



Gippsland
Water

Modern Slavery Statement

2023-24

Table of contents

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Custodians	2
Context.....	3
About Us	4
Our Vision	4
Our Strategic Priorities and Values	4
Our Services	4
Our commercial businesses	5
Organisation Structure.....	6
Supply Chain	6
Governance	7
Management of Modern Slavery Risks.....	8
Identifying modern slavery risk in our operations and supply chains	8
Actions Taken to Address Modern Slavery Risks	10
Tendering.....	10
Supplier Code of Conduct	10
Fair Jobs Code	10
Additional Policies	10
Effectiveness of Actions.....	12
Industry Approach to Modern Slavery	12
Practical effectiveness.....	12
The Way Forward – 2024-25	13
Capability Building	13
Fair Jobs Code	13
Approval.....	14

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Custodians

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Gippsland Water area, the Gunaikurnai people and the Bunurong people, and recognise their strong cultural connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respect to their Elders, past and present.



Figure 1. Commissioned artwork from local Aboriginal artist, Gunaikurnai artist Alice Pepper

Context

Central Gippsland Region Water Corporation (Gippsland Water) is committed to the responsible management of water resources, the provision of high-quality and affordable water services, and the delivery of effective wastewater management solutions to safeguard public health.

In addition to our core functions of water and wastewater management, we operate two commercial enterprises, being an agricultural business and an organic waste management facility. These operations play a vital role in supporting the organisation's broader objectives, generating value for our customers, the local community, and the state.

In pursuit of these goals, our diverse and capable teams collaborate with the community, developers, and a range of partners, contractors, and suppliers. Our organisational values underpin all our activities and interactions, reflecting our commitment to ethical practices and sustainable outcomes.

In line with these values, we are dedicated to ensuring that modern slavery is not present in our operations or supply chain.

This Modern Slavery Statement has been prepared in accordance with section 13 of the Australian Commonwealth *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Cth).

It outlines the steps we have taken to assess and address the risks of modern slavery within our organisation and supply chain during the reporting period of 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

The scope of our operations and supply chain has not changed significantly from the previous reporting period to the current one. Consequently, this year's statement is closely aligned with, and expands upon our 2022-23 Modern Slavery Statement.

About Us

Gippsland Water, officially known as the Central Gippsland Region Water Corporation (ABN 75 830 750 413), is a regional water corporation based in Victoria, Australia. Established under the *Water Act 1989* (Vic), Gippsland Water was constituted on 21 December 1994.

We operate under a Board of Directors appointed by the Minister for Water. We're regulated by the Essential Services Commission (ESC), the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Change Action (DEECA), Department of Health (DoH) and the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA).

Our Vision

We take pride in partnering with the community in providing quality water and waste services so we can enjoy a healthy and sustainable Gippsland for generations to come.

Our Strategic Priorities and Values

Over the next five years, our strategic priorities will focus on the most important initiatives that align with the values we gathered through customer feedback during our pricing submission process. These priorities are reviewed and updated annually to ensure they remain in line with our commitments as outlined by the Victorian Government.



