DRINKING WATER QUALITY ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

EAST GIPPSLAND WATER

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Cover Image: EGW local media source – Network/Aerial Imagery 2023. The Woodglen water treatment plant and supply basin #one. This supplies the majority of the East Gippsland population.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report conforms with guidance from the Department of Health in relation to section 26 *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003*. Additional details have been included in the report in accordance with section 21 of the *Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2025*.

East Gippsland Water (EGW) provides quality drinking water services across an area covering 10% of Victoria and a population of approximately 49,000 people. This includes 26,494 active water service connections. We are committed to providing customers with excellent quality and safe drinking water that meets the requirements of the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003*, EGW's Statement of Obligations, customer expectations and EGW's Drinking Water Quality Policy.

EGW treated and delivered over 4,608 ML of drinking water in 2025-26. The quality of our drinking water consistently performed well against the *Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2025* with all drinking water supplied to our customers remaining compliant with health-based drinking water quality standards during 2025-26.

We continue to improve our supplies through strategic investment in new infrastructure and focus on maintenance systems for existing assets. We continue to improve our operational activities to identify hazards and manage risks.

1.1. Characteristics of the region

The Gippsland region presents a climate that is generally temperate and humid. Our service region covers approximately 21,000 square kilometres and extends east from Lindenow and Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance to Mallacoota near the New South Wales border, and as far north as Omeo and Dinner Plain in the High Country of the Victorian Alps (Figure 1).

Most of the water delivered to customers is sourced from local river systems. Underground aquifers are utilised in our Mallacoota and Mitchell systems to supplement river-based supply. Dinner Plain is the only area where all drinking water is sourced from local groundwater aquifers.

The region is currently experiencing a moderate population increase of 1 to 2 percent per year.

As reported in previous years, nine individual water supply systems serve the communities of East Gippsland including:

1. Bemm River
2. Buchan
3. Cann River
4. Dinner Plain
5. Mallacoota
6. Mitchell System - Bairnsdale, Bruthen, Eagle Point, Johnsonville, Lakes Entrance, Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust, Lake Tyers Beach, Lindenow, Lindenow South, Metung, Newlands Arm, Nicholson, Nowa Nowa, Paynesville, Raymond Island, Sarsfield, Swan Reach
7. Omeo
8. Orbost, Marlo, Newmerella (Brodribb System) and
9. Swifts Creek.

A summary of our water supply and treatment systems is provided in Section 2.1.

Figure 1: EGW's region of operation

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2. WATER TREATMENT AND QUALITY RISK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

To manage water quality risks, a Drinking Water Quality Risk Management System (DWQRMS) supports and identifies key risks, ensuring they are managed appropriately. The DWQRMS has been developed in accordance with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011. An overview of its structure is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Structure of the Drinking Water Quality Risk Management System with reference to internal documents.

2.1. Water Supply System Summary

Water treatment processes vary slightly according to each water sampling area. A description of each treatment process and chemical additives is included in the glossary of terms in section 12 of this report.

A summary of the nine systems is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Water Supply and Treatment Systems Summary

WATER SAMPLING AREA	POPULATION SUPPLIED*	SOURCE WATER	CATCHMENT DESCRIPTION	RAW WATER STORAGE	TREATMENT PLANT	TREATMENT PROCESS	ADDED SUBSTANCES	COMMENTS
BAIRNSDALE	9018	Mitchell River and the Latrobe Aquifer (5 bores, seasonal supplemental supply)	Primarily forest (> 90%) with some human, forestry and agricultural impacts, some cattle and some septic tanks particularly around the town of Dargo. The non-forested area is around 5-10% of the catchment, but is mostly located near the river banks	Woodglen No.1 (850ML) & №.2 (713ML) storage basins	Woodglen	Coagulation, flocculation, clarification (dissolved air flotation), filtration (granular media filter), disinfection, fluoridation, mechanical dewatering	Caustic soda, poly (Magnafloc LT 25 & 27), poly aluminium chlorohydrate (PAC 23), chlorine (compressed chlorine gas and sodium hypochlorite); fluoride (fluorosilicic acid), powder activated carbon, copper sulphate (Earthtec)	LT 25 used for backwash water clarification LT 27 used for centrifuge Fluoride dosing commenced in August 2010 Capacity for powder activated carbon addition exists, but is not currently in use Earthtec - a product utilised to reduce algae in water basins as required
LINDENOW	263							
LINDENOW SOUTH	207							
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	634							
MERRANGBAUR	1068							
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	3165							
KALIMNA	710							
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE NEWLANDS ARM	4373							
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	984							
METUNG	1534							
NOWA NOWA	100							

WATER SAMPLING AREA	POPULATION SUPPLIED*	SOURCE WATER	CATCHMENT DESCRIPTION	RAW WATER STORAGE	TREATMENT PLANT	TREATMENT PROCESS	ADDED SUBSTANCES	COMMENTS
BUCHAN	108	Buchan River	80% forest with some minor impacts (forestry, agriculture, cattle and camping)	420kL	Buchan	Buchan, Cann River and Bemm River water sampling areas: Coagulation, flocculation, clarification (dissolved air flotation), filtration (granular media filter), disinfection	Caustic soda, poly aluminium chlorohydrate (PAC 23), poly (LT 25), chlorine (sodium hypochlorite), copper sulphate (Earthtec)	LT 25 used for backwash water clarification
CANN RIVER	191	Cann River	Forest, some agricultural land (cattle), minimal septic tanks, roads	3.4ML basin	Cann River			
BEMM RIVER	103	Bemm River	90% forest, with some minor forestry, agricultural and human impacts.	6.4 ML modular covered basin	Bemm River			
SWIFTS CREEK	130	Tambo River	Forest, agricultural land (cattle), some septic tanks, roads and logging	4.6ML basin	Swifts Creek	Coagulation, flocculation, dissolved air flotation, filtration, disinfection (Ultraviolet (UV) and chlorine)	Caustic soda, poly aluminium chlorohydrate (PAC 23), poly (LT 25), chlorine (sodium hypochlorite)	LT 25 used for backwash water clarification

WATER SAMPLING AREA	POPULATION SUPPLIED*	SOURCE WATER	CATCHMENT DESCRIPTION	RAW WATER STORAGE	TREATMENT PLANT	TREATMENT PROCESS	ADDED SUBSTANCES	COMMENTS
ORBOST (INC MARLO AND NEWMERELLA)	2104	Brodribb River & Rocky River	90% forest, with some forestry, agricultural and human impacts	6ML basin	Orbost	Orbost & Omeo water sampling areas: Coagulation, flocculation, clarification (Up flow clarifier), filtration (granular media filter), disinfection,	Caustic Soda, poly aluminium chlorohydrate (PAC 23), poly (LT 20), chlorine (sodium hypochlorite)	Shadecloth Orbost (partially treated storage)
OMEO	274	Butchers Creek	State forest with minimal human impacts (some grazing)	5ML (shade-cloth covered) and 10ML (Hex-covered) basins	Omeo			
MALLACOOTA	1065	Betka River & Aquifer (3 bores)	State forest with minimal human impacts (some forestry)	41ML basin (shade-cloth covered)	Mallacoota	Ultraviolet (UV) disinfection (Mallacoota only)	Caustic soda, poly aluminium chlorohydrate (PAC 23), poly (LT 20 & 25), chlorine (sodium hypochlorite)	LT 25 used for backwash water clarification
DINNER PLAIN	412	Aquifer (2 bores)	Supply is extracted from bores at ~70m depth	700kL tank	Dinner Plain	Ultraviolet (UV) disinfection	Chlorine low dose to support UV	Community engagement being finalised

***** The Population supplied is the equivalent number of customer connections, including both residential and non-residential customers.

2.2. Issues

There were no water quality issues in addition to what has been reported in this document.

2.3. Source Water Protection

The Drinking Water Quality Risk Management Plan (RMP) identifies risks to drinking water quality at all steps in the water supply chain, from catchment to consumer. This ensures that appropriate control measures and checks are in place to effectively manage those risks.

In accordance with catchment and water protection policy we recognise the critical importance of sustainable catchment management for the protection of water quality and quantity. EGW works in collaboration with several external stakeholders, including the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and the East Gippsland and North East Catchment Management Authorities to identify and manage water quality risks at the catchment level. Our catchments' health risks are addressed in comprehensive waterway strategies developed by the above authorities with the support of EGW with the primary goal of continual improvement to river and catchment health. The works conducted as part of the waterway strategies reduce source water quality risks. EGW however, acknowledges ongoing improvements are needed, through initiatives such as livestock exclusion from rivers, riparian zone revegetation and river bank stabilisation for erosion control. This applies in all water catchments as shown in Figure 3.

