at the Goulburn Valley Field Day at Stanhope. The display promoted the range of activities that schools and the community can get involved with under the Waterwatch program.

National Water Week

The Goulburn/Broken National Water Week Committee held a festival of events during 2005 National Water Week which was once again a huge success in the catchment.

The week commenced with free boat cruises on Sunday 16 October from Cobram and a boat cruise and a tour of the new wetlands area at Tahbilk Winery, near Nagambie. In addition to the boat cruises, there was a canoe tour of Lake Nagambie. Participants were informed about the Lake's history from expert tour guides and were able to study the birdlife and surrounding native vegetation and explore the backwaters of Lake Nagambie.

Movie nights were held for the general public in Euroa, Mansfield and Swanpool with large crowds attending screenings of movies including "Whale Rider", "Fern Gully - The Last Rainforest" and "No Worries". Wetland and river walks were also popular with around 200 people attending twilight walks in Yea, Mangalore, Mansfield, and Benalla.

The school competitions proved to be popular again this year with over 300 entries in the poster competition, over 40 entries in the murals competition and over 60 entries in the Create-A-Critta competition. The murals and Create-A-Critta required a minimum of three types of recycled materials to be used in their creation.

The community again embraced the writing and photographic competitions with over 200 entries being received for both competitions. The writing competition was open to all ages with Junior, Youth and Open categories. Community members were asked to submit

fiction and non fiction stories of swimming holes, fishing days, floods and dramas, picnics and boating. The photographic competition invited community members to submit photos depicting the rivers and creeks of the Goulburn Broken Catchment. The competition was open to all ages with three categories: Best Historical Shot, Best Recreational Shot, and Best Nature Image.

In addition to the community and schools competition, each organisation that sponsored National Water Week created an award. The awards, along with the competition winners were announced at the Inaugural National Water Week Awards Night, which was held in Shepparton on Wednesday 19 October. The Awards included:

- Waterwise Garden Award - GVW
- Outstanding Water Use Efficiency - Achievements in Primary Production Award - DPI
- Best Practice Irrigation Management on Farm Award - G-MW
- Outstanding Commitment to the Environment Award - GB-CMA
- Industry Award - Best Practice in Stormwater Management - Shire of Campaspe
- Building Industry Award - Good Practice in Stormwater Management - City of Greater Shepparton

Water Week activities could not occur without the support of our sponsors and committee; Goulburn Valley Water, Goulburn-Broken Waterwatch, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Goulburn-Murray Water, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, City of Greater Shepparton, Campaspe Shire Council, Department of Primary Industries/Department of Sustainability & Environment, Resource GV and Kyabram Fauna Park.



2005 National Water Week Committee