



Customers and the Community

Picture
 Longwood Reservoir CRC
 Inspection (L-R South
 West District Manager Ian
 Matheson, CRC Members
 Tony Court, Kevin
 Kennedy, Steve Tobin,
 Geoff Guest, Max Cox,
 Neil Tubb, GVW General
 Manager Technical
 Services Allen Gale, CRC
 Members Heather Healey,
 Ian Moore and Ian Ball

Community Service Obligations

Goulburn Valley Water is required to provide a range of concessions and rebates on behalf of the Victorian Government. In 2008/2009, the combined total of these concessions and rebates was \$2.7 million.

The table below outlines the value of the Corporation's community service obligations.

Type	2008/2009	2007/2008
Pension Concessions	\$2,432,769	\$2,032,634
Water & Sewerage Rebate Scheme	\$238,859	\$234,973
Utility Relief Grant Scheme	\$13,898	\$6,076
Life Support Machines	\$510	\$215
Hardship relief grants	-	-
Total	\$2,686,036	\$2,273,898

Community Engagement

Community engagement is an integral part of Goulburn Valley Water business activities. To enhance the Corporation's commitment to better understand its customers and the community, Goulburn Valley Water established a Corporate Community Reference Committee in August 2008. The members of this committee bring a diverse range of skills and experience in business and community involvement. This committee has been highlighted in the Case Study titled "Working with the Community."

Throughout the year Goulburn Valley Water has also been working closely with the communities of Alexandra, Eildon and Thornton on the Upper Goulburn Regional Water Supply project. A Community Reference

Committee has been established for this project with the purpose being to review and provide input into the pipeline route selection.

In May 2009 a Community Reference Committee was established for the upgrade of the Longwood Water Supply. The purpose of the committee is to provide feedback and drivers to help determine the most appropriate source of water for the Longwood Community. The committee consists of 12 people and has been established for the life of the project which includes the planning phase and construction phase.

Customer Service

Goulburn Valley Water has two main customer service teams, the Customer Accounts and Services team and the Technical Services Customer Services team.

The Customer Accounts & Services team is responsible for the issuing of accurate accounts, managing tenancies and account collection activities. This team continued to deliver a high level of customer service and met performance targets set in the Corporation's Water Plan. This performance is also reflected in high levels of customer satisfaction as per the annual customer perception survey results.

In 2008/2009 the Customer Accounts & Services team distributed 192,000 bills. On average they receive 100 calls from customers daily and deal with a wide range of enquiries. These include change of address, billing and metering enquiries and payment assistance.

The Technical Services Customer Services team consists of three groups, the 24 hour Customer Service Centre, Property Services Team and the Land Development Team.

Did You Know?

That the Customer Accounts and Services team 1300 number has taken over 25,000 calls in 2008/2009 and the 24 hour customer service centre 1800 number has taken over 7,500 calls.

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 Corporation's customer service register and then dispatched to the relevant district office for attention. The outcome of the service request is then logged.

The Property Services Team is able to assist customers with asset locations, connections to water & sewer and any other technical property servicing enquiries. This may include supplying properties located inside and outside both the water and sewer districts, structures over Corporation works and metering enquiries. The team can be contacted between the hours of 8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday, to assist customers.

The Land Development Team works with consultants to provide the water and sewer assets required to service new subdivisions. The land developer engages a consultant to design and construct the assets to the Corporation's standard. In addition to meeting the costs of servicing the subdivision, the developer is required to pay new customer contributions, which are a contribution towards the major water and sewerage assets that service the property. At the end of the maintenance period, the assets are formally transferred over to the Corporation which assumes ongoing maintenance responsibility.

Customer Perception

Goulburn Valley Water values the views of its customers and their views are taken into account in developing the Corporation's plans and strategies. Since 1998 the Corporation has undertaken an annual market research project to help understand customers' views and perceptions.

The market research provides and enhances Goulburn Valley Water's understanding of customers' perceptions and expectations. It helps to identify any gaps that exist between customers' rating of importance of services attributes and their perception of performance. This is then measured against benchmarks established in the previous surveys.

