Barwon Water

Community update

Forrest Wastewater Project

Spring 2026

The Forrest Wastewater Project has reached a significant milestone

We're pleased to let you know that we've endorsed the Forrest Wastewater Project's business case, enabling the project to proceed. This is a positive outcome for the township and represents a significant investment of approximately $30 million (preliminary estimate) into Forrest's future.

The decision recognises the public health, environmental and amenity risks that cannot be sustainably resolved through continued reliance on individual onsite septic systems. It also reflects broad community support for a reticulated wastewater system, and the wider economic benefits the project is expected to bring to Forrest and the region.

Thank you to the Forrest community

We acknowledge the significant contribution of the entire Forrest community, including property owners, businesses, residents, local stakeholders and the Forrest and District Community Group, who have helped shape the project.

Over recent years, community feedback, conversations, submissions and advocacy have helped inform the project's business case and Board decision-making process.

We'll continue to balance investments in projects that deliver the greatest benefit for customers in Forrest and across the broader Barwon Water region. This is reflected in our $320 million investment across more than 100 Colac Otway Shire projects in the past eight years.

Community feedback

- Survey results from within the proposed Declared Sewer Area (DSA) show strong support for the project, with 78% of respondents supporting or strongly supporting the proposal.
- Over the previous months we've also received submissions from Colac Otway Shire and the Forrest and District Community Group which included 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 to everyone who has taken the time to participate.

What the project includes

The endorsed solution is a reticulated town wastewater system that will provide a long-term replacement for privately owned septic systems within the proposed DSA. It includes sewer pump units at individual properties, sewer pipelines and a new water recycling facility at Gerangamete.

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What happens next

Our endorsement is an important milestone for the project and enables the next phase of planning and design to begin. Detailed design will begin in 2027, alongside the required environmental and planning approvals.

As the project progresses into detailed design in 2027, we'll take a more active role in the community, with additional site investigations and engagement activities. We will continue to work with property owners and stakeholders as project details are refined.

Construction is currently anticipated to commence within the 2028–33 pricing period, subject to completion of detailed design, environmental approvals and EPA licensing requirements. Once the design and these approvals are secured, we will be in a position to begin construction. We will keep you up to date on our progress.

Concessions, financial support and payment assistance options

While construction is still several years away it will be important for landowners to prepare for connection. Get in touch – we're here to help!

You can head to our website at www.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/billhelp for more information about our customer support.

Keep up to date

We'll continue to keep you updated as the project progresses and encourage you to follow the project's Your Say web page for the latest information using the QR code or head to:

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

Get in touch

If you have any questions about the project, or would like to register for updates, please reach out to us at:

Email: projects@barwonwater.vic.gov.au
Phone: 1300 656 007