

## Water price review 2023

### Submission received through Engage Victoria

Date submitted: 1 December 2022

Water business: Barwon Water

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From 3 October 2022, we began accepting submissions on our 2023 water price review via Engage Victoria ([www.engage.vic.gov.au](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au)). On this website, people were given the option to send us general feedback or respond to questions we provided.

1. What do you think of the prices proposed by your water business?

I am from Forrest, where a \$28.1m capital upgrade of the waste water system is proposed. Much of this is needed because of a few tourist related businesses and inner-town housing.

Personally, I have a functioning septic and would rather upgrade the septic than have a waste-water system. I worry that it will lead to increased development in our town. While I don't actually disagree with development, my issue is that Colac Otway Shire has a history of unplanned and poor development. This will lead to more AirBNBs and poor quality housing in poor locations, rather than good quality development that our town needs. The only reason the Shire hasn't approved more subdivisions is because of EPA guidelines on waste management.

The other unresolved issue is who is going to pay for the \$28.1m upgrade? In the pricing review it notes \$26m will not affect customer pricing. Does this mean we are only going to contribute \$2.1m as customers, or will we have an additional levy as Forrest customers?

With around 150 households in Forrest, the build will cost \$200,000 per household. Even if half of that are grants, still that's \$100,000 per household. Much more than a septic. Moreover, if that's amortised over 20yrs on our fees, it's \$5,000 per annum or \$100 per week. That's not affordable for most residents. And it will substantially impact the value of our house. Before any commitments, it is essential we -the customer and taxpayer - know what the costs are, and who will bear them.

2. What do you think of the proposed outcomes?