This integrated management approach to protecting source water is underpinned via following legislation:

- *Water Act 189*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*
- *Land Act 1958*
- *Environment Protection Act 2017*

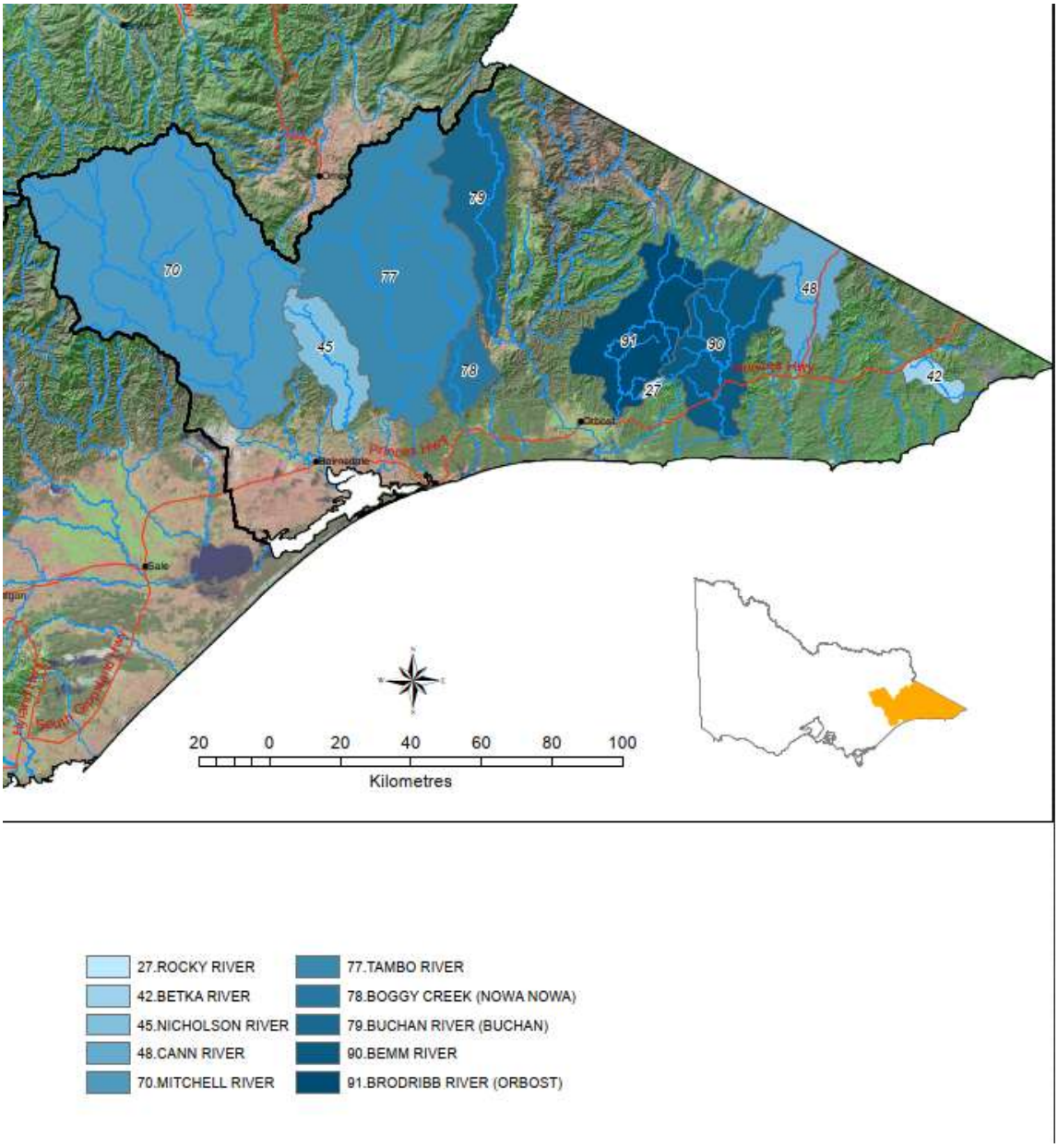

Figure 3: EGW Source Water Catchments
(Source: Declared Water Supply Catchments)

Catchments such as №. 27, 45 and 78 are not supply catchments for EGW but fall within our operating area.

3. DRINKING WATER RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN AUDIT RESULTS

Regulatory audits of the DWQRMS are undertaken as directed by the Department of Health (DH). A regulatory audit of EGW's drinking water risk management plan was undertaken in February 2023, against the requirements of the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003* (the Act) and *Regulations 2015*. The prior year's 'Annual Drinking Water Quality Report 2023-2024', available on the EGW website, provides a summary of the actions taken to close the audit findings (refer pages 9 thru 10 of the report).

New *Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2025* came into operation in Victoria on 6 July 2025, and future regulatory audits will be undertaken against the Act and the new regulations when required.

A copy of the RMP audit certificate is provided in the Appendix A to this document.

4. EMERGENCY INCIDENT AND EVENT MANAGEMENT

4.1 Management of Incidents

EGW implements an Emergency Incident Reponses System that assists with managing and responding to incidents including water quality incidents. EGW's Drinking Water Quality Risk Management System has specific operational alarm limits related to forecasting non-compliant drinking water so that appropriate and timely response can react before a drinking water health risk occurs. Section 18 and 22 notifications are captured in these systems.

4.2. Section 18 Notifications/Reports

A Section 18 notification is a notification to DH required under Section 18 of the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003*, which states:

'A water supplier must notify the Secretary in writing if it becomes aware that the drinking water it is supplying to another person does not comply, or is not likely to comply, with any relevant water quality standard and must do so within 10 days after it becomes aware of that fact.'

In 2025-26, there were **no** Section 18 notifications made to DH.

4.3. Section 22 Reports

A Section 22 report is a report to DH required under Section 22 of the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003*, which states:

'(1) This section applies if an officer of a water supplier, water storage manager or council believes or suspects, on reasonable grounds, that water supplied, or to be supplied, for drinking purposes-

(a) may be the cause of an illness; or
(b) may be the means by which an illness is being, has been or will be, transmitted; or
(c) may contain any pathogen, substance, chemical or blue-green algae toxin, whether alone or in combination, at levels that may pose a risk to human health; or
(d) may cause widespread public complaint.

'(2) On forming that belief or suspicion, the officer must immediately report his or her belief or suspicion to the Secretary, and must make the report in the form required by the Secretary.'

In 2025-26, there were **no** Section 22 notifications made to DH.

5. QUALITY OF DRINKING WATER FOR 2025-26

The 2025-26 Water Quality Annual Report includes Regulated Parameter data for the *Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2025* (SDWR 25*)* as shown in table 2. All results irrespective of sample location and type for drinking water supply have been included.

Table 2: SDWR 2025 – Regulation.16 (R.16), Drinking Water Quality Standards

PARAMETER	RELEVANT SAMPLING FREQUENCY PER WATER SAMPLING AREA (R.14)	WATER QUALITY STANDARD FOR EACH WATER SAMPLING AREA	PRESENTATION OF EGW RESULTS
ESCHERICHIA COLI (E. coli)	One sample per week	'All samples of drinking water collected are found to contain no *Escherichia coli* per 100 millilitres of drinking water, with the exception of any false positive sample'	Reported as 0 *Escherichia coli* detected in 100mL
OTHER CHEMICAL OR PHYSICAL CONTAMINANTS*	At the frequency determined by the Water Supplier's water sampling program (which is risk-based)	The characteristic '…does not exceed the health guideline value (if any) that is specified' in Table 10.6 of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines' for that measured characteristic	Results expressed according to the relevant units in Table 10.6
TURBIDITY	One sample per week	The 95th percentile of results for samples in any 12-month period must be less than or equal to 5.0 Nephelometric Turbidity Units	Results expressed to one decimal place.

*including those not covered by table 10.6 as well as other microbial, but which may 'pose a risk to human health'

Parameters such as pH and trihalomethanes must be sampled *at least once per month* if included in the water sampling program, though pH is not mandated until after 6/1/2028.

PARAMETER	SAMPLING FREQUENCY (R.14)	WATER QUALITY STANDARD /WATER SAMPLING AREA	PRESENTATION OF EGW RESULTS
TOTAL TRIHALOMETHANES	One sample per month	Less than or equal to 0.25 milligrams per litre (mg/L) of drinking water	Results expressed to two decimal places

EGW follows a risk-based sampling program from catchment to consumer throughout each drinking water supply system. In addition to the drinking water parameters sampled, this program determines the location and frequency of samples taken throughout each system.

In 2025-26 EGW complied with the schedule of the risk-based drinking water sampling program.

5.1. Regulated Parameters

5.1.1. Escherichia coli (E. coli)

E. coli is a microorganism that may cause illness in susceptible individuals. *E. coli* is associated with contamination of water supplies with faecal material and is therefore considered to be an important indicator of the safety of the water supply. Samples are taken at least weekly in each of the water sampling areas. There must be no *E.coli* detected in drinking water within the distribution system, i.e. zero *E. coli*/100 ml.

Table 3: *E. coli* sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	Sampling Frequency	Total №. Samples [1]	Maximum Detected (orgs/100ml)	Number of detections and investigations conducted (s.22)	Number of samples where standard was not met.	Comments Complying (Yes / No)
BAIRNSDALE	Weekly	124	0	-	0	Yes
BEMM RIVER	Weekly	106	0	-	0	Yes
BUCHAN	Weekly	104	0	-	0	Yes
CANN RIVER	Weekly	106	0	-	0	Yes
DINNER PLAIN	Weekly	104	0	-	0	Yes
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Weekly	106	0	-	0	Yes
KALIMNA	Weekly	102	0	-	0	Yes
LINDENOW	Weekly	104	0	-	0	Yes
LINDENOW SOUTH	Weekly	104	0	-	0	Yes
MALLACOOTA	Weekly	106	0	-	0	Yes
MERRANGBAUR	Weekly	103	0	-	0	Yes
METUNG	Weekly	102	0	-	0	Yes
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Weekly	102	0	-	0	Yes
NOWA NOWA	Weekly	159	0	-	0	Yes
OMEO	Weekly	104	0	-	0	Yes
ORBOST	Weekly	108	0	-	0	Yes
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Weekly	104	0	-	0	Yes
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Weekly	107	0	-	0	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK	Weekly	104	0	-	0	Yes

[1] Multiple site samples are taken across water sampling areas.

All water sampling areas were compliant with the *E. coli* water quality standard for the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 3).

5.1.2. Total Trihalomethanes

Trihalomethanes (THMs) are compounds that may be produced when chlorine disinfectant reacts with organic material present in the water. These compounds may impact public health if they are present in drinking water in high concentrations over a long period of time. Samples are taken monthly in each of the water sampling areas. There must be less than or equal to 0.25 mg/L of Total Trihalomethanes within drinking water.

