

## New round of price discussions coming up for 80,000 water customers

Households and small businesses from the state's south east and central Victoria will get a chance to talk service levels and priorities with two of the state's 18 water businesses starting soon.

South Gippsland Water and Western Water will be commencing community consultation soon ahead of prices being set for 2020 to 2023.

For now, the state's water regulator is taking submissions on papers that will guide the two water businesses in making their price submissions to the Essential Services Commission in late 2019.

**Western Water** has just over 60,000 customers. It covers 3,000 square kilometres taking in Sunbury, Melton, Bacchus Marsh, the Macedon Ranges and surrounds.

One of the state's smallest water businesses, **South Gippsland Water** has around 20,000 customers located across 4,000 square kilometres and including Foster, Fish Creek, Waratah Bay, Leongatha, Port Franklin, Port Albert, Cape Paterson and Wilsons Promontory.

The commission's Marcus Crudden says the release of the guidance papers marks the beginning of the process for setting water prices in these two regions from 1 July 2020.

"The papers set out the minimum information we need from the businesses in their pricing submissions due next year," he said.

The commission completed price decisions for the majority of the state's water businesses earlier this year using a [new framework](#) designed to get better value for customers.

Mr Crudden says the key principles of the new framework will apply.

"Western Water and South Gippsland have already done some of the work, including some consultation with their communities, we still expect their submissions to meet the high standard required under the framework," he said.

Comments on the [draft guidance paper](#) should be sent to [water@esc.vic.gov.au](mailto:water@esc.vic.gov.au) by 4 December, 2018.

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