Event summary

Your water, your say: 2028-2033 Price Submission community pop-ups

July 2026

Event details

Project	2028-2033 Price Submission
Event name	Your water, your say: Community pop-ups
Date	July 2026
Locations	• South Geelong Farmer's Market – Sunday 5 July 2026 • Deakin O-Fest Waurn Ponds – Tuesday 7 July 2026 • Deakin O-Fest Waterfront – Wednesday 8 July 2026 • Colac Plaza – Wednesday 15 July 2026 • Torquay Farmer's Market – Saturday 18 July 2026

Feedback summary

Session attendees

Session	Attendees
South Geelong Farmer's Market	267
Deakin O-Fest Waurn Ponds	76
Deakin O-Fest Waterfront	35
Colac Plaza	50
Torquay Farmer's Market	170
TOTAL	**598**

Purpose

The aim of this event series was to connect with our local customers and communities to promote our "Your water, your say: 2028-2033 Price Submission" project and let them know how they could have their say.

We promoted uptake in the current "willingness to pay" community survey and registrations to join our upcoming deliberative community panel. We also collected feedback with a hands-on activity, where customers could vote on our four key priority areas and what they cared about most.

We provided general messages about who we are and what we do, ongoing dry conditions, water saving tips, our support for customers experiencing vulnerability and any relevant local projects. We also handed out free native plants (supplied from genU Community Nursery) and / or seeds for customers who completed the engagement activity.

Activity

We created an interactive and engaging activity where participants used play money to "invest" in the priorities they felt were most important. The activity encouraged meaningful feedback in a simple, fun and visual way.

Activity objectives:

- Gather community input on priority areas
- Encourage participation through a hands-on activity
- Create a visual representation of community values
- Spark conversations and deeper insights

Concept:

Participants were given $30 in $10 notes to "invest" in the priority areas that meant the most to them. They could invest the $30 all in one area, or spread it out across a few. This activity was inclusive, visual, and easy to understand. It empowered participants to have a voice and see the impact of their input in real time. It also sparked lots of discussion around the priority areas.

Priority areas:

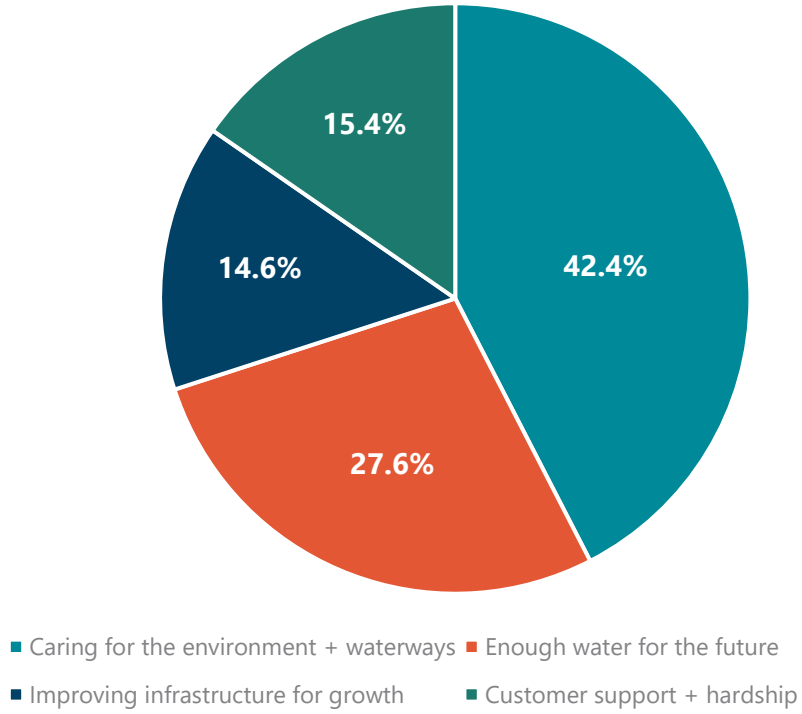
- Caring for the environment and looking after our waterways
- Ensuring we have enough water in the future
- Improving infrastructure for growth and efficiency
- Supporting customers experiencing hardship.



Barwon Water staff at the Deakin O-Fest event at Waurn Ponds

Overall results

The overall results show where participants chose to invest their $30, providing an indication of the priorities that mattered most to community members across all events. While participants could distribute their investment across multiple areas, the strongest levels of investment were directed toward the priorities that participants felt would have the greatest impact on the future of the region.