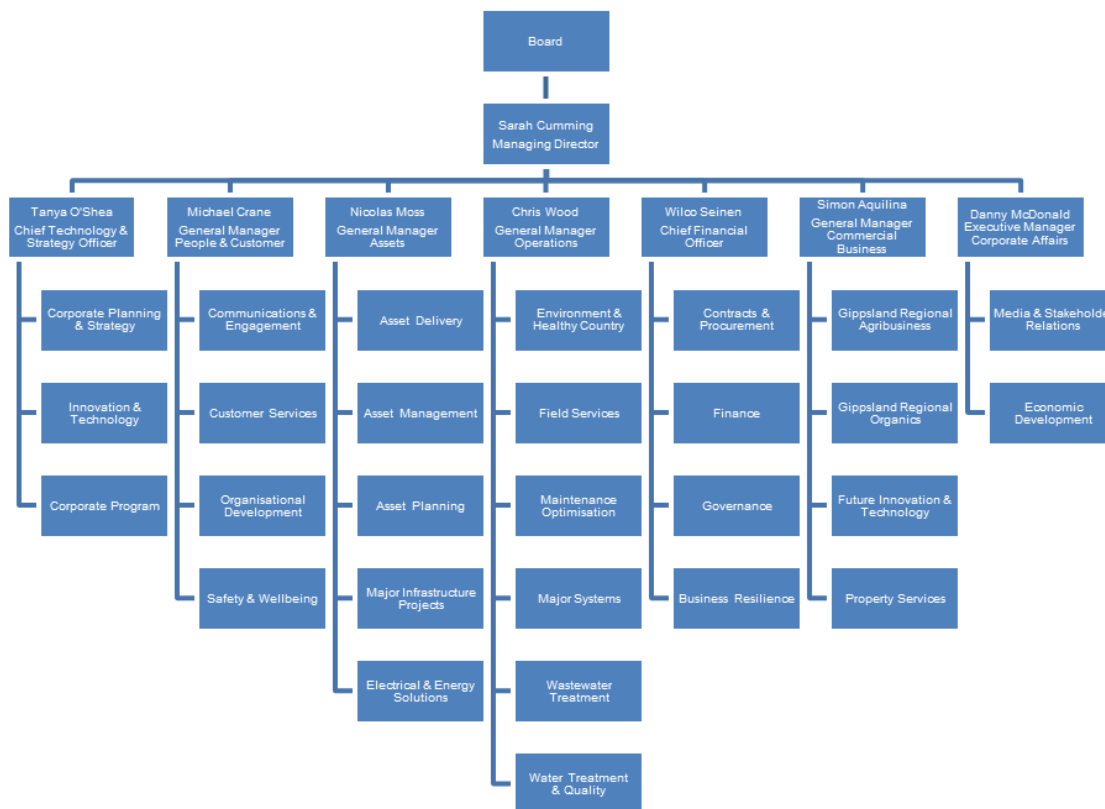
Our Services

We supply drinking water to 76,490 households and businesses, and wastewater services to more than 69,000 households and businesses, across 43 towns. Our customers include major industries, some of which are of state and national significance.

We take water from 13 different sources including aquifers, rivers, creeks, and reservoirs and treat it to meet our strict water quality standards. Our largest storage is Moondarra Reservoir, south of Erica, with a capacity of 30,458ML. We also take water from

Organisation Structure

With 375 operational, engineering, financial, environmental, and administrative employees, we are a major local employer for the region serving an estimated population base of over 165,000.



Supply Chain

We are committed to operating our business lawfully and ethically, and working with suppliers that are aligned to our values, including corporate social responsibility, environmental and workplace safety protection, and staff inclusion and diversity.

Our operations make a significant positive contribution to our region's economy and liveability. During 2023-24, the organisation had a \$171.8 million turnover supported by \$1.7 billion in assets and spent \$57.8 million in capital and related infrastructure works.

Gippsland Water's supply chain includes the purchase of goods and services needed for the businesses day-to-day operations including water and wastewater treatment chemicals, materials, external technical and professional services, office supplies, employment and training of staff, external legal advice, IT infrastructure and support services.

We worked with well over 2000 suppliers during the 2023-24 financial year and spent almost \$138,394,000 with these suppliers. Majority of these suppliers are local (Australia/New Zealand), with 10 suppliers located outside of our local region.

All but one of these suppliers relate to ongoing software licencing and the provision of training services and are located within the United States (US) or Europe.

The remaining supplier is a reputable machine industry company and is also US based. They provide a low risk to us of modern slavery practices which are demonstrated through their key social policies, such as:

- Supplier Code of Conduct
- Environmental Health Safety Policy
- Human Rights Policy
- Human Trafficking Statement

Governance

Our own procurement documentation guide our activities to ensure that our buying power advances social, economic, and environmental objectives.

As a Victorian Government-owned organisation, we aim to ensure that our purchases represent value for money and are sourced fairly and ethically.

We require our suppliers to operate in accordance with applicable modern slavery laws.

In accordance with our spending threshold guidelines, procurements for goods and services exceeding \$100,000, construction services exceeding \$200,000, and construction works exceeding \$500,000 must undergo a competitive tendering process through the Buying for Victoria platform.

This ensures enhanced transparency, with all successful tenders, including supplier details, being publicly published on Buying for Victoria.

Management of Modern Slavery Risks

Identifying modern slavery risk in our operations and supply chains

Gippsland Water has formal policies in place that promote ethical and legally compliant business conduct. Our policies contribute to our commitment to prevent violations of human rights such as modern forms of slavery in our business including the Supplier Code of Conduct, and Public interest Disclosure (whistle-blower) Policy.

We acknowledge that the risks of modern slavery may be present as a result of the characteristics of the industry of our suppliers, the products and services produced or provided, the geographical location of some our suppliers, and the complexity of the supply chains used in products and services supplied to us.

The following categories have been identified as representing potential human rights risks across all areas of our business, including our commercial businesses:

- Asset maintenance: ongoing operations and maintenance of facilities, grass cutting, cleaning, herbicide application;
- Construction: construction labour and engineering technical services;
- Corporate: temporary staff, labour hire and traineeship programs, security;
- Customer: debt collection services, customer research services;
- Equipment and materials: mechanical and electrical equipment, chemical products;
- ICT: offshore IT services.

Operations	Supply Chains	
Asset Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water treatment services. • Waterways. • Operations & maintenance of assets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation & maintenance of facilities, including cleaning. • Land care services & conservation management.
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering, Constructions & Major Projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering consulting / technical services.
Corporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase & lease of properties. • Electricity, gas, utilities. • Commercial travel. • Freight, couriers & mail. • Temporary labour hire. • Professional services. • Marketing & advertising. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training services. • Fleet purchase, maintenance & operation. • Stationery & office equipment. • Security services. • Research. • Insurance services.
Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call centre services. • Customer research services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt collection services. • Printing of bills & notices.
Equipment & Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply & Storage of chemicals. • Hire of construction equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service & maintenance of equipment. • Consumable supplies.

Operations	Supply Chains	
Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supply of IT hardware.• Telecommunication expenses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IT Software & licensing.• IT Services.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fleet and Facility.• Office stationery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchase of vehicles and maintenance.• Office consumables etc.