The research is undertaken by an independent research company. A sample size of 414 people from across Goulburn Valley Water's region was used for the 2009 Customer Perception Survey. This sample size provided results with a 4% to 5% margin of error - at the 95% confidence interval.

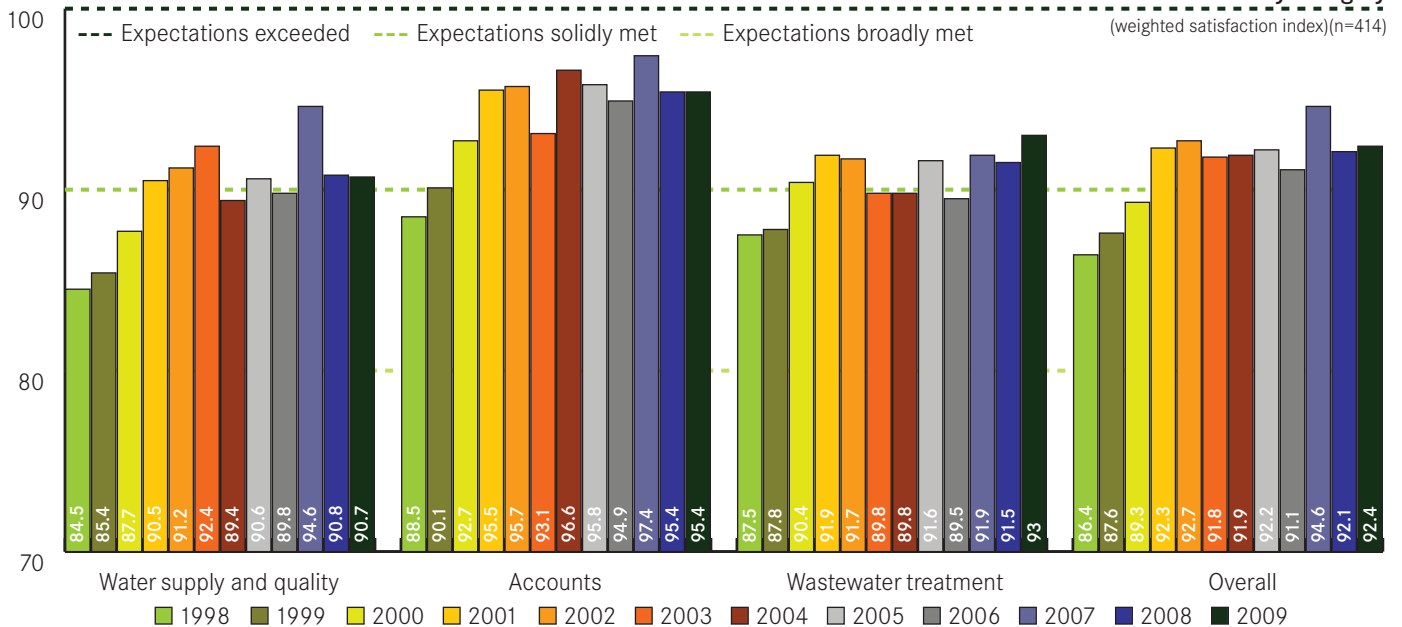
The overall 2009 customer satisfaction rating of 92.4 has increased slightly by 0.3 points from the 92.1 overall rating in 2008. 87% of customers scored on or above the minimum satisfaction benchmark of 80. This compares with 88% in 2008.

The past twelve years results in the key areas of water supply, wastewater treatment, tariffs and the overall results are shown in the graph.

The survey measured 15 service items, including items such as taste of water, colour of water, smell of water, readability of bills etc. Of the 15 items, 13 have a customer satisfaction score of 89 or above suggesting that customers are strongly satisfied with the Corporation on these issues.

The item, taste of water, fell below the benchmark of 80 indicating some dissatisfaction amongst customers on this item.