Table 4: Total Trihalomethanes sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL Nº. SAMPLES	Nº. OF SAMPLES ABOVE THE STANDARD	MAX mg/L	AVERAGE mg/L	MET THE STANDARD (YES / NO)
Bairnsdale	Monthly	12	0	0.07	0.04	Yes
Bemm River	Monthly	12	0	0.08	0.05	Yes
Buchan	Monthly	12	0	0.16	0.07	Yes
Cann River	Monthly	12	0	0.09	0.06	Yes
Dinner Plain*	Monthly+	43	0	0.00	0.00	Yes
Eagle Point-Paynesville	Monthly+	14	0	0.06	0.04	Yes
Kalimna	Monthly	12	0	0.08	0.06	Yes
Lindenow	Monthly	12	0	0.03	0.02	Yes
Lindenow South	Monthly	12	0	0.04	0.03	Yes
Mallacoota	Monthly	12	0	0.15	0.08	Yes
Merrangbaur	Monthly	12	0	0.08	0.06	Yes
Metung	Monthly	12	0	0.06	0.05	Yes
Nicholson-Swan Reach	Monthly	12	0	0.06	0.04	Yes
Nowa Nowa	Monthly	12	0	0.08	0.07	Yes
Omeo	Monthly	12	0	0.06	0.03	Yes
Orbost	Monthly	13	0	0.05	0.03	Yes
Sarsfield-Bruthen	Monthly	12	0	0.07	0.04	Yes
Sunlakes-Toorloo	Monthly	12	0	0.09	0.06	Yes
Swifts Creek	Monthly	12	0	0.09	0.06	Yes

* Dinner Plain had more THM samples in this twelve-month period due to the ongoing use of a chlorine disinfection system to control occasional bacterial detections within source (bore) supply.

All water sampling areas were compliant with the Total Trihalomethanes water quality standard for the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 4).

5.1.3. Turbidity

Turbidity measures the presence of fine suspended material present in the water and at elevated levels may result in a 'cloudy' appearance of water. Turbidity is an indirect indicator for the general quality of water and may represent fine particles such as clays, minerals or microscopic organisms. Samples are taken weekly in each of the water sampling areas. The 95th percentile of turbidity results for samples in any 12-month period must be less than or equal to 5.0 NTU within drinking water.

Table 5: Turbidity sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

Water Sampling Area	Sampling Frequency	Total No. Samples	Max NTU	95th Percentile	Met the Standard (yes / no)
Bairnsdale	Weekly	124	0.2	0.1	Yes
Bemm River	Weekly	106	1.3	0.2	Yes
Buchan	Weekly	104	0.3	0.1	Yes
Cann River	Weekly	106	0.6	0.1	Yes
Dinner Plain	Weekly	104	0.2	0.1	Yes
Eagle Point-Paynesville	Weekly	106	0.3	0.1	Yes
Kalimna	Weekly	102	0.4	0.2	Yes
Lindenow	Weekly	104	0.3	0.2	Yes
Lindenow South	Weekly	104	0.2	0.1	Yes
Mallacoota	Weekly	106	1.1	1.0	Yes
Merrangbaur	Weekly	103	0.2	0.1	Yes
Metung	Weekly	102	0.4	0.2	Yes
Nicholson-Swan Reach	Weekly	102	0.3	0.2	Yes
Nowa Nowa	Weekly	106	0.4	0.2	Yes
Omeo	Weekly	104	0.2	0.1	Yes
Orbost	Weekly	108	0.5	0.2	Yes
Sarsfield-Bruthen	Weekly	104	0.3	0.2	Yes
Sunlakes-Toorloo	Weekly	107	1.2	0.1	Yes
Swifts Creek	Weekly	104	0.6	0.1	Yes

All samples taken in water sampling areas were compliant with the turbidity water quality standard for the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 5).

5.1.4. Fluoride

Fluoride is added to the Mitchell system and remains as per past reports, the only system providing fluoridation. Fluoride samples are taken monthly in each of the fluoridated water sampling areas, resulting in a weekly sample being taken at different locations in the Mitchell system.

Compliance is measured as: the annual rolling average fluoride level must not exceed 1.0 milligram per litre and all individual samples must be less than 1.5 mg/L. *Meeting Obligation* is measured as: annual average fluoride level between 0.8 – 1.0 mg/L in fluoridated systems.

Table 6: Fluoride sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL №. SAMPLES	OPERATING TARGET (mg/L)	MAX (mg/L)	AVERAGE	NUMBER OF SAMPLES WHERE STANDARD (>1.5mg/L) WAS NOT MET.
BAIRNSDALE	Weekly	74	0.9	0.95	0.84	0
BEMM RIVER	N/A	0	N/A	-	-	-
BUCHAN	N/A	0	N/A	-	-	-
CANN RIVER	N/A	0	N/A	-	-	-
DINNER PLAIN	N/A	0	N/A	-	-	-
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Monthly	12	0.9	0.90	0.84	0
KALIMNA	Monthly	12	0.9	0.90	0.85	0
LINDENOW	Monthly	12	0.9	0.97	0.84	0
LINDENOW SOUTH	Monthly	12	0.9	0.93	0.84	0
MALLACOOTA	N/A	0	N/A			-
MERRANGBAUR	Monthly	12	0.9	0.91	0.84	0
METUNG	Monthly	12	0.9	0.91	0.86	0
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Monthly	12	0.9	0.94	0.85	0
NOWA NOWA	Monthly	12	0.9	0.91	0.84	0
OMEO	N/A	0	N/A	-	-	0
ORBOST	N/A	0	N/A	-	-	0
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Monthly	11	0.9	0.93	0.85	0
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Monthly	12	0.9	0.89	0.86	0
SWIFTS CREEK	N/A	0	N/A	-	-	-

N/A - Not Applicable as these systems are not fluoridated.

All relevant water sampling areas were compliant for fluoride in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 6). EGW has been 100% compliant with this standard at each fluoridated sampling area or locality since fluoridation began in 2010.

5.2. Other Substances

5.2.1. Arsenic

Arsenic can be introduced into water in the catchment through the presence of naturally occurring minerals and ores. Short and long-term exposure to arsenic may result in potential health impacts. Samples are taken biannually in each applicable water sampling area.

While the distribution network was not routinely monitored for arsenic in 2025-26, EGW raw water sources *were* monitored in systems with a groundwater source or in areas potentially exposed to previous mining activities. Quarterly raw water samples were assessed in 2025-26 in the Tambo River at Swifts Creek, and in a sample of combined bore water stored in the Dinner Plain Groundwater Storage Tank and at each of the three Mallacoota bores in January 2026.

Compliance is measured as: less than or equal to 0.01 milligrams per litre (health-based guideline value under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011).

Table 7: Arsenic sampling frequency in raw waters and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL No. SAMPLES	No. OF SAMPLES ABOVE THE STANDARD	MAX (mg/L)	COMPLYING (YES / NO)
DINNER PLAIN	Annually	1	0	<0.001	YES
MALLACOOTA	Annually	3	0	0.003	YES
SWIFTS CREEK	Quarterly	4	0	0.001	YES

All raw water sampling areas monitored were compliant for Arsenic in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 7).

5.2.2. Cadmium

Cadmium may be introduced into drinking water supplies through corrosion of pipes and fittings. Exposure to high concentrations of cadmium may result in potential health implications. Samples are taken quarterly in each of the water sampling areas.

Compliance is measured as: less than or equal to 0.002 mg/L (health-based guideline value under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011).

Table 8: Cadmium sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

Water Sampling Area	Sampling Frequency	Total №. Samples	№. of Non-Complying Samples	Maximum (mg/L)	Complying (yes / no)
BAIRNSDALE	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
BEMM RIVER	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
BUCHAN	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
CANN RIVER	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
DINNER PLAIN	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Monthly	14	0	<0.0002	Yes
KALIMNA	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
LINDENOW	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
LINDENOW SOUTH	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
MALLACOOTA	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
MERRANGBAUR	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
METUNG	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
NOWA NOWA	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
OMEO	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
ORBOST	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK	Monthly	12	0	<0.0002	Yes

All water sampling areas were compliant for Cadmium in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 8).

5.2.3. Chromium

Chromium may occur naturally in the environment or be introduced through human activity. Exposure to high concentrations of chromium may have adverse dermatological effects over many years, such as allergic dermatitis (skin reactions). Samples are taken quarterly in each of the water sampling areas.

Compliance is measured as: less than or equal to 0.05 mg/L of Cr (VI) (health-based guideline value under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011).

Table 9: Chromium sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL Nº. SAMPLES	Nº. OF NON-COMPLYING SAMPLES	MAXIMUM (mg/L)	COMPLYING (YES / NO)
BAIRNSDALE	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
BEMM RIVER	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
BUCHAN	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
CANN RIVER	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
DINNER PLAIN	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Monthly	14	0	<0.001	Yes
KALIMNA	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
LINDENOW	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
LINDENOW SOUTH	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
MALLACOOTA	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
MERRANGBAUR	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
METUNG	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
NOWA NOWA	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
OMEO	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
ORBOST	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes

All water sampling areas were compliant for Chromium in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 9).

5.2.4. Copper

Copper may occur naturally in the environment or be introduced into water through contact with corroding copper pipes and fittings. Exposure to high levels of copper can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, gastric (stomach) complaints and headaches. Samples are taken quarterly in each applicable water sampling area.

Compliance is measured as: less than 2 mg/L (health-based guideline value under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011) and less than or equal to 1 milligram per litre (aesthetic guideline value under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011).

Table 10: Copper sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL Nº. SAMPLES	Nº. OF NON-COMPLYING SAMPLES	MAXIMUM (mg/L)	COMPLYING (YES / NO)
BAIRNSDALE	Monthly	12	0	0.021	Yes
BEMM RIVER	Monthly	12	0	0.010	Yes
BUCHAN	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
CANN RIVER	Monthly	12	0	0.005	Yes
DINNER PLAIN	Monthly	12	0	0.055	Yes
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Monthly	14	0	0.008	Yes
KALIMNA	Monthly	12	0	0.013	Yes
LINDENOW	Monthly	12	0	0.016	Yes
LINDENOW SOUTH	Monthly	12	0	0.020	Yes
MALLACOOTA	Monthly	12	0	0.003	Yes
MERRANGBAUR	Monthly	12	0	0.011	Yes
METUNG	Monthly	12	0	0.020	Yes
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Monthly	12	0	0.010	Yes
NOWA NOWA	Monthly	12	0	0.008	Yes
OMEO	Monthly	12	0	0.004	Yes
ORBOST	Monthly	13	0	0.002	Yes
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Monthly	12	0	0.067	Yes
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Monthly	12	0	0.018	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK	Monthly	12	0	0.010	Yes

All water sampling areas were compliant for Copper in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 10).