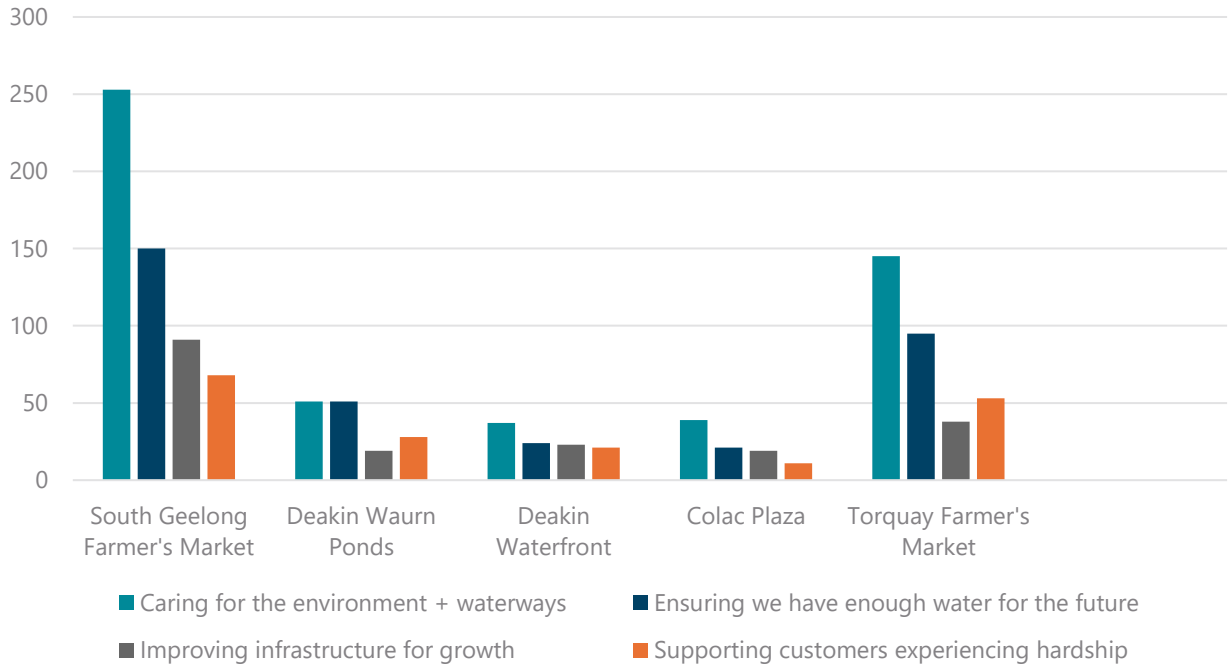
Participants placed the greatest emphasis on caring for the environment and looking after waterways, which attracted around 42.4% of all investment and was clearly the highest-ranked priority.

Ensuring we have enough water in the future was the second-highest priority, accounting for around 27.6% of total investment. Together, environmental protection and water security attracted approximately 70% of all investment, demonstrating strong community support for Barwon Water's core environmental and water supply responsibilities.

Improving infrastructure for growth and efficiency and supporting customers experiencing hardship received lower but similar levels of investment, highlighting that community members also recognise the importance of growth planning and customer support alongside environmental and water security outcomes.

Results by location

While similar themes emerged across most locations, the level of investment in each priority area varied between communities. These results provide insight into local perspectives and highlight where particular issues resonated more strongly in different parts of the Barwon Water region.



- **Caring for the environment and looking after waterways** received the highest level of investment at all engagement locations, demonstrating consistent support for environmental outcomes across the region.
- **Ensuring we have enough water in the future** was the second-highest priority at most locations, reinforcing the importance participants place on securing future water supplies.
- While the overall pattern was broadly consistent, some variation was evident between locations. For example, participants at the **Torquay Farmer's Market** allocated relatively more investment to **Supporting customers experiencing hardship** compared with other locations.
- The strongest participation was recorded at the **South Geelong Farmer's Market** and **Torquay Farmer's Market**, providing the largest volume of feedback for the activity.

Overall sentiment

Overall sentiment across the pop-up events was positive, with many participants expressing strong support for Barwon Water and appreciation for the services we provide.

We heard that having a local presence is important to our customers, and people were supportive of Barwon Water being out in the community and engaging directly with local residents.

Many community members commented on the things we're already doing well, including how well we support customers experiencing hardship or vulnerability. We also received constructive suggestions, including consideration for household size when determining service charges.

Overall, the events demonstrated a high level of trust in Barwon Water and provided valuable insights into the issues that mean the most to local communities.

Feedback summary:

The below provides a snapshot of some of the anecdotal feedback we heard at the pop-up events.

Strong support for Barwon Water's performance: Community members spoke positively about Barwon Water, describing the organisation as trusted, reliable and performing its role well. Many visitors to the stall felt Barwon Water is already delivering strong outcomes for customers and the broader community.

Positive customer service and hardship support: Community members value the support available to customers experiencing financial difficulty and believe Barwon Water provides meaningful assistance when needed. Some felt existing hardship programs are already very effective and well above the baseline.

Recognition of innovation and technology: Community members highlighted initiatives such as digital water meter data loggers as positive innovations that help customers better understand and manage their water use.

Viewed as a leading community organisation: Community members compared Barwon Water favourably with other respected organisations, noting its strong reputation, community engagement and commitment to doing the right thing for customers.

Appreciation for previous engagement opportunities: Community members who had participated in past engagement activities reflected positively on their experience and valued the opportunity to contribute to decision-making processes.

Prioritising long-term water security: Community members emphasised the importance of ensuring sufficient water supplies for future generations. Many felt investment in water

security should remain a priority, as infrastructure alone has limited value without reliable water resources to support it.

Concerns about fairness of service charges: Some community members questioned whether fixed service charges adequately reflect household circumstances, particularly for single-person households who currently pay the same service charge as larger families.

Desire for equitable cost allocation: One community member expressed interest in exploring charging approaches that better recognise differences in household size and water service usage, while maintaining fairness across the customer base.

Verbal feedback:

"Barwon Water are doing a good job!"

"I like the data loggers on the water meters."

"There are two organisations that do things well – CCMA and Barwon Water."

"Barwon Water already support their customers really well. You're one of the only organisations that pay credit back to their customers if they need it."

Customer shared that they did not vote for the hardship option because "Barwon Water has that down pat".

"Barwon Water does everything really well – keep up the great work."

"Colac water is great!"

"Ensuring we have enough water in the future is more important than upgrading infrastructure, because if we don't have water to feed it then what's the point."

"A number of people living in the same house should be considered in terms of services charges – I am a single person household and paying the same as a family of five next door."



The voting activity at South Geelong Farmer's Market