2009 Customer Satisfaction Survey Customer satisfaction by category





Working with the Community

In August 2008 Goulburn Valley Water established a Corporate Community Reference Committee (CCRC) consisting of 12 members from across the region.

Picture
L-R Sally Dickinson, Mary Hall, Sue Marstaeller, Lynnda Heard, Andrea Smith, Margaret Moss, Timothy Purbrick, Philip Clancy, Bruce Ackerman. Missing from the photo is Neville Atkinson, Catherine Keady and Ian Watt.

The membership of the CCRC is made up of customers and non customers appointed for an initial three year period. The Corporation is pleased with the diversity of the group and is looking forward to working with the members.

Members of the CCRC include:

Mary Hall from Buxton
Catherine Keady from Cobram
Sally Dickinson from Cobram
Sue Marstaeller from Heathcote Junction
Andrea Smith from Kialla
Philip Clancy from Kilmore
Bruce Ackerman from Marysville
Lynnda Heard from Merton
Ian Watt from Mundoona
Margaret Moss from Nagambie
Timothy Purbrick from Nagambie
Neville Atkinson from Shepparton

The CCRC's inaugural meeting was in September 2008 and they met monthly for the first three months. The initial three meetings provided the committee with background on the Corporation and developed the working principles of the CCRC. The members also provided input into the Corporation's communications strategy, water conservation messages and the community engagement programs for the Corporate Licence.

The committee also had the opportunity to hear from DSE on the Northern Region Sustainable Water Strategy and from DHS on the fluoridation of Seymour, Cobram and Kyabram.

After the initial induction meetings the CCRC now meets quarterly, February, May, August and November.

To date the CCRC have been involved in development of the community engagement programs for items such as the Recycled Water Return to Stream project, and Carbon Neutrality. The committee has also been involved in reviewing and making recommendations on amendments to the annual customer satisfaction survey questionnaire.

During the initial meetings the committee developed a list of roles and responsibilities and also developed a mission for the committee. The mission statement is as follows:

"Through information sharing we will responsibly represent the views of the community to facilitate informed decision making by Goulburn Valley Water.

We will do this by the quality involvement of all CCRC members and GVW officers, the CCRC members providing advice on community views and mechanisms for GVW to facilitate community understanding on relevant water issues."

At its May 2009 meeting a review of the CCRC process was undertaken via a short survey. The survey looked at the induction program, the development of the roles and responsibilities for the group, participation to date and satisfaction level on a personal scale and as part of the group.

Item	Rating
Importance of Induction Program	8.5
Importance of Developing the Roles and Responsibilities	8.9
Rating of Personal Input to Date	7.3
Individual Perspective of Satisfaction of CCRC Process	9.2
Group Perspective of Satisfaction of CCRC Process	9.0

Community Minded Staff



The February 2009 Bushfires affected many Victorian communities, including some of those serviced by Goulburn Valley Water.

Picture (Top)
Cattle from Bushfire Affected Areas Grazing at the Shepparton wastewater management facility

Picture (Inset)
Some of our staff CFA Volunteers the morning after the firestorm: (L-R) Chairman Mark Lawlor, Senior Engineer Alan Tyson, Plant Operator Rachel Lawlor

Picture (Right)
Charity Fund Treasurer Melinda Malcolm with GVW Hospice Care's Executive Manager Carmel Smith

In response to the tragedy, all Goulburn Valley Water staff did a fine job under demanding conditions to help restore affected essential services.

To add to this, staff also contributed to the bushfire response and recovery effort in many other ways. For example, some staff are volunteer CFA members and responded to the initial fire fight on 7th February, while others contributed tirelessly in the following weeks to contain the many fires burning across the State.

Staff members also housed displaced families from the Marysville area in their time of need, while other staff contributed to post fire stock fencing reinstatement efforts.

The Corporation also accommodated displaced livestock at its wastewater management facilities

and donated hay grown at the facilities as stock feed to the bushfire affected areas.

To add to all this, the Staff Charity Fund donated around \$3,000 to the Red Cross Bushfire Appeal from staff contributions.