5.3. Dichloroacetic Acid

Dichloroacetic Acid (DCA) is a halo-acetic acid produced as a by-product of the reaction between chlorine and naturally occurring humic and fulvic acids. Based on preliminary data, concentrations of dichloroacetic acid in Australian drinking waters range from 0.001 mg/L to 0.1 mg/L.

Compliance is measured as: less than 0.1 mg/L (health-based guideline value under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011).

Table 11: Dichloroacetic Acid sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL №. SAMPLES	№. OF NON-COMPLYING SAMPLES	MAXIMUM (mg/L)	COMPLYING (YES / NO)
BAIRNSDALE	Quarterly	4	0	0.023	Yes
BEMM RIVER	Quarterly	4	0	0.013	Yes
BUCHAN	Quarterly	4	0	<0.030	Yes
CANN RIVER	Quarterly	4	0	0.013	Yes
DINNER PLAIN	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Quarterly	6	0	<0.020	Yes
KALIMNA	Quarterly	4	0	<0.030	Yes
LINDENOW	Quarterly	4	0	<0.020	Yes
LINDENOW SOUTH	Quarterly	4	0	<0.020	Yes
MALLACOOTA	Quarterly	4	0	0.008	Yes
MERRANGBAUR	Quarterly	4	0	0.021	Yes
METUNG	Quarterly	4	0	0.014	Yes
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Quarterly	4	0	0.021	Yes
NOWA NOWA	Quarterly	4	0	0.018	Yes
OMEO	Quarterly	4	0	0.017	Yes
ORBOST	Quarterly	4	0	0.010	Yes
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Quarterly	4	0	0.027	Yes
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Quarterly	4	0	0.018	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK	Quarterly	4	0	0.021	Yes

Note: Dichloroacetic acid is not sampled in Dinner Plain based on assessment as very LOW risk.

All water sampling areas were compliant for Dichloroacetic Acid in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 11).

5.3.1. Free Chlorine

Chlorine is a disinfection agent that is added to drinking water to kill harmful microorganisms and ensure the water is safe to drink. Chlorine has an odour threshold in drinking water of about 0.6 mg/L, but some people may detect lower levels.

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 state that Chlorine concentrations in the drinking water supply must be less than or equal to 5 mg/L for health purposes.

Table 12: Free Chlorine sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL No. SAMPLES	MINIMUM (mg/L)	MAXIMUM (mg/L)	AVERAGE (mg/L)
BAIRNSDALE	Weekly	124	0.05[2]	1.30	0.87
BEMM RIVER	Weekly	106	0.38	1.40	0.90
BUCHAN	Weekly	106	0.18[2]	1.30	0.89
CANN RIVER	Weekly	106	0.06[2]	1.30	0.74
DINNER PLAIN[1]	Weekly	103	0.19[2]	0.73	0.38
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Weekly	106	0.20	0.92	0.61
KALIMNA	Weekly	102	0.31	1.10	0.80
LINDENOW	Weekly	104	0.05[2]	1.20	0.86
LINDENOW SOUTH	Weekly	104	0.23	0.87	0.58
MALLACOOTA	Weekly	106	0.05[2]	1.40	0.79
MERRANGBAUR	Weekly	104	0.39	0.95	0.66
METUNG	Weekly	102	0.30	0.91	0.70
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Weekly	102	0.52	1.30	0.87
NOWA NOWA	Weekly	106	0.13[2]	0.89	0.57
OMEO	Weekly	104	0.05[2]	1.40	0.69
ORBOST	Weekly	108	0.31	1.50	0.93
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Weekly	104	0.24	1.40	0.82
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Weekly	107	0.42	1.10	0.80
SWIFTS CREEK	Weekly	104	0.30	1.10	0.68

Notes:
1 In response to *E. coli* detection in the Dinner Plain raw water source during December 2021, chlorine disinfection was introduced as a secondary treatment barrier and the sampling program updated.
2 EGW aims for a free chlorine concentration of >0.2 mg/L within all reticulation systems. While some free chlorine levels were less than 0.2 mg/L temporarily, they were not considered a health risk. Notwithstanding, EGW responds to low chlorine levels by routinely and reactively flushing the main in vicinity of the sample point. These are notified on the day to the EGW water quality team from the sampling contractor and operations then respond on the day with a mains flush operation.

All water sampling areas were compliant for Free Chlorine in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 12).

5.3.2. Lead

Lead may occur naturally in water or be introduced through contact with lead pipes and fittings. Human exposure to high levels of lead may result in toxic effects.

Compliance is measured as: less than or equal to 0.005 mg/L (health-based guideline value under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011).

Table 13: Lead sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY (minimum)	TOTAL Nº. SAMPLES	Nº. OF NON-COMPLYING SAMPLES	MAXIMUM (mg/L)	COMPLYING (YES / NO)
BAIRNSDALE	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
BEMM RIVER	Monthly	12	0	0.001	Yes
BUCHAN	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
CANN RIVER	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
DINNER PLAIN	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Monthly	14	0	<0.001	Yes
KALIMNA	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
LINDENOW	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
LINDENOW SOUTH	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
MALLACOOTA	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
MERRANGBAUR	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
METUNG	Monthly	12	0	0.002	Yes
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
NOWA NOWA	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
OMEO	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
ORBOST	Monthly	13	0	<0.001	Yes
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK	Monthly	12	0	<0.001	Yes

All water sampling areas were compliant for Lead in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 13).

5.3.3. Manganese

Manganese may occur naturally in the environment or may be introduced through industrial activity. Manganese may cause aesthetic issues such as taste or staining of laundry and appliances as well as health issues at high concentrations.

Compliance is measured as: less than or equal to 0.05 mg/L (aesthetic value) and less than or equal to 0.1 mg/L (health-based guideline value under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011).

Table 14: Manganese sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL Nº. SAMPLES	MINIMUM (mg/L)	MAXIMUM (mg/L)	COMPLYING (YES / NO)
BAIRNSDALE	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
BEMM RIVER	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.013	Yes
BUCHAN	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
CANN RIVER	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
DINNER PLAIN	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Monthly	14	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
KALIMNA	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
LINDENOW	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
LINDENOW SOUTH	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
MALLACOOTA	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.006	Yes
MERRANGBAUR	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
METUNG	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
NOWA NOWA	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
OMEO	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
ORBOST	Monthly	13	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK	Monthly	12	<0.001	<0.001	Yes

All water sampling areas were compliant for Manganese in the 2025-26 reporting period; both aesthetic and health values. (Table 14).

5.3.4. Trichloroacetic Acid

Trichloroacetic acid (TCA) is a chloroacetic acid produced in drinking water as a by-product of the reaction between chlorine and naturally occurring humic and fulvic acids.

Compliance is measured as: less than 0.1 mg/L (health-based guideline value under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011).

Table 15: Trichloroacetic Acid sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

Water Sampling Locality	Sampling Frequency	Total No. Samples	No. of Non-Complying Samples	Maximum (mg/L)	Complying (yes / no)
BAIRNSDALE	Quarterly	4	0	0.021	Yes
BEMM RIVER	Quarterly	4	0	0.010	Yes
BUCHAN	Quarterly	4	0	0.029	Yes
CANN RIVER	Quarterly	4	0	0.008	Yes
DINNER PLAIN	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Quarterly	6	0	0.023	Yes
KALIMNA	Quarterly	4	0	0.024	Yes
LINDENOW	Quarterly	4	0	0.009	Yes
LINDENOW SOUTH	Quarterly	4	0	0.010	Yes
MALLACOOTA	Quarterly	4	0	<0.005	Yes
MERRANGBAUR	Quarterly	4	0	0.024	Yes
METUNG	Quarterly	4	0	0.023	Yes
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Quarterly	4	0	0.023	Yes
NOWA NOWA	Quarterly	4	0	0.026	Yes
OMEO	Quarterly	4	0	0.016	Yes
ORBOST	Quarterly	5	0	<0.005	Yes
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Quarterly	4	0	0.023	Yes
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Quarterly	4	0	0.024	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK	Quarterly	4	0	0.010	Yes

Note: Dichloroacetic acid is not sampled in Dinner Plain based on risk assessment.

All water sampling areas were compliant for Trichloroacetic Acid in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 15).

5.4. Aesthetic Characteristics

5.4.1. Colour (True)

Colour generally occurs in water as a result of dissolved organic material. Although not a health consideration, elevated colour can be an aesthetic issue.

Compliance is measured as: less than or equal to 15 Hazen Units (HU) which is the amount of colour that is just noticeable in a glass of water; (Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 aesthetic value).

Table 16: Colour sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL No. SAMPLES	MINIMUM (HU)	MAXIMUM (HU)	COMPLYING (YES / NO)
BAIRNSDALE	Weekly	124	<2	<2	Yes
BEMM RIVER	Weekly	91	<2	4	Yes
BUCHAN	Weekly	104	<2	6	Yes
CANN RIVER	Weekly	96	<2	4	Yes
DINNER PLAIN	Weekly	104	<2	4	Yes
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Weekly	106	<2	<2	Yes
KALIMNA	Weekly	102	<2	4	Yes
LINDENOW	Weekly	104	<2	4	Yes
LINDENOW SOUTH	N/A	NA	NA	NA	N/A
MALLACOOTA	Weekly	106	<2	4	Yes
MERRANGBAUR	Weekly	52	<2	4	Yes
METUNG	Weekly	102	<2	4	Yes
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	N/A	NA	NA	NA	N/A
NOWA NOWA	Weekly	106	<2	4	Yes
OMEO	Weekly	104	<2	4	Yes
ORBOST	Weekly	108	<2	<2	Yes
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Weekly	104	<2	4	Yes
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Weekly	107	<2	4	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK	Weekly	104	<2	4	Yes

Note: Colour is not sampled in some sampling areas within the Mitchell system based on risk assessment and results from network samples taken downstream of these areas i.e., Lindenow South, Nicholson-Swan Reach.

