

Community update

Forrest Wastewater Project

Winter
2026

Welcome to the Forrest Wastewater Project's Winter Community Update

As the season changes to winter, the Forrest Wastewater Project team has been busy assessing the feedback it has received from across the Forrest community to help inform the project's detailed business case.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to participate.

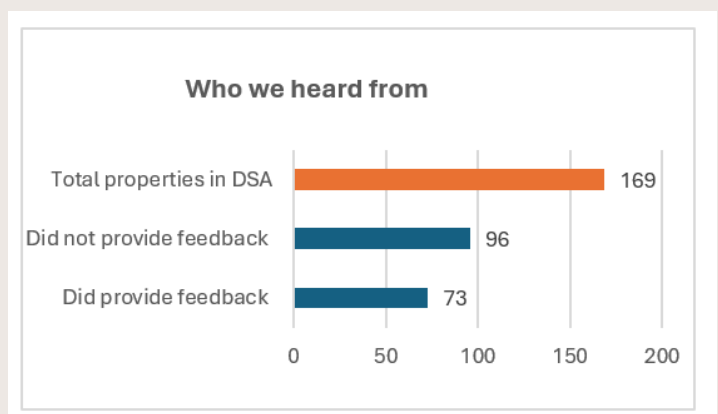
Building on last year's survey we have now heard from 73 of the 169 properties within the proposed Declared Sewer Area (DSA). This includes feedback you gave us at listening posts outside the Forrest General Store in February and via our survey in April. During this engagement we sought to understand your level of support for the project, and how we might ensure the project's financial model represented an affordable outcome for all.

Over the previous month we have also received submissions from Colac Otway Shire and the Forrest and District Community Group which includes a petition with 70 signatures (67 for and 3 against), 14 letters of support from local landowners and businesses and 4 advocacy letters from regional stakeholders. Thank you for the work and time that has been put into these submissions. They will be provided to the Board alongside a comprehensive engagement report to inform their decision-making processes. We will share this report with you on the project's Your Say page over the coming months.

While the formal engagement period has finished, we'll continue to seek to understand the views of those who are not yet represented, given the cost impact to these households.

Who we heard from

There are 169 properties within the DSA. We have heard from 73 of these properties across multiple phases, with 96 outstanding.

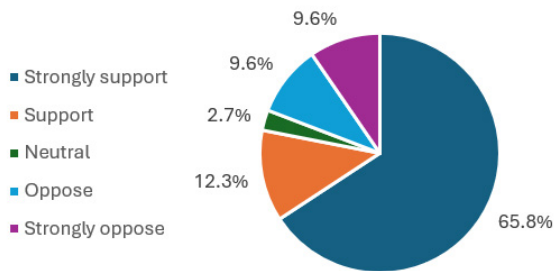


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Level of support within the DSA



Your level of support for the project

Of the 73 landowners from within the DSA that we have heard from, 78.1% strongly support or support the project, 19.2% strongly oppose or oppose the project, while 2.7% remain neutral.

People who support or strongly support the project say it would:

- improve public health, sanitation, environmental protection and waterway health, and resolve odour and amenity issues.
- address the failure of existing septic systems, reducing costs and individual burden
- support population growth and long-term viability, enabling economic development, business activity and tourism.
- be timely delivery of infrastructure.

While people who oppose or strongly oppose the project have concerns about:

- affordability and the financial burden of connecting, limited or uneven individual benefits and associated equity and fairness
- the risk of unwanted growth and change to the town's character
- the perceived shift in focus from public health and environmental outcomes toward enabling broader development
- the impacts of infrastructure siting and uncertainty about implementation requirements
- the preference for alternative solutions rather than a town-wide scheme.

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Funding

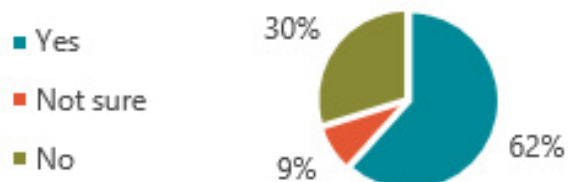
In February 2026 we introduced information about the responsibilities and potential costs for landowners to connect individual properties to the wastewater system. This included a funding model where landowners would be responsible for plumbing costs to connect to Barwon Water's infrastructure as well as connection and ongoing service charges.

Under this model Barwon Water would fund approximately \$29 million of infrastructure, including sewer pump units at properties, sewer pipelines and a new water recycling facility.

In April, when we sought feedback from landowners within the DSA about whether you supported the project proceeding under this funding model, 62% continued to support the project proceeding, 9% said they were unsure, and 30% said did not support it.

Those who supported the funding model pointed to the financial and practical burden of maintaining their septic systems, while some of those who didn't support it suggesting that the high connection costs and ongoing service charges were unaffordable and could exceed their financial capability.

DSA landowner support for the funding model



You will find more information on the project's funding model and property owner costs in the Document Library at [Forrest Wastewater Project | Your Say Barwon Water](#).

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Next steps

We're continuing to refine the project's business case and economic assessment and will take this to the Board later this year.

If the project is considered viable and we receive approval to proceed, our focus will then turn to developing detailed designs of the sewer network and water recycling facility.

As always, we will continue to keep you up to date and ask you for feedback on specific negotiable aspects of the project as they become clear.

Keeping in touch

Keep an eye out for updates on the project's Your Say web page at the QR code below, for advertisements in the Forrest Post or on social media, or call the 1800 number below.

www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/forrest-hub-forrest-wastewater