Since the establishment of the Staff Charity Fund in 1998, the fund has donated over \$100,000 to needy community programs. Staff members raise money through a range of activities such as payroll deductions, morning teas, meat raffles, etc.

The staff Charity Fund also actively supports "meals on wheels" program, blood bank donations and even provides "hands on" assistance to local sporting club's major events such as the Shepparton Half Ironman Triathlon.



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 the Corporation’s systems and employees are sensitive to cultural and language diversity within the Corporation’s customer base and regional community.

Goulburn Valley Water is aware of its responsibilities with respect to community inclusiveness in the areas of:

- Culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Women
- Youth
- Indigenous communities.

Goulburn Valley Water will continue to plan for and monitor against its community inclusiveness obligations and ensure that all staff who interact with customers are aware of these obligations.

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 2008/2009 for Goulburn Valley Water and all regional urban water corporations (RUWC) are set out in the table.

Type of Contact	GVW	All RUWC
Enquiries	8	39
Complaints referred to Provider	11	119
Complaints referred to higher – level contact	15	185
Complaints Investigated	5	54

Management of Social and Economic Impacts

Goulburn Valley Water has a hardship policy in place to assist customers in genuine financial hardship. The Corporation’s Customer Account officers are trained so that they can encourage customers to discuss their personal circumstances surrounding non-payment of accounts. The officers can then determine if there are any Government assistance programs the customers may qualify for to assist them with their short or long term financial hardship. The officers also provide a range of payment options to assist the customer in working out the best option for their situation. The hardship policy is reviewed and updated on an annual basis and can be viewed online at www.gvwater.vic.gov.au.

Community Education

The community education program at Goulburn Valley Water is a broad-ranging program that raises awareness in the whole community of a range of water-related issues from conservation and sustainability to water quality and biodiversity.

Did You Know?

Each year over 2,000 people will visit a Goulburn Valley Water facility on an organised tour.

Working with Schools

Goulburn Valley Water continued its strong focus on education in 2008/2009. The Corporation worked with a total of 84 schools undertaking activities focussing on water conservation, water production and wastewater management, as well as organising a range of water related activities during National Water Week. Many of these schools participated in two or more activities during the school year.

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 Corporation. The Corporation 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
- The Goulburn Valley Water website.

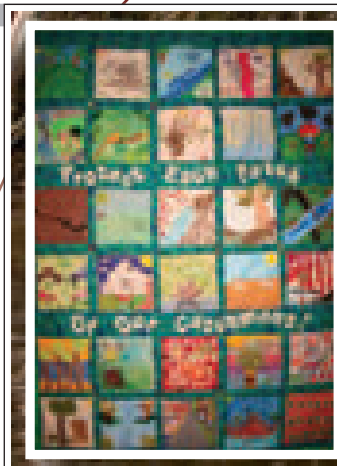
Facility Tours and Presentations

During 2008/2009 over 2,000 people visited Goulburn Valley Water’s facilities on organised tours. The community visited water treatment and wastewater management facilities at Alexandra, Cobram, Euroa, Kyabram, Longwood, Shepparton and Tatura.

Goulburn Valley Water’s employees also gave talks at Rotary, Probus, U3A, Gardening Clubs, and other service clubs across the region.



Picture
Managing Director Peter Quinn, Member for Northern Victoria Region Kaye Darveniza and District Manager Central Wastewater Darren Sharman at the Tatura wastewater management facility



National Water Week

Each year Goulburn Valley Water is an active member and the coordinator for the Goulburn Broken National Water Week Committee. The 2008 National Water Week was once again a success with many competitions and events organised by the Committee to highlight water issues within the whole community.

School Activities

School Competitions

A successful patch competition ran again this year where students decorated fabric squares to promote the message “Protect Each Patch of Our Catchment”. Five hundred squares from 12 schools were received with the best sewn together to produce a striking quilt that is touring regional schools during 2009.

