

Customer Accountability Panel Update – March 2026



The Customer Accountability Panel (CAP) is the stewardship group holding Goulburn Valley Water (GVW) accountable to commitments made in **Price Plan 2023–28**.

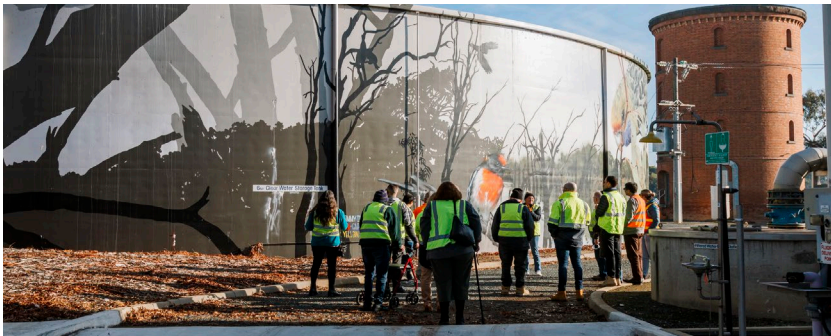
Members are asked to consider the wider community when providing feedback and advice. The CAP's continuing role provides assurance that customers are receiving the services they pay for.

The annual CAP 2025 workshop was held in June at the Kyabram Club. At the workshop, participants:

1. Confirmed the CAP Terms of Reference
2. Provided feedback on Supporting Customers Who Need Help projects
3. Were updated on other customer-led initiatives
4. Created an assessment statement on our Price Plan annual performance

Kyabram Water Treatment Plant tour: The June event started with breakfast and a tour of the Kyabram Water Treatment Plant, followed by a workshop full of interaction and discussion.

Participant said they loved the tour and said they were interested in visiting other facilities in the future.



1. CAP Terms of Reference confirmation

The CAP *Terms of Reference* have been finalised, incorporating the feedback provided by workshop participants and will remain in effect until June 2028. This document outlines the role, expected behaviours and governance arrangements of the CAP and can be accessed here [Customer Accountability Panel Terms of Reference.pdf](#)

CAP AT A GLANCE

- 70** everyday customers
- 34** participants attended the 2025 workshop
- 33** of **34** participants enjoyed the workshop



SAVE THE DATE

NEXT CAP WORKSHOP

18 July 2026 *details coming soon*

2. Supporting Customers Who Need Help feedback

At the 2025 CAP workshop, participants were provided an update on the customer-led program **Supporting Customers Who Need Help** and the **five projects** being delivered in this program.

They were then given the opportunity to provide feedback on each of the five projects - here is what they said.

Participants told us it is important to:

- ✓ Keep improving communication about support
 - ✓ Make initiatives easier to understand
 - ✓ Increase education about:
 - ❖ Digital meters
 - ❖ Leak detection
 - ❖ Water saving
 - ✓ Continue focusing on customers who need extra support
 - ✓ Be clear about how performance is measured
- This feedback is being incorporated into current work and planning.*

Here is an update on each project that customers helped shape.



Project 1. Water Efficiency Partnerships Provide practical support and information to enable customers who need help to be more water efficient and to save money on their bills.



Project 2. Customer Leak Repair Introduce a scheme that will fix customer leaks on their side of meter for those unable to afford it.

What's happened

- Started identifying eligible customers and reaching out via phone calls
- Created a simple water use audit tool
- Started engaging with support agencies to extend project delivery opportunities

What's next

- Extending support agency network across our service area
- Promoting learning materials to customers via support agencies
- Seeking further feedback from customers on this project and support

CAP feedback

Participants supported GVW taking a proactive role in finding customers who may need financial help. They suggested incentives for water efficiency and tools to help customers watch and manage their water use.

They also suggested aligning services with existing assistance services and focusing on long-term cost savings.

What's happened

- Leak identification reports and processes in place and working
- Started proactive calls to customers
- Developed approach to provide single point of contact and tailored access to all available support

What's next

- Promoting to customers who traditionally don't access support and need our help
- Continuing to seek feedback from customers to refine how we provide support

CAP feedback

Participants asked for more information and transparency around digital meters, including how leaks are detected and how GVW responds.

They also liked the idea of a dedicated GVW contact rather than an impersonal call centre.



Project 3. Monthly Billing Support adoption of more flexible billing support.

What's happened

- Designed a new web-based billing calculator with web developer
- IT requirements scoped for a new business billing system

What's next

- Testing billing calculator then uploading
- Incorporating calculator into customer support package
- Building requirements for new billing system including billing more frequently
- Renaming this project

Participant feedback

Participants valued water use tools and asked how they work with digital meters

Some participants raised concerns about barriers to contacting GVW and promoting supports in remote areas, and others shared experiences of rising bills and feeling supported when help was provided



Project 4. Youth Pathways to GVW Create opportunities for students to discover career options and offer work experience and traineeships to attract regional youth to work at GVW.

What's happened

- Continued partnership with GMLEN to provide new education resources
- Education focus on operations careers
- Added new careers education content to pathway map
- Partnership with Kaiela Institute to deliver scholarships

What's next

- Building framework to deliver pathways in GVW – traineeships, work experience, graduate programs, mentoring
- Offering Kaiela program scholarships to eligible students
- Developing a virtual reality education tool related to operations with the GMLEN

Participant feedback

Participants suggested ways to introduce students to career opportunities at GVW, including school partnerships, trainee programs and information for schools

Social media and student-generated promotional content was also supported, along with curriculum links, school tours and excursions



Project 5. New Arrivals, New Needs Make information and support more accessible for customers who are new to the region, and for diverse communities.

