

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Kaniva's water supply being upgraded?

Kaniva is the largest town in Victoria which does not have a drinking water supply. Upgrading the town's supply is an investment in the town now and for generations to come.

Upgrading townships to drinking water supplies contributes to the prosperity and liveability of the communities we serve. Drinking water supplies have the potential to attract more businesses to the town and increase tourism opportunities. Existing accommodation and hospitality businesses will no longer have to rely on packaged water to meet their food safety obligations.

A drinking water supply will provide water that has consistent water clarity and quality that ensures it meets Australian Drinking Water guidelines. This generally improves the life of appliances such as hot water services, washing machines and dishwashers.

In consultation with the Department of Health (DH), GWMWater identified four priority towns for future upgrades, including Kaniva. The project achieved support from our independent Deliberative Panel and was approved by the Essential Services Commission (ESC) as part of our 2018-23 Pricing Submission.

What is the proposed timeline for the project?

(Timeline updated March 2023)

Construction of a new facility in Kaniva has started in preparation for the introduction of drinking water. The new facility will provide improved pressure to the industrial estate and extend to the rest of the town once drinking water is introduced.

Further works, including pipe cleaning and water main upgrades, are planned over the next 18 months to prepare the network for drinking water.

Statutory and construction approvals are being prepared for both the Kaniva and Moyston drinking water upgrade projects along with the previously mentioned works.

Following these approvals, construction of the pipelines and remaining facilities is expected to start in the first half of next year.

What opportunities are there for wetlands and green areas?

The drinking water upgrade presents opportunities for how the existing bore water and network can be used to support community outcomes. GWMWater will be engaging with the community to identify priorities and goals so that Kaniva can get the best value from this resource.

Recreation and green space facilities which are already serviced and connected to the urban reticulated water supply will be upgraded to a drinking water supply as part of the current project, but may benefit from dual supplies so the water is fit for purpose.

GWMWater offers water discounts to eligible community service clubs, recreational and sporting clubs, schools and cemeteries. The discount varies depending on the volume of water required

and the supply type. Contact our Call Centre on 1300 659 961 to check eligibility.

How will the water be treated?

Water will be sourced from the Grampians reservoir system and treated at the Dimboola Water Treatment Plant to ensure that it meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and Safe Drinking Water Regulations.

The central water treatment technology at Dimboola is Dissolved Air Flotation and Filtration (DAFF). This is a well-developed and robust technology that is also used in Ararat, Stawell and Horsham. Although the source water is already good quality, the DAFF technology, along with regular sampling, ensures the water consistently meets the Guidelines.

What testing will be done to make sure the treated water is safe before it is supplied to the community?

GWMWater conducts a comprehensive sampling program to ensure that the water meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines before officially declaring the water as drinking water. The Department of Health oversee the process of declaration, which typically involves sampling for key microbiological, physical and chemical indicators at least once a month.

Will there be an increase in the cost of water supplied?

When the water quality upgrades are completed and the system is declared a drinking water system, customers will shift to the drinking water tariff. This is the same tariff that applies to towns already receiving a drinking water supply such as Nhill, Horsham, Stawell and Ararat.

Average residential water use in Kaniva for 2020/21 was 5600 litres per week. Based on this usage, we estimate that the bill for a household with average usage would increase by about \$5.17 a week (the equivalent of \$67.50 on each quarterly account).

As part of the 2018-23 Pricing Submission customer consultation, the Deliberative Panel supported a proposal for the cost of service improvements, including drinking water upgrades, to be spread across all GWMWater customers rather than reduce rates. This was in recognition of the potential growth and long-term benefits for towns identified for upgrades.

What support is available with regard to the price increase?

GWMWater offers confidential, personalised assistance to our customers experiencing difficulties paying their account. Options available include flexible payment arrangements, payment cards, Centrepay, government concessions where eligible, utility relief grants and more. For more information visit gwmwater.org.au/hardship

Can I opt out of receiving the drinking water supply?

You will not be able to opt out of the system but GWMWater will continue to work with customers to identify water efficiency initiatives. The treated drinking water supply will be fed through existing urban network infrastructure. All customers within the West Wimmera Shire Planning Scheme for Kaniva, and zoned residential, commercial or industrial, will receive a drinking water supply as part of this project.

Can I access a drinking water supply if my property is not serviced?

It may be possible in the future to extend the drinking water supply to properties that are not currently serviced (where the property does not front an existing main). Applications will be assessed individually and any extension costs would be the responsibility of the landowner or the developer.

Why can't we drink our current water supply?

Untreated water may contain harmful microorganisms from animals and humans. It can be particularly dangerous for children, elderly people, those with low immunity or people visiting or new to town who aren't aware the water isn't suitable for drinking.

Untreated water (non-potable) must not be used for brushing teeth, drinking, food preparation, preparing baby formula, ice making or other human consumption purposes.

How can customers keep up to date with the project?

GWMWater will share information through regular newsletters, our website, in local media and community drop-in sessions. If you would like further information please call our Customer Call Centre on 1300 659 961 during business hours or visit our website gwmwater.org.au

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