Fifty entries were received in an innovative new project to educate the school and wider community about water issues. School groups focussed on a single issue relevant to the local area in decorating large used polling booths with information about water using pictures, posters and display aids. These Water Information Stations were placed in locations well frequented by local people such as supermarket, libraries and other commercial premises.

School Productions

Two performing arts groups, “Theatre on Toast” and “Our Planet Enterprises”, toured schools across the region during National Water Week to present highly entertaining productions on water conservation issues. Almost 2,000 students attended these performances.

Community Activities

Tours and Wetland/River walks

A number of community activities were held during the week to celebrate our water resources and riverine environment. Boat cruises at Nagambie and the Barmah Wetlands, canoe tours along the Broken River near Benalla, a Water Cycle along the Goulburn River bike path at Shepparton and walks around four important wetlands in the region attracted over 200 participants.

During National Water Week, 140 people visited water treatment plants at Euroa, Shepparton, Gargarre and Murchison to learn about water treatment processes undertaken by Goulburn Valley Water.

River to Tap Tour

30 people participated in the River to Tap Tour for the Euroa catchment. The purpose of the tour was to provide the community with an opportunity to find out where the town water supply comes from, the requirements placed on Goulburn Valley Water for taking water from the Seven Creeks, where the water is stored and how the water is treated.

The tour started off at a weir on Seven Creeks at Gooram which is not accessible by the general public. After seeing where the water comes from the tour continued onto the Waterhouse and Mt Hutt reservoirs.

After the reservoirs it was onto the water treatment plant to find out how the water is treated before it is delivered to customers homes.

Writing and Photograph Competitions

The community writing and photography competitions were again popular in 2008 with over 170 entries being received for both competitions.

Award Ceremony

The Water Week Awards Night was held on Wednesday 22nd October in Shepparton with around 250 people attending. The winners of all Water Week Competitions were announced and guests were treated to a wonderful display of artwork and culture that included all Water Information Stations and the catchment quilt.

The awards included:

- **Waterwise Garden Award** – sponsored by Goulburn Valley Water
- **Water Use Efficiency: Irrigation Award** – sponsored by Goulburn-Murray Water
- **Commitment to Natural Resource Management** on a Goulburn Broken Waterway Award – sponsored by Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- **Building Industry Awards: Stormwater Management** – sponsored by City of Greater Shepparton & Moira Shire

Water Week activities could not occur without the support of sponsors and the committee. Participating organisations included Goulburn Valley Water, Goulburn Broken Waterwatch, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Goulburn- Murray Water, Northern Victorian Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP), Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, City of Greater Shepparton, Moira Shire and the Country News.

Shorter Shower Mission



As part of National Water Week 2008, Goulburn Valley Water's education team developed a program to encourage students and their families to monitor the time they spent in the shower over a seven day period. Students and their families were able to learn about potential water savings inside the home in a practical way.

Picture
Participants from St Johns School Euroa - Photo courtesy of Euroa Gazette

All students were provided with an easy to use Shower Timer and a Record Sheet to record shower times over seven consecutive days. Other family members and school staff were also welcome to participate in this activity.

The times recorded by the students were used by the teacher to compare water usage within the class and between classes, and to determine the effectiveness of their water conservation efforts.

The program was designed with three main objectives

1. Encourage student participation because it was fun and challenging
2. Encourage teachers uptake because the activity satisfied some Victorian Education Learning Standard (VELS) domains and was time-effective, short-term and easy to run
3. Goulburn Valley Water would send a strong message about water saving to a broad section of its customer base.

20 Schools participated from across the region with almost 1,600 students taking part. Classes of students formed teams with clever water inspired names like "Aquanoughts" (Mansfield PS), "Stream Team" (St Mary's Mooroopna) and "Minute Minders" (Wilmot Rd PS).

Shower times in minutes and seconds were converted into 'litres' by a formula in Microsoft Excel. Students were able to make linkages between time spent in the shower and the number of litres they used from day to day in the shower.

86% of the teams participating showed a drop in shower times over the seven days. By the last day students were using a total of 12,248 litres per day less than on the first day.

This difference equates to 46 seconds less in the shower per participant.