All water sampling areas were compliant for colour in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 16).

5.4.2. Hardness

Hardness is caused by the presence of dissolved calcium compounds in water. Hard water may result in scaling issues.

Compliance is measured as: less than or equal to 200 mg/L (Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 aesthetic value) as total hardness (as calcium carbonate).

Table 17: Hardness sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL Nº. SAMPLES	MINIMUM (mg/L)	MAXIMUM (mg/L)	COMPLYING (YES / NO)
BAIRNSDALE	Monthly	9	19	26	Yes
BEMM RIVER	Monthly	12	15	23	Yes
BUCHAN	Monthly	12	23	52	Yes
CANN RIVER	Monthly	12	22	34	Yes
DINNER PLAIN	Monthly	11	33	48	Yes
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Monthly	9	21	28	Yes
KALIMNA	Monthly	12	19	28	Yes
LINDENOW	Monthly	12	18	26	Yes
LINDENOW SOUTH	Monthly	12	20	27	Yes
MALLACOOTA	Monthly	12	29	46	Yes
MERRANGBAUR	Monthly	12	20	29	Yes
METUNG	Monthly	12	20	30	Yes
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Monthly	NA	NA	NA	N/A
NOWA NOWA	Monthly	12	24	32	Yes
OMEO	Monthly	12	12	19	Yes
ORBOST	Monthly	11	17	28	Yes
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Monthly	12	19	30	Yes
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Monthly	12	20	31	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK	Monthly	12	52	95	Yes

Notes: NA - Not Applicable;
Hardness is not sampled in some sampling areas within the Mitchell system based on risk assessment and results from network samples taken downstream of these areas i.e., Nicholson-Swan Reach.

All water sampling areas were compliant for Hardness in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 17).

5.4.3. Iron

Iron may occur naturally in the environment and can be introduced through industrial activity, as well as through cast iron pipework. High levels of iron in water can impart taste and may stain laundry or fittings. There is no health-based guideline for iron in drinking water.

Compliance is measured as: less than or equal to 0.3 mg/L (based on Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 aesthetic value).

Table 18: Iron sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL No. SAMPLES	MINIMUM (mg/L)	MAXIMUM (mg/L)	COMPLYING (YES / NO)
BAIRNSDALE	Monthly	12	<0.01	0.04	Yes
BEMM RIVER[1]	Monthly	12	0.01	0.36[1]	No
BUCHAN	Monthly	12	<0.01	<0.01	Yes
CANN RIVER	Monthly	12	<0.01	0.02	Yes
DINNER PLAIN	Monthly	12	<0.01	<0.01	Yes
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Monthly	14	<0.01	0.02	Yes
KALIMNA	Monthly	12	<0.01	<0.01	Yes
LINDENOW	Monthly	12	<0.01	<0.01	Yes
LINDENOW SOUTH	Monthly	12	<0.01	0.03	Yes
MALLACOOTA	Monthly	12	<0.01	0.05	Yes
MERRANGBAUR	Monthly	12	<0.01	<0.01	Yes
METUNG	Monthly	12	<0.01	0.02	Yes
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Monthly	12	<0.01	<0.01	Yes
NOWA NOWA	Monthly	12	<0.01	<0.01	Yes
OMEO	Monthly	12	<0.01	<0.01	Yes
ORBOST	Monthly	13	<0.01	0.03	Yes
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Monthly	12	<0.01	0.04	Yes
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Monthly	12	<0.01	<0.01	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK	Monthly	12	<0.01	<0.01	Yes

[1] The guideline value is based on the taste threshold of 0.3 mg/L, which is similar to the concentration that would result in iron precipitating out of solution. Sufficient human data exist to indicate that iron in drinking water would not become a health concern unless the concentration was above 3 mg/L (ADWG).

All water sampling areas were compliant for iron in the 2025-26 reporting period with the exception of Bemm River on one occasion (Table 18).

5.4.4. pH

pH is the measure of the acidity (pH <7.0) or alkalinity (pH >7.0) of the water. Extreme pH values may cause corrosion or scaling in certain circumstances. High pH may also reduce the effectiveness of chlorine disinfection.

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 state that the pH of drinking water should be between pH 6.5 and 8.5 (aesthetic guideline limit). However, cement mortar-lined pipes and newly constructed concrete water storages may raise pH. Values up to pH 9.2 may be tolerated provided no deterioration in microbiological quality of the water supply is observed.

Table 19: pH sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL No. SAMPLES	MINIMUM (mg/L)	MAXIMUM (mg/L)	AVERAGE (mg/L)
BAIRNSDALE	Weekly	124	6.90	9.10	7.46
BEMM RIVER	Weekly	106	7.00	8.40	7.89
BUCHAN	Weekly	104	7.80	9.20	8.44
CANN RIVER	Weekly	106	7.30	9.40	8.55
DINNER PLAIN	Weekly	104	6.20	7.70	6.99
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Weekly	106	7.10	8.50	7.62
KALIMNA	Weekly	102	6.30	7.90	7.37
LINDENOW	Weekly	104	7.30	8.30	7.64
LINDENOW SOUTH	Weekly	104	7.10	8.20	7.74
MALLACOOTA	Weekly	105	7.10	9.00	7.92
MERRANGBAUR	Weekly	104	7.00	8.00	7.47
METUNG	Weekly	102	7.30	8.20	7.70
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Weekly	102	7.00	8.00	7.38
NOWA NOWA	Weekly	106	7.40	9.40	8.24
OMEO	Weekly	104	7.10	8.90	8.18
ORBOST	Weekly	107	7.10	9.30	8.19
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Weekly	104	7.00	8.90	7.48
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Weekly	107	7.10	8.90	7.56
SWIFTS CREEK	Weekly	104	7.60	8.70	8.18

Based on the average values over the year (Table 20), pH values for all water sampling areas are within the aesthetic guideline limit (6.5 to 8.5). Elevated individual pH values have been observed in a number of water sampling areas. This is largely due to the presence of cement-lined distribution pipes. However, these higher pH values have not impacted water quality or asset condition (pipes and tanks). When higher than expected pH is detected, EGW have flushed the network and reviewed the resulting pH.

5.4.5. Zinc

Zinc may occur naturally in the environment, or may be introduced through industrial activity, as well as through corrosion of customer piping. High levels of zinc in water can impart taste and appearance issues with drinking water.

Compliance is measured as: less than or equal to 3 mg/L (Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 aesthetic value).

Table 20: Zinc sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL №. SAMPLES	MINIMUM (mg/L)	MAXIMUM (mg/L)	% COMPLIANCE
BAIRNSDALE	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.006	100
BEMM RIVER	Monthly	12	0.002	0.013	100
BUCHAN	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.002	100
CANN RIVER	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.004	100
DINNER PLAIN	Monthly	12	0.002	0.007	100
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	Monthly	14	0.001	0.011	100
KALIMNA	Monthly	12	0.001	0.005	100
LINDENOW	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.003	100
LINDENOW SOUTH	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.005	100
MALLACOOTA	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.004	100
MERRANGBAUR	Monthly	12	0.002	0.006	100
METUNG	Monthly	12	0.001	0.005	100
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	Monthly	12	0.002	0.004	100
NOWA NOWA	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.002	100
OMEO	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.004	100
ORBOST	Monthly	13	<0.001	0.002	100
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.015	100
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	Monthly	12	0.001	0.004	100
SWIFTS CREEK	Monthly	12	<0.001	0.006	100

All water sampling areas were compliant for Zinc in the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 20).

5.4.6. Acid Soluble Aluminium

EGW applies poly aluminium chlorohydrate to multiple water treatment processes as a coagulant to remove impurities in water. This can result in the presence of acid soluble aluminium within drinking water. Should acid soluble aluminium exceed the compliance concentration of 0.2 mg/L, a white gelatinous precipitate can form within the distribution network causing "milky coloured" water (depending on the pH of the water).

Table 21: Acid Soluble Aluminium sampling frequency and results for 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA [1,2]	ENTRY WATER SAMPLING FREQUENCY	RETICULATION SAMPLING FREQUENCY	TOTAL No. SAMPLES	MINIMUM (mg/L)	MAXIMUM (mg/L)	% COMPLYING
BAIRNSDALE	Weekly	Monthly	76	<0.01	0.07	100
BEMM RIVER[2]	Monthly	Monthly	24	0.02	0.69	92
BUCHAN	Monthly	Monthly	24	0.01	0.05	100
CANN RIVER	Monthly	Monthly	24	<0.01	0.09	100
DINNER PLAIN[1]	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE	NA	Monthly	14	0.01	0.04	100
KALIMNA	NA	Monthly	12	0.01	0.04	100
LINDENOW	NA	Monthly	12	0.01	0.05	100
LINDENOW SOUTH	NA	Monthly	12	0.01	0.04	100
MALLACOOTA[2]	Monthly	Monthly	24	<0.01	0.25	92
MERRANGBAUR	NA	Monthly	12	0.01	0.03	100
METUNG	NA	Monthly	12	0.01	0.04	100
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH	NA	Monthly	12	0.01	0.04	100
NOWA NOWA	NA	Monthly	12	0.01	0.03	100
OMEO	Monthly	Monthly	24	<0.01	0.02	100
ORBOST[2]	Monthly	Monthly	26	<0.01	0.20	100
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN	NA	Monthly	12	0.01	0.05	100
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO	NA	Monthly	12	0.01	0.03	100
SWIFTS CREEK	Monthly	Monthly	24	<0.01	0.07	100

Note 1: Dinner Plain does not use aluminium based coagulant.
Note 2: Bemm River network and Mallacoota entry and reticulated water had a small number of results >0.2mg/L , attributable to water treatment plant operation.

All of the sampling areas were compliant for Acid Soluble Aluminium for the 2025-26 reporting period (Table 21) with the exception of Bemm River (twice) and Mallacoota on one occasion in both the entry and network samples on the same day. No customer complaints for milky coloured water were received at the time of the exceedance for these locations. Milky coloured water is sometimes produced by the treatment process and reported levels do not pose health impacts.

