



Grampians
Wimmera
Mallee

Communications and Engagement Strategy 2026-2031



Our strategy 2025-2029



Our Vision

Vital services
for thriving
communities.

Our Purpose

Enhance prosperity and
liveability in our communities
through sustainable, quality
and affordable water and
other essential services.

Strategy Statement

We provide affordable water services for our communities
by sustaining infrastructure and looking for ways to
enhance our region. We do this through strong community
connections, innovative technology and a skilled workforce.

Our Goals

1.

Understand our
stakeholders'
changing
expectations and
**proactively work to
build satisfaction.**

2.

Attract and develop
a highly capable team
who are empowered
with purpose and
proud to serve our
communities.

3.

Meet our
communities'
**current and
emerging water
demands.**

4.

Facilitate **better
energy outcomes**
for our communities
using our excess
renewable energy.

Our Values

Safe
and secure



Respect and
prioritise everyone's
safety, security
and wellbeing.

Together
with our
communities



Working with, and
for, our communities.

Big steps,
small
footprint

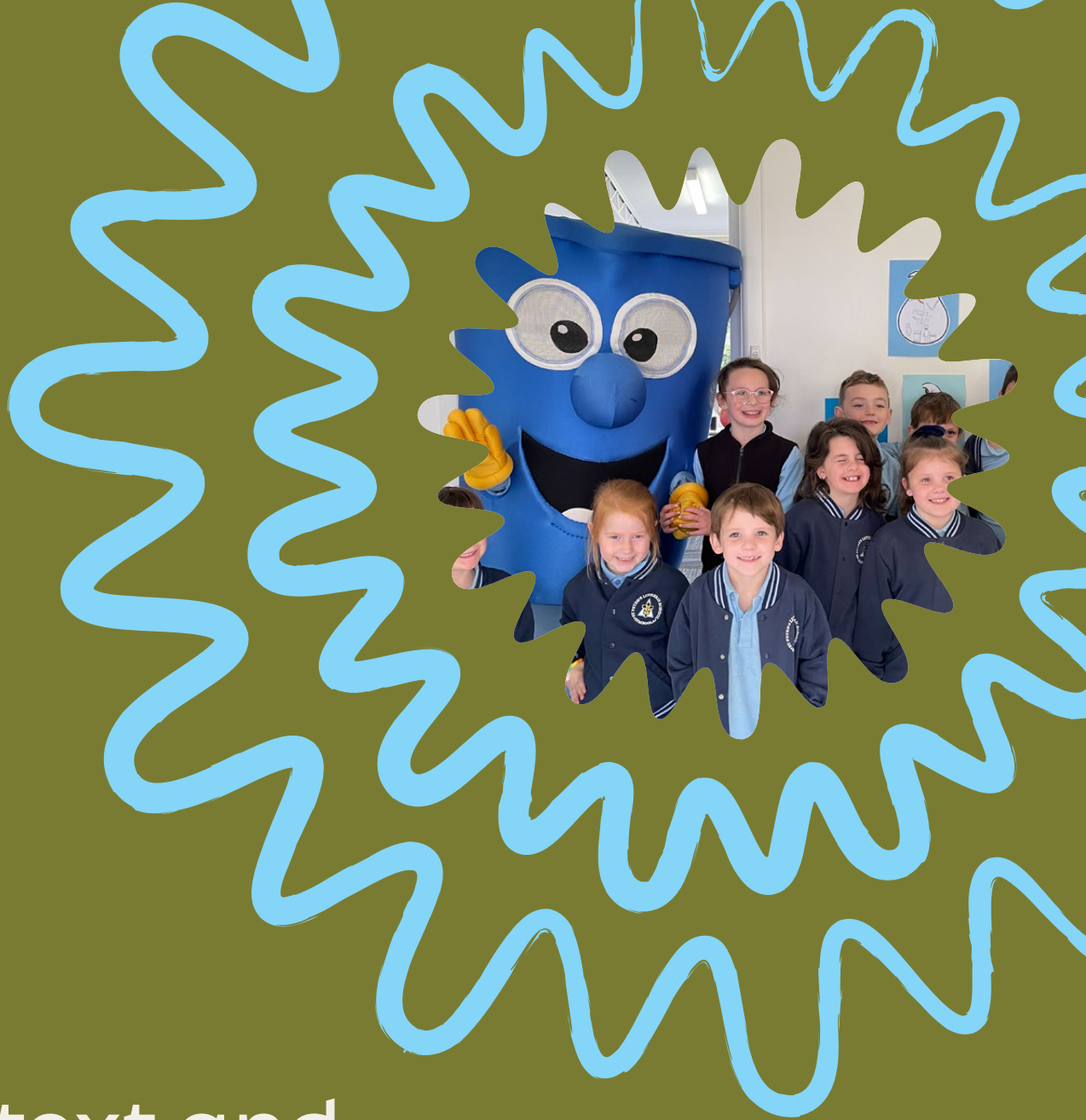


Take action for
the benefit of both
current and future
generations.