What's happened

- Relationships increased with Ethnic Council & developed with Uniting, Umoja Empowerment Group and Settlement Hub
- Six Easy English booklets being distributed and promoted
- Delivered information sessions in Dari, Arabic and Swahili for new customers
- Engaged interpreter to help inform customers about project works
- Developed a multilingual poster promoting “our water is safe to drink”

What's next

- Delivering more in person information sessions to customers from multicultural communities
- Developing deeper relationships with partners and create new partnerships with regional support agencies
- Creating more Easy English customer resources

Participant feedback

Participants expressed the need to find and support new arrivals and ensure fair access to information and services

Translation tools and social media were supported to reach culturally and linguistically diverse communities, particularly those not reached through traditional channels

3. Update on other customer-led initiatives - Regional Leadership and Carbon Abatement

Participants were updated on the two other customer-led programs that customers had helped shape during the last pricing submission. GVW advised that the Regional Leadership Program and the Carbon Abatement with Local Benefits Program (including individual projects) did not meet all of the Essential Services Commission (ESC) requirements to include and pass on allocated budgets to customers. As a result, these specific programs will not be funded.

However, GVW confirmed that strong customer support means an ongoing commitment to both regional leadership and carbon abatement with local benefits. Projects proposed under these programs will be re-assessed as part of normal business planning and Pricing Submission 2028-33.

Next steps:

- ✓ GVW is still committed to regional leadership and carbon abatement with local benefits
- ✓ Submitted projects will be re-assessed for inclusion in Pricing Submission 2028-33
- ✓ GVW will continue to engage with the CAP on opportunities to implement these programs as part of business as usual
- ✓ There will be an ongoing focus on delivering the Supporting Customers Who Need Help Program

4. Assessment of Price Plan 2023-28 Year 2 performance

As part of our **Price Plan 2023–28**, GVW made four promises to customers and set 16 performance measures to make sure we are delivering on those promises. Each year of the plan we must report to the Essential Services Commission on annual performance against these promises and measures.

During the 2025 workshop participants were updated on Year 2 performance against each promise and measure and asked to write assessment statements. A sub- group of participants then wrote an assessment summary that was included in GVW's performance report sent to the ESC.

Price Plan 2023-28 promises and Year 2 performance rating summary – GVW assessment to the Essential Services Commission

Promise one - We will provide reliable water and wastewater services customers can trust

We continue to deliver on this promise overall, rating our performance as green or on track. We met targets for four measures but targets for two measures were not met and rated red.

Promise two - We will lead action and partner with our communities to grow the region

Overall we rated our performance as amber or close to being or largely met. The target for one performance measure was rated red or not met and the target for the other was rated amber.

Promise three - We will care for the environment and adapt to a future impacted by climate variability

We continued to make excellent progress with this promise, rating our overall performance as green or on track. Targets for all four performance measures were rated green or met.

Promise four - We will deliver respectful and responsive customer service, balancing affordability, value for money and fairness

We were pleased with the ongoing delivery of this promise, rating our overall performance as green or on track. Targets for three of four measures were rated green or met, with the target for one measure amber or close to target or largely met.

You can read the full ESC Price Plan Outcomes Report on the GVW website or by following this link [Goulburn Valley Water – Outcomes – 2023–2028](#)

CAP assessment summary on Goulburn Valley Water's Year 2 performance: The individual statements made at the 2025 workshop were combined by a sub-group of participants following the 2025 workshop to create a CAP performance assessment summary.

The following commentary was written by CAP members in their own voice:

"The promises show that GVW is customer-focused and committed to the community. Overall, GVW is keeping its promises (outcomes), providing high quality services at very fair prices. We encourage GVW's ongoing efforts in cost management. We applaud its many sustainability initiatives and want GVW to continue to promote water saving measures, to plan for droughts and to ensure that our communities don't run out of water.

GVW has delivered well on promises (outcomes) 1, 3 and 4, and we acknowledge that while Promise (Outcome) 2 presents measurement and assessment challenges, we believe the intent has been fulfilled. There is an opportunity to make all of GVW's achievements more visible to customers and the broader community by exploring and expanding communication and education opportunities. Indeed, we feel that improved and expanded communications – both in print and electronically – should be given the highest priority among future planning avenues.

There is also an opportunity for GVW to employ an embedded feedback loop across its operations to capture lessons learned and insights gained through regular activity and outcome audits. Information thus gathered can be used to maintain alignment with best practice and ensure that staff and contractors remain fully informed.

We strongly encourage GVW to work towards attaining missed measures (outputs), to maintain its momentum and to continue to aim high. GVW is indeed delivering on what matters, and we commend its commitment to accountability, transparency and engagement. We especially commend its uniquely positive response to feedback."

CAP WRAP

We thank the Customer Accountability Panel for contributing to the current Price Plan and other strategy development. You play an important stewardship role, holding GVW accountable to the commitments in Price Plan 2023–2028 and beyond.

Thank you to the CAP members who participated in one of three Urban Water Strategy development online focus groups. We value your contribution over the 90-minute sessions. Your input is being analysed alongside other engagement data to inform the strategy.

You can find more information about the [Customer Accountability Panel page](#) on the Goulburn Valley Water website or by following this link:
[Customer Accountability Panel | Goulburn Valley Water](#)

Our thoughts are with all CAP members and families impacted by the recent devastating fires. We are proud to continue supporting affected communities in recovery.

PLEASE REMEMBER to save the date - the next CAP workshop will be held on **Saturday 18 July 2026**. Further details about the event will be coming soon.