5.5. Analysis of Results

All sampling areas were compliant with the parameters described in the *Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2025*.

These include two six-monthly samples for *chlorite* analysis from Raymond Island (Mitchell system) which were both < 0.05 mg/L and below the chlorite health compliance value of 0.8 mg/L. Chlorite is a breakdown product of free chlorine and is sometimes found in solutions of concentrated sodium hypochlorite. As such, chlorite may occasionally be transmitted to drinking water where sodium hypochlorite is use as a disinfectant.

During 2025-26 EGW sampled for additional parameters in raw water, entry points and throughout the reticulation system as part of its drinking water quality risk management process. Additional metals antimony, barium, beryllium, boron, lanthanum, mercury, molybdenum, nickel, selenium, silver, and uranium presence, plus iodide, were all assessed in EGW's network monitoring program as a 'once-off' in June 2026. These additional metals were either all below their detection limits and/or below their respective health-guideline values. As outlined in Table 22 and 23, all entry point and reticulation samples were 100% compliant against the health guideline values in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011. Other parameters such as acid soluble aluminium and iron (one result) were 98.7% and 99.6% compliant against aesthetic (non-health) guideline values.

As reported in Table 19, a small number of pH values for water sampling areas were above the upper guideline range for pH (i.e., pH ≤ 8.5). These have been risk assessed as not impacting human health.

Table 22. Reticulation and entry point monitoring and results 2023 to 2025-26

PARAMETER	UNIT	HEALTH GUIDELINE VALUE (ADWG 2011)	AESTHETIC GUIDELINE VALUE (ADWG 2011)	PERFORMANCE AGAINST GUIDELINE VALUES 2023/24	PERFORMANCE AGAINST GUIDELINE VALUES 2024/25	PERFORMANCE AGAINST GUIDELINE VALUES 2025/26 (%)
ACID SOLUBLE ALUMINIUM	mg/L	-	0.2	99.4	99.7	98.7
ANTIMONY	mg/L	0.003	-	NS	NS	100.0
ARSENIC	mg/L	0.01	-	NS	100.0	NS
BARIUM	mg/L	2	-	NS	NS	100.0
BERYLLIUM	mg/L	0.06	-	NS	NS	100.0
BORON	mg/L	4	-	NS	NS	100.0
CADMIUM	mg/L	0.002	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
CHLORINE (AS FREE CHLORINE)[1]	mg/L	5	0.6	100.0	100.0	100.0
CHLORITE	mg/L	0.8	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
CHROMIUM (CR(VI))	mg/L	0.05	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
COLOUR (TRUE)	HU	-	15	100.0	100.0	100.0
COPPER	mg/L	2	1	100.0	100.0	100.0
CYANIDE	mg/L	0.08	-	NS	100.0	NS
E.COLI	orgs/100 mL	0	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
FLUORIDE	mg/L	1.5	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
DICHLOROACETIC ACID	mg/L	0.1	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
TRICHLOROACETIC ACID	mg/L	0.1	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
HARDNESS (AS CACO3)	mg/L	-	200	100.0	100.0	100.0
IODIDE	mg/L	0.5	-	NS	NS	100.0
IRON	mg/L	-	0.3	100.0	100.0	99.6
LANTHANUM (LA(III))[1]	mg/L	0.002	-	NS	NS	100.0
LEAD	mg/L	0.01	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
MANGANESE	mg/L	0.5	0.1	100.0	100.0	100.0
MERCURY	mg/L	0.001	-	NS	NS	100.0
MOLYBDENUM	mg/L	0.05	-	NS	NS	100.0
NICKEL	mg/L	0.02	-	NS	NS	100.0
PH (FIELD)[2]	mg/L	-	6.5-9.2	99.6	99.4	99.4
SELENIUM	mg/L	0.004	-	NS	NS	100.0
SILVER	mg/L	0.1	-	NS	NS	100.0
TOTAL TRIHALOMETHANES	mg/L	0.25	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
TURBIDITY	NTU	-	5	100.0	100.0	100.0
URANIUM	mg/L	0.02	-	NS	NS	100.0
ZINC	mg/L	-	3	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note 1: Yellow highlight – Regulated parameters under the legislation. Refer Table 23.

2. Elevated individual pH values have been observed in a small number of water sampling areas. This is largely due to the presence of cement-lined distribution pipes. However, these higher pH values have not impacted water quality as evidenced by compliant microbiological and aesthetic quality during the period. Based on the average values measured over the year (ref. Table 19), the pH values for all water sampling areas fell within the aesthetic guideline limits of 6.5 to 8.5. NS- means 'Not Sampled' during the period shown.

Parameters not listed in the ADWG 2011 as having health guideline values were also analysed (Table 23).

Table 23: Reticulation and entry point - other parameter monitoring results 2025-26

PARAMETER	UNIT	2023/24 MAXIMUM	2024/25 MAXIMUM	2025/26 MAXIMUM
CALCIUM	mg/L	22.0	20.0	23.0
CHLORATE	mg/L	0.34	0.05	0.05
TOTAL COLIFORMS	Colilert mpn/ 100 mL	9	20	0
ELECTRICAL CONDUCTIVITY	(uS/cm @ 25C)	590	520	790
MONOCHLOROACETIC ACID[1] (H.A.A.)	mg/L	0.005	0.005	0.005
BROMOACETIC ACID (H.A.A.)	mg/L	0.005	0.005	0.005
BROMOCHLOROACETIC ACID (H.A.A.)	mg/L	0.006	0.007	0.010
BROMODICHLOROACETIC ACID (H.A.A.)	mg/L	0.006	0.005	0.008
DIBROMOACETIC ACID (H.A.A.)	mg/L	0.010	0.012	0.008
MAGNESIUM	mg/L	15.0	12.0	9.2
TOTAL ALUMINIUM	mg/L	0.80	0.24	0.70

Note: [1] monochloroacetic acid in the table above *is listed* in the ADWG as 'chloroacetic acid' with a Health Guideline Value of 0.15 mg/L; For ALL other items in the table, there is insufficient information to specify a health guideline value.

H.A.A.s or '*halo-acetic acids*' may be produced as by-products of disinfection with chlorine, however these have historically been shown to have very low presence in EGW water supply systems and beyond any health concern. / mpn=most probable number (of organisms)

6. QUALITY OF RAW AND PARTIALLY TREATED WATER FOR 2025-26

The following information applies to substances of interest that are sampled for in EGW's raw water storages (untreated water) and partially treated clear water storages (water that has been treated, but not undergone secondary disinfection).

6.1. Other Substances

6.1.1. Radiological

Radiologically active compounds may impact public health. Based on risk assessment, radiological activity samples are taken from bore waters every two years and from surface waters every five years.

Table 24: Radiological samples from raw water sources taken in 2023-24 (Not sampled in 2025-26)

WATER SAMPLING AREA	Nº. OF SAMPLES	Nº.OF NON COMPLYING SAMPLE	MAXIMUM ('Bq/L')	HEALTH GUIDELINE VALUE Bq/L^ (ADWG 2011)	COMPLYING (YES / NO)
BAIRNSDALE - RIVER	2	0	0.1	0.5	Yes
BEMM RIVER - RAW WATER STORAGE BASIN	2	0	0.1	0.5	Yes
BUCHAN - RAW WATER SOURCE - RIVER	2	0	0.1	0.5	Yes
CANN RIVER - RAW WATER SOURCE	2	0	0.1	0.5	Yes
DINNER PLAIN - CLEAR WATER STORAGE	2	0	0.1	0.5	Yes
MALLACOOTA - BORE	6	0	0.23	0.5	Yes
MALLACOOTA - RAW WATER SOURCE	2	0	0.1	0.5	Yes
OMEO - RAW WATER SOURCE	2	0	0.1	0.5	Yes
ORBOST - RAW WATER SOURCE	2	0	0.1	0.5	Yes
SWIFTS CREEK - RAW WATER SOURCE	2	0	0.1	0.5	Yes

^ for *each* of gross-α and gross-β radiation individually

6.1.2. Biocides in raw water sources

All surface raw water sources are analysed annually for biocides (i.e., herbicides and pesticides). A representative suite of these biocides is examined based on land management activities in the water supply catchments. Sampling occurs during the months of heaviest rainfall, namely July or September.

The targeted biocides are presented in the table below. Compliance is measured as recorded values being below the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011 health-based guideline value, or if not specified in the Guidelines, the absence of the compound above the laboratory's limits of detection.

EGW maintains close liaison with local stakeholders (e.g. catchment management authorities) regarding biocide application in water supply catchments to ensure minimal risk to the drinking water supply. This informs the frequency of biocide sampling and testing.

In the 2025-26 period, raw surface water samples were again analysed from Bairnsdale, Bemm River, Buchan, Cann River, Mallacoota, Orbost, Omeo, and Swifts Creek.