Actions Taken to Address Modern Slavery Risks

The scope of our operations and supply chain has not changed significantly from the previous reporting period to the current one. Consequently, this year's statement is closely aligned with, and expands upon our 2022-23 Modern Slavery Statement.

However, we remain firmly committed to further strengthening our procurement processes and improving data-driven performance. These continuous efforts are crucial to our ongoing work to identify and mitigate the risks of modern slavery within our operations and supply chains.

Over this reporting period, progress in addressing the Modern Slavery risks associated with our operations and supply chains, where all tender templates, supplier evaluation tools, and standard contractual clauses addressing Modern Slavery are applied to contract management practices.

Tendering

We continue to require the provision of statements and policies specifically related to Modern Slavery in Requests for Tender and engages with suppliers on modern slavery issues and qualification procedures based on levels of commitment to assess and address risks of Modern Slavery practices.

Our list of current tenders and the award of successful contract can be found here: <https://www.tenders.vic.gov.au/>

Supplier Code of Conduct

Our Supplier Code of Conduct outlines the minimum standards we expect from our suppliers and their supply chains in areas such as integrity, ethics, corporate governance, labour and human rights, health and safety, and environmental management.

Fair Jobs Code

The new Fair Jobs Code came into effect on 1 December 2022.

Suppliers tendering for procurement contracts that meet the Fair Jobs Code threshold must hold a Pre-Assessment Certificate to confirm their compliance with industrial relations and occupational health and safety law over the previous three years.

More information on the Fair Jobs Code can be found here:

<https://www.buyingfor.vic.gov.au/fair-jobs-code-departments-and-agencies>

Additional Policies

We have a suite of policies, procedures, codes, and standards, that are relevant to modern slavery and summarised in the below table.

Document name	Purpose
Code of Conduct	Details the expected conduct for employees within the Victorian public sector, including provisions related to fair employment practices and the recognition and respect of the human rights of all individuals.
Corporate Social Responsibility Policy	At Gippsland Water, as a manager of Central Gippsland's most valuable resource, our water, we have a clear obligation to operate in an environmentally sensitive and socially responsible manner. This obligation is further constituted under the Water Act (1989). Gippsland Water sees the maintenance of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program

Document name	Purpose
Complaints and Disputes Procedure	as enhancing its core values of open dialogue, integrity and respect, collaboration, accountability, capability, safety, and wellbeing and recognises that failure to achieve compliance with policy objectives may lead to loss of reputation.
Procurement Policy	Recognises the importance of feedback as a mechanism for continuous improvement and sets out the principles that govern our response to complaints, concerns, or feedback. Sets out the principles that govern the procurement of all goods and services by Gippsland Water.

Effectiveness of Actions

Industry Approach to Modern Slavery

We continue to work with other water authorities to share insights and actions related to modern slavery in the water industry.

Practical effectiveness

We have a large array of policies, frameworks, and procedures in place to ensure our procurement processes incorporate risk management requirements, including modern slavery risks.

These provide guidance to our staff and key stakeholders in considering modern slavery risks in both our operations and supply chains.

During 2023-24, we have continued to provide guidance and support to our Contract Responsible Officers in the implementation of appropriate contract and tender documentation, considering modern slavery risks.

Tender responses continue to adhere to our requirements and Gippsland Water recognises that the assessment of the effectiveness of our actions is an ongoing and evolving process.

The Way Forward – 2024-25

Capability Building

Effectively managing our modern slavery risks is a long-term commitment. In 2024-25 we will focus on capability building within the organisation.

This will be done by:

- Consider further collaboration opportunities with our peers through the Water Services Association of Australia working group on modern slavery supplier engagement.
- Enhance current training and tools so that internal knowledge on our modern slavery risks and how best to address these are improved.
- Undertaking a review of our current modern slavery risks to ensure that they are on our central organisation risk register.

Fair Jobs Code

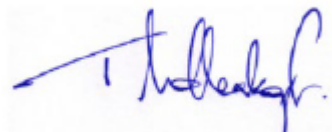
From 1 September 2024, a Fair Jobs Code pre-assessment certificate became mandatory for all suppliers tendering for contracts of \$1 million or more, and all direct subcontractors with a contract valued at \$1 million or more.

The Victorian Governments Department of Treasury and Finance is finalising updates to its Ministerial Directions and Instructions for Public Construction Procurement, including request for tender and contract documents and templates to reflect these changes.

We will ensure we comply with the new Fair Jobs Code requirements when issuing a Request for Tender.

Approval

This statement has been approved by the Board of Gippsland Water on 5 December 2024 and has been signed by Tom Mollenkopf AO (Board Chair) who is authorised to sign this statement on behalf of Gippsland Water.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Mollenkopf', is written over a faint, light blue grid background.

Tom Mollenkopf AO

Board Chair



**Gippsland
Water**

PO Box 348
55 Hazelwood Road
Traralgon VIC 3844

General enquiries 1800 050 500
Faults and emergencies 1800 057 057

contactus@gippswater.com.au

www.gippswater.com.au

ABN 75 830 750 413