Reliable
through
change



Adapt and innovate
to deliver services
when and where
they are needed.



Context and background



GWMWater has a strong and evolving communications and engagement capability, underpinned by recognised best practice, positive customer feedback and regulatory acknowledgement.

This strategy builds on acknowledged successes including award-recognised engagement practices, positive outcomes from the most recent customer survey, and ESC acknowledgement during the last price review. It focuses on deliberately progressing GWMWater's engagement capability as customer expectations continue to evolve.

What's working well



GWMWater performs strongly across many aspects of communications and engagement.

Hybrid engagement models have been successfully applied for major initiatives, customer satisfaction results are generally positive, and digital services such as the website, portal and e-billing are increasingly well-used and valued by customers.



A continuous conversation: how engagement shapes GWMWater's decisions

GWMWater engages with its community through a continuous cycle of listening, learning and responding to customer needs, consistent with IAP2 best practice principles.

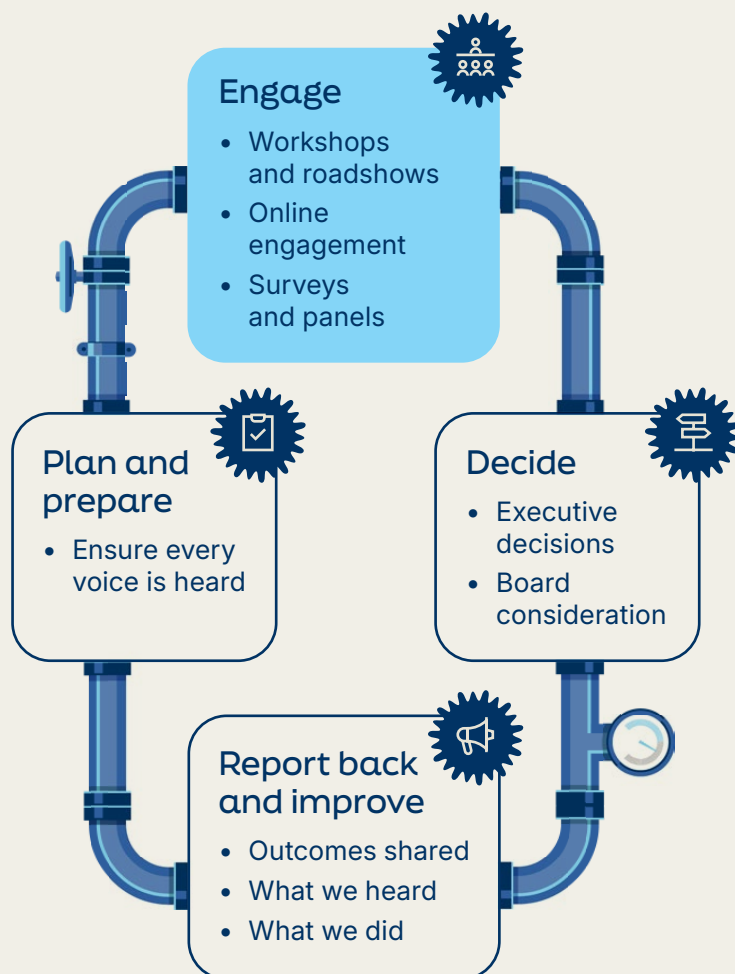
Our approach blends broad and targeted engagement activities to ensure diverse customer voices can influence decisions that shape their services and experiences.

Insights gathered throughout the year build an evolving evidence base that strengthens our understanding of customer segments. Insights are regularly shared with our Board to guide organisational decision making.

This rolling model ultimately feeds into major processes such as our Price Submission, where a deliberative Community Panel is convened to consider all prior insights and provide informed recommendations on proposals that affect customer services and value.

By incorporating hybrid online and in-person engagement methods, we've expanded participation across our large region and enhanced both the accessibility and depth of feedback.

This ongoing, looped engagement ensures our decisions consistently reflect community priorities, not only during price reviews but every year.



Customer insights informing our strategy



Customer research confirms that GWMWater is a trusted service provider, with customers generally satisfied with the information they receive and increasingly confident engaging through both digital and traditional channels.

Customer insights at a glance

Trusted information

Customers value clear, relevant and accessible information.
Strength to build on.