Table 25. Biocide sampling program and results 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	CLASS	COMPOUND	UNITS	HEALTH GUIDELINE VALUE (ADWG 2011)	MAX RESULT
JANUARY 2026 -	N/A	Glyphosate	mg/L	1	<0.030
JANUARY 2026 - BAIRNSDALE	Organo-Chlorine Biocides	BHC (Alpha Isomer)	mg/L		<0.0001
		BHC (Beta Isomer)	mg/L		<0.0001
JANUARY 2026 - BEMM RIVER		BHC (Delta Isomer) [Benzene Hexachloride]	mg/L		<0.0001
JANUARY 2026 - BUCHAN		cis-Chlordane	mg/L	0.002	<0.00001
JANUARY 2026 - CANN RIVER		trans-Chlordane	mg/L	0.002	<0.00001
JANUARY 2026 - MALLACOOTA		4,4'-DDD	mg/L		<0.0001
JANUARY 2026 - OMEO		4,4'-DDE	mg/L		<0.0001
JANUARY 2026 - ORBOST		4,4'-DDT	mg/L	0.009	<0.0001
JANUARY 2026 - SWIFTS CREEK		Endosulfan I	mg/L	0.02	<0.0001
OCTOBER 2025 -		Endosulfan II	mg/L		<0.0001
OCTOBER 2025 - BAIRNSDALE		Endosulphan Sulphate	mg/L		<0.0001
OCTOBER 2025 - BEMM RIVER		Endrin	mg/L		<0.0001
OCTOBER 2025 - BUCHAN		Endrin Aldehyde	mg/L		<0.0001
OCTOBER 2025 - CANN RIVER		Heptachlor	mg/L		<0.0500
OCTOBER 2025 - MALLACOOTA		Heptachlor Epoxide	mg/L		<0.0500
OCTOBER 2025 - OMEO		Lindane (BHC Gamma Isomer)	mg/L	0.01	<0.0001
OCTOBER 2025 - ORBOST		Methoxychlor	mg/L	0.3	<0.2000
OCTOBER 2025 - SWIFTS CREEK	Organo-Phosphorus Biocides	Dichlorvos	mg/L	0.005	<0.001
		Monocrotophos	mg/L	0.002	<0.001
		Prophos	mg/L		<0.001
		Tetraethyldithiopyrphos	mg/L		<0.001
		Phorate	mg/L		<0.001
		Demeton-S	mg/L		<0.001
		Diazinon	mg/L	0.004	<0.001

		Methyl Parathion	mg/L	<0.001
		Ronnel	mg/L	<0.001
		Malathion	mg/L	<0.001
		Fenthion	mg/L 0.007	<0.001
		Chloropyrifos	mg/L 0.01	<0.001
		Trichlorinate	mg/L	<0.001
		Tetrachlovinphos	mg/L 0.1	<0.001
		Tukuthion	mg/L	<0.001
		Fensulfothion	mg/L 0.01	<0.001
		EPN	mg/L	<0.001
		Coumaphos	mg/L	<0.001

Table 25 results were below the health-based guideline values in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, or if not specified in the Guidelines, were below the lower limits of detection, and were deemed to be compliant in 2025-26.

6.1.3. Blue green algae in raw water and clear water

Blue green algae (or cyanobacteria) are microscopic organisms that may thrive in warm, nutrient rich waters. They may impact water quality by releasing taste and odour compounds. In some extreme circumstances, these organisms may release concentrations of toxins. Samples are taken seasonally in each of the relevant water sampling areas. In addition to routine monitoring samples, additional samples may be taken to monitor the progression of algal growth during the summer/autumn seasons.

Under the Victorian Blue Green Algae Circular (2018), DH must be notified when samples representing the quality of drinking water supplied to customers indicate any of the following:

- Total microcystins are detected at greater than or equal to 1.3 micrograms per litre.
- *Microcystis aeruginosa* is present at greater than or equal to 6,500 cells per millilitre.
- Total combined biovolume of known toxic cyanobacterial species is greater than or equal to 0.6 cubic millimetres per litre.
- Total combined biovolume of all cyanobacterial species is greater than or equal to 10 cubic millimetres per litre.

Table 26 below (overleaf) summarises our monitoring program for blue green algae in 2025-26 in both raw water and clear water supplies.

Table 26: Blue green algae sampling program and results 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	Nº. OF SAMPLES (RAW WATER)	Nº. OF SAMPLES (PARTIALLY TREATED WATER)
BAIRNSDALE	86	N/A
EAGLE POINT-PAYNESVILLE		N/A
KALIMNA		N/A
LINDENOW		N/A
LINDENOW SOUTH		N/A
MERRANGBAUR		N/A
METUNG		N/A
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH		N/A
NOWA NOWA		N/A
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN		N/A
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO		N/A
BEMM RIVER	5	N/A
BUCHAN	N/A	N/A
CANN RIVER	29	N/A
DINNER PLAIN	N/A	N/A
MALLACOOTA	29	6
OMEO	12	N/A
ORBOST	29	6
SWIFTS CREEK	7	N/A

Note: N/A – Not Applicable; this may be due to the absence of an open storage within this locality, or due to the low risk from algal growth due to the presence of a fully sealed storage tank.

Run-off after the January 2026 bushfires in the upper Mitchell and Wonnangatta catchments lead to increased suspended solids and nutrient levels in the river following rainfall events. The elevated nutrient levels are suspected to have caused a bloom of non-toxic blue-green algae in one raw water storage that persisted over a three-month period from late April 2026 through to July 2026. The affected raw water storage was isolated for most of that period of time without having to add chemical algaecide. The basin was only returned to service as the blue-green algae counts began to decline naturally due to the onset of cooler weather.

It is known that some species of algae can release compounds (by-products) that have objectionable taste and odour. Geosmin and MIB are two such compounds produced by BGA. The Swifts Creek Water Treatment Plant required use of activated carbon to assist removal of potential taste during December 2023. This was successful. There were no customer complaints during 2025-26 due to the presence of algae taste and odour compounds in East Gippsland Water drinking water.

There is now consideration for taste and odour contributions from soil with the EGW monitoring plan. The 2020 fires heavily impacted some catchments including Swifts Creek and Mallacoota. The close scrutiny of water harvesting during periods of heavy rainfall has been important over the past year to ensure impacts from soil are minimised.

6.1.4. BTEX and PAH in raw waters

In 2025-26 a brief risk-assessment concluded that although the risk was low, monitoring the raw waters present for some organic solvents and hydrocarbons found in ADWG Table 10.6 could be of value if these hadn't been monitored recently.

While many of these compounds are volatile benzene could occur in raw water sources for example from atmospheric deposition (motor vehicle emissions) and is carcinogenic. Whereas ethylbenzene (the 'E' in BTEX) is a natural component of petrol and petroleum products. Toluene (the 'T' in BTEX) may be present in petroleum products, forest-fire emissions, and may appear in drinking water from atmospheric deposition. Toluene presence may also indicate industrial contamination and leaching from protective coatings in storage tanks. Xylenes on the other hand are used as solvents in certain marker pens and for bonding plastic fittings. Additionally, poly-aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) in widespread use can lead to water contamination through atmospheric deposition or leaching from bituminous linings in distribution systems. Although the presence of these compounds are extremely unlikely in pristine alpine catchments, it was decided to monitor for these at least once in all nine EGW raw water sources to rule them out.

Table 27: BTEX and PAH all below health guideline values in all raw waters (June 2026)

ANALYTE	UNITS	LIMIT OF RESULT	RESULT
PAH (LL) Naphthalene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Acenaphthylene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Acenaphthene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Fluorene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Phenanthrene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Anthracene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Fluoanthene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Pyrene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Benz(a)Anthracene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Chrysene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Benzo(b)Fluoranthene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Benzo(k)Fluoranthene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Benzo(a)Pyrene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Dibenz(a,h) Anthracene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Benzo (g,h,i) Perylene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Indeno (1,2,4-cd) Pyrene	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
PAH (LL) Total PAH	mg/L	0.0001	<0.0001
BTEXN - Benzene	mg/L	0.001	<0.001
BTEXN - Toluene	mg/L	0.001	<0.001
BTEXN – Ethyl Benzene	mg/L	0.001	<0.001
BTEXN – Xylene – m & p	mg/L	0.002	<0.001
BTEXN – Xylene - o	mg/L	0.001	<0.001
BTEXN - Naphhthalene	mg/L	0.001	<0.001
BTEXN – Total Xylenes	mg/L	0.002	<0.002
BTEXN – BTEX – (Sum)	mg/L	0.002	<0.002

6.1.5. Emerging contaminants

These include naturally occurring and synthetic chemicals such as per & polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and their variants, personal care and pharmaceuticals (PPCPs) and microplastics. They may have been recorded over time globally and like recent PFAS developments in Australia and the U.S.A., require further testing and sampling by relevant research and government agencies, such as the NH&MRC (National Health & Medical Research Council) PFAS Taskforce. New PFAS Health Guidelines for drinking water were rolled out in 2025 which inform relevant national and Victorian health standards.

EGW have previously applied a 5-yearly PFAS sampling program on raw water sources however, due to a higher level of public interest, the raw water PFAS sampling program frequency was increased. In 2025, eight (8) raw water samples were taken from each of the EGW drinking water catchments, as well as nine (9) samples of treated water entering the distribution system from each water treatment plant after treatment. In the latest sampling PFAS was below the detection limit of 0.002 µg (2 ng)/L PFAS. This is compliant with the new guidelines for drinking water ADWG (2011), version 4, released in June, 2025.

7. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT MEASURES – NOW AND FUTURE

Throughout 2025-26, work continued to improve EGW's drinking water quality supply network and the drinking water quality management system (DWQMS) by: -

- Renewing a large supply main from November 2025 to early 2026 which was one of two principal supply mains for Lakes Entrance. This will improve water security for the town and for future generations.
- Commencing construction in early 2026 on a new clear water storage tank for the township for Buchan, in order to improve water quality and replace ageing assets.
- Adding Ultra-Violet (UV) disinfection to the townships of Buchan and Cann River, which will enhance water quality at those locations. The project tenders were awarded in early 2026, and construction is now in progress with an expected completion date in 2027.
- Ongoing facility master planning for water treatment facilities remains an important tool to assess community needs for the next 25 years including water quality and volume aspects.
- Conducting risk assessments for additional health- based parameters as described in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (2011) ADWG to determine the requirements for any additional monitoring, if any and incorporating these changes into East Gippsland Water's risk management framework. This provides further health benefits to the public.
- Inclusion of a greater suite of chemicals for analysis and many new health-based and *aesthetic* constituents from 2028. The drivers for change were improved water quality health outcomes for all consumers and the new *Safe Drinking Water Regulations* released in July 2025.
- East Gippsland Water's quality and treatment team critically reviewing some of their Operational Monitoring Control Points settings during the last period.
- EGW completing staff comprehensive database training for its Water (Quality) Information Management System (WIMS) during 2025-26. The training was conducted by the WIMS subject matter experts in North America via MS-Teams (live video).
- Implemented a new asset maintenance system called Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) system at East Gippsland Water. EAM is designed to improve scheduling via work to log (record) defects more efficiently.