Hybrid engagement works

Combining digital and in-person engagement improves reach and participation.
Model to continue.



Digital confidence is growing

Use of the website and online services continues to increase.
Foundation for future engagement.



Clear updates during change

Timely, consistent communication is critical during outages and service changes.
Ongoing focus area.



Awareness improves outcomes

Customers who know about available services report higher satisfaction.
Promotion matters.



Different needs across communities

Preferences vary by age, location and context.
Flexible, inclusive approach required.



How this informs the strategy

These insights guide the strategy by:

- Building on strong foundations of trust
- Progressing digital services as an opportunity
- Maintaining effective traditional channels
- Prioritising clear communication during change
- Tailoring engagement to diverse communities



Our areas of focus



GWMWater delivers essential services in a complex, highly visible and evolving environment. Communications and engagement must respond to a broad range of influences while building on the strong foundations already in place across the organisation.

This strategy recognises that GWMWater performs well in engaging its customers and communities, as reflected in customer survey results, regulatory acknowledgement and successful application of hybrid engagement approaches. At the same time, the operating environment continues to evolve, requiring a deliberate and adaptive approach to communications and engagement over the next five years.

Key considerations shaping our approach

High visibility of essential services

Clear, timely and transparent communication remains critical to sustaining trust, particularly during service changes, projects or disruptions.

Affordability and value

Communications play an important role in explaining pricing outcomes, demonstrating value and promoting customer support options.

Growing expectations for engagement

Customers and stakeholders increasingly expect proactive updates and accessible information, requiring ongoing refinement of channels and content.

Regulatory and sector alignment

Engagement activities will continue to align with regulatory obligations and Victorian water sector expectations.

Diverse customer needs

A flexible, multi-channel approach ensures communications remain inclusive, supporting both digital and traditional preferences.

Traditional Owner partnerships

Strengthening partnerships supports respectful, informed and outcomes-focused engagement in relation to land and water management.

Digital advancement as an opportunity

Expanding digital tools will enhance customer choice, accessibility and responsiveness while maintaining strong non-digital options.

Privacy and security

Protecting customer information and clearly communicating privacy commitments underpins trust in digital services.

Infrastructure delivery and change

Early engagement and locally relevant communication support confidence during infrastructure delivery and periods of change.

These considerations inform the strategic drivers and actions outlined in this strategy and guide how GWMWater will continue to strengthen communications and engagement in a measured, inclusive and future-focused way.

Strategic timeline

Where we've been



Strong foundations in traditional channels

Reactive communication

Simple digital presence

Embedded water conservation

Water-saving culture strengthened in our community

Where we are now



Hybrid engagement

Recognised leader in engagement practice

Trusted community partner

Increasing expectations for Traditional Owner Engagement

Where we're going



Driver 1



Driving digital transformation to enhance the customer experience

Driver 2



Delivering agile engagement to meet changing needs

Driver 3



Demonstrating the value we provide to the community



Delivering outcomes



How we will get
to where we
want to be

Driver 1



Digital evolution

- Establish a user-friendly website offering a one-stop-shop for customers and a hub for other platforms (Customer Portal, eNotices).
- Implement a social media strategy.
- Publish real-time service dashboards for outages and water quality.
- Launch digital access support initiatives for rural customers (tutorials, kiosks at service centres).
- Expand multi-channel engagement (SMS alerts, local radio, community boards).
- Communicate privacy commitments clearly in all digital interactions.

Driver 2



Agile engagement

- Develop agreed engagement practices with Traditional Owners.
- Implement Child Safe policy and guidelines.
- Develop an understanding of the drivers behind our customers' satisfaction.
- Support regional development and streamline permit processes.
- Promote the work of the organisation by invigorating the education program, industry awards/forums and staff profiling.
- Pilot emerging engagement technologies (interactive webinars, virtual and in-person site tours).
- Host seasonal community forums (in-person and livestream) for project updates.
- Integrate AI-driven sentiment analysis to anticipate community concerns.
- Provide clear, accessible information and guidance to support regional development.
- Simplify permit processes for builders, buyers and renovators by improving responsiveness and advocating for efficiency.

Driver 3



Demonstrating value

- Align our brand and tone of voice to reflect a contemporary approach across all customer and stakeholder communications.
- Create our own multimedia, particularly video and still photography where appropriate.
- Create a rapid response protocol for misinformation (social listening and fact-check dissemination).
- Share case studies and stories that highlight organisational accountability and customer outcomes.
- Build in actions to communicate the positive outcomes of our community sponsorship programs and support initiatives.
- Expand use of e-Newsletters as a communication tool.
- Align messaging with Victorian water sector sustainability goals for credibility.





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