8. COMPLAINTS RELATING TO WATER QUALITY

EGW's Customer Charter sets out the obligations to customers as outlined by the Essential Services Commission's Customer Service Code for metropolitan, retail and regional water businesses. This includes specific standards and conditions of service that apply to all water businesses in Victoria.

Further information relating to EGW's Customer Charter can be found on our website www.egwater.vic.gov.au.

East Gippsland Water continues to follow the definition for water quality complaints in line with the requirements of the Essential Services Commission. There were 49 water quality complaints, compared to 40 in the previous financial year. Taste and odour complaints (usually chlorine or 'chemical taste' related) and air in the water (water pipe breaks related) were the most common classes (Table 28). Seventy-three percent (73%) of the complaints came from the large population centres of Bairnsdale, Paynesville and Metung (Table 29).

East Gippsland Water continues to improve the maintenance regimes of its water delivery network to reduce the likelihood of customer complaints.

Table 28: Summary of all customer water quality complaints 2021-2026

TYPE OF COMPLAINTS	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS					COMPARISON BETWEEN YEARS	COMMENTS
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26		
ALLEGED ILLNESS	0	2	1	1	0	N/A	
DISCOLOURED/ COLOURED WATER	18	11	6	14	21	Increase	Includes 'turbid' cloudy water reports
TASTE AND ODOUR	23	14	13	16	12	Decrease	Includes 5 'chemical' taste reports
AIR IN WATER (WHITE WATER)	7	6	12	7	16	Increase due to multiple reports at common locations	Usually due to a local mains break affecting more than one customer
OTHER	5	3	6	2	0		
TOTAL	53	36	38	40	49		

Table 29: Summary of all customer water quality complaints per locality 2025-26

WATER SAMPLING AREA	TYPE OF COMPLAINT					Total
	Alleged Illness	Discoloured Water	Taste and Odour	White Water/Air	Other	
BAIRNSDALE		8	7#	6	0	21
BEMM RIVER						0
BUCHAN						0
CANN RIVER		3		1		4
DINNER PLAIN						0
EAGLE POINT- PAYNESVILLE		2		1		3
KALIMNA						0
LAKES ENTRANCE		3	1	1		5
LINDENOW						0
LINDENOW SOUTH						0
MALLACOOTA						0
MERRANGBAUR						0
METUNG		1		2		3
NICHOLSON-SWAN REACH						0
NOWA NOWA		2				2
OMEO			1			1
ORBOST /MARLO		2	2	4		8
SUNLAKES-TOORLOO						0
SARSFIELD-BRUTHEN			1	1		2
SWIFTS CREEK						0
UNKNOWN (ANONYMOUS)						0
TOTAL	0	21	12	16	0	49

#Two complaints were reported by the same person, at differing times.

8.1. Alleged Health Complaints

No health complaints related to drinking water supply were recorded in 2025-26.

8.2. Discoloured Water

Twenty-one (21) complaints of discoloured drinking water were recorded in 2025-26 which is an increase over the previous year. The nature and variety of reports suggested the colour was due to a variety of reasons such as works being undertaken on water mains, high draw down from fire hydrants and brown water from fire service flushing, or as a result of internal plumbing issues. The majority of these were managed through flushing of the reticulation system.

8.3. Taste and Odour

Twelve (12) taste and odour complaints were recorded in 2025-26 which is a slight reduction than the number reported in the previous period. Five of these complaints related to drinking water taste and the smell of chlorine. EGW manages these complaints by re-sampling for chlorine residual and/or flushing the system where required. Re-sampling confirmed 100% compliance with health-based guidelines.

8.4. Air in Water (White Water)

The number of 'air in water' reports increased significantly to sixteen (16) this year compared to 2024-25, as a number of reports were received in relation to the same breaks. Air in water can cause drinking water to appear cloudy as a result of the formation of tiny bubbles. This can be attributed to mains breaks (water loss and resulting air turbulence) and air scouring (proactive works).

8.5. Summary

There was an overall small increase in the total number of complaints from the previous year from forty to forty-nine (49) reports. This was mainly due to an increase in air in water reporting and an increase in coloured water reports. Almost half of the complaints related to the Bairnsdale region, which is where most of the people live. The most common remedy was to flush the local mains.

EGW's proactive asset maintenance program to replace ageing infrastructure and routinely flush or air scour mains to remove sediment, were positive contributing factors to the low ongoing complaint numbers.

9. REGULATED WATER

Regulated Water is "water that is not intended for drinking but could reasonably be mistaken for drinking water". EGW has no declared Regulated Water supplies as defined in Section 6 (2) of the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003*.

EGW has no regulated water supplies, however, there are a number of customers who are supplied non-potable water by agreement. We remind those customers that their water is non-potable on their quarterly invoice.

10. UNDERTAKINGS, AESTHETIC STANDARD VARIATIONS AND EXEMPTIONS

EGW has no undertakings, aesthetic standard variations or exemptions relating to the provision of Safe Drinking Water during 2025-26.

11. FURTHER INFORMATION

This Water Quality Annual Report is prepared in accordance with Section 26 of the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003*.

Section 23 of the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003* requires that EGW make available for inspection by the public the results of any water quality monitoring program that is conducted on any drinking water supplied by this Corporation.

Customers and members of the public may access drinking water quality data by contacting EGW on the details provided below;

For further information regarding water quality information, please refer to the EGW website (www.egwater.vic.gov.au), or contact EGW on 1800 671 841.

12. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
Bq	Becquerel – standard unit for radioactivity
CAMMS	EGW risk management software program
COAGULATION/ FLOCCULATION	Treatment process where chemicals are added to raw water to bind suspended solids, generally expressed as turbidity. Once bound, the chemical and turbidity form “floc” which is either settled out in the clarification process or floated off during the dissolved air flotation process.
CHLORINE GAS	Chemical added for disinfection of water
CWS	Clear water storage (treated drinking water storage)
DH	Department of Health
DWQRMS	Drinking Water Quality Risk Management System
DISSOLVED AIR FLOTATION	Treatment process utilising air dissolved in water to float suspended particles to the surface of a treatment plant clarifier cell. The float is periodically removed and clear water is drained from the bottom of the cell.
DISINFECTION	Treatment process where chlorine or ultraviolet light is introduced to the flow of clear water prior to customer consumption to kill any pathogenic organisms (make it safe to drink) that may be present in the clear water following the sedimentation/dissolved air flotation and granular media filtration processes.
FLUORIDATION	The addition of fluoride to the water supply system for the benefit of dental hygiene
FLUOROSILICIC ACID	Chemical used for fluoridation of water
GRANULAR MEDIA FILTRATION	Treatment process which utilises anthracite, sands and gravels to filter out suspended particles following the sedimentation/dissolved air flotation processes. Suspended particles are trapped within the media and clear water passes through prior to being disinfected. The particles build up in the media and are periodically washed out in a reverse flow process.
HU	Hazen units
kL	Kilolitres (1,000 litres)
L/s	Litres per second
mg/L	Milligrams per litre
ng	Nanograms
MECHANICAL DEWATERING	Treatment process where solids and water are separated through a high-speed centrifugal separation process. High speed revolutions force separation between the solid and liquid, solids are captured for processing and water is returned back to the treatment process.
ML	Megalitre (1,000,000 litres)
N/A	Not applicable
NTU	Nephelometric turbidity units (turbidity/cloudiness)
POLY ALUMINIUM CHLOROHYDRATE (PAC 23)	Coagulant chemical used during coagulation process to remove suspended solids from raw water

POLYMER (MAGNAFLOC LT20, 25, 27)	Chemical used as a flocculation aid to increase settlement rate of suspended solids in the coagulation process
POWDER ACTIVATED CARBON	Product used for reduction/removal of taste and odour compounds and algae toxins in water
RMP	Risk management plan
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SODA ASH	Chemical used for pH correction to aid the coagulation/flocculation process
SODIUM HYDROXIDE (CAUSTIC SODA)	Chemical used for pH correction to aid the coagulation/ flocculation process
SODIUM HYPOCHLORITE	Chemical added for disinfection of water
SEDIMENTATION/ CLARIFICATION	Treatment process where flocculated particles in the raw water are settled into the bottom of a clarifier and periodically removed. Clear water is taken from the top of the clarifier prior to filtration and disinfection.
WTP	Water treatment plant

APPENDIX A. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

Risk Management Plan Audit Certificate
Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2015

Certificate Number: 186
Audit period: 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2022

To:
Aline Cardoso
Coordinator Operations Monitoring and Reporting
East Gippsland Water
PO Box 52
Bairnsdale, Vic 3875

Australian Business Number (ABN): 40 096 764 586

I, Karen Pither, after conducting a risk management plan audit of the water supplied by East Gippsland Water, am of the opinion that East Gippsland Water *has not* complied with the obligations imposed by section 7(1) of the *Safe Drinking Water Act 2003* during the audit period.

The details of the reasons for noncompliance are—

Section 8(1)(d)(v) of the Safe Drinking Water Regulation requires that a risk management plan developed by a water supplier, specifies the basis on which the location for the collection of a particular sample will be determined, so as to ensure that, for the purposes of routine sampling, samples are not taken from the same location within a water sampling locality on two consecutive occasions.

The audit noted that some chemical parameters were sampled from the same location within a sampling location on two or more consecutive occasions.

The non-compliance was considered minor as there is a low potential for a risk situation, and the potential impact of the noncompliance is not likely to be a serious or imminent risk to public health, or compromise public health.

Karen Pither

10/3/2023

Certificate Image: EGW 2-yearly drinking water quality audit certificate.

The audit was undertaken in 2023. The Department of Health advised there would be no further audits until after the 2025 review of the *Safe Drinking Water Regulations*.

In terms of the audit reference to sampling the same location on consecutive occasions, this requirement has been removed from the *Safe Drinking Water Regulations 2025*.

EAST GIPPSLAND WATER

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East Gippsland Water