



Essential Service Commission  
2 Lonsdale Street  
Level 37  
Melbourne Victoria 3000

1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2022

**Support for Barwon Water Delivering the future | 2023 - 2028 Price Submission**

The Forrest & District Community Group (FDCG) have been partnering with Barwon Water and Colac Otways Shire since 2017 to investigate opportunities for wastewater improvements in the township of Forrest.

A 2017 Audit of existing onsite wastewater systems in Forrest indicates that 60 – 70% can be considered failing or impacting on health/ or the environment.

The Audit also determined that the township was currently (and would continue to be) well below the World Health Organisations target for Disease Protection due to discharge of wastewater off-site (four times below the WHO threshold)

The Audit found that the problem is widespread and compounded by the growth of Forrest, over the past 10 years, as a popular tourist and recreation (Mountain Biking) destination.

We support Barwon Water's proposed investment in a Forrest Wastewater solution which will address an urgent health and environmental problem in our town.

- **Design a centralised wastewater system to service the town of Forrest, as existing onsite systems are unable to cope with peak tourism loads and cause odours, spills and discharges to sensitive receiving environments \$1.9M**
- **Explore installation of Forrest wastewater system \$24.5M\***

This is critical infrastructure, and if approved will underpin the sustainability and prosperity of a healthy and positive community.

Our community-based plan **TOWARDS 2030 - Forrest Victoria** identifies wastewater infrastructure as an urgent priority for our town.

The lack of suitable wastewater facilities in Forrest is an impediment to community development and poses a public health risk. Installing new wastewater infrastructure will advance many other improvements, such as amenity, residential development, public toilet facilities, and the general health and wellbeing of the Forrest community. Developing a fully integrated water management plan will set up the community for a sustainable future and help achieve all five community goals as set out in the TOWARDS 2030 plan. The opportunities for Forrest to contribute to the wider community will be greatly expanded by the delivery of this infrastructure.

We are pleased that Barwon Water has taken the initiative to explore an enduring solution to support the future of our town. We write to urge you to support the Delivering the future | 2023 - 2028 Price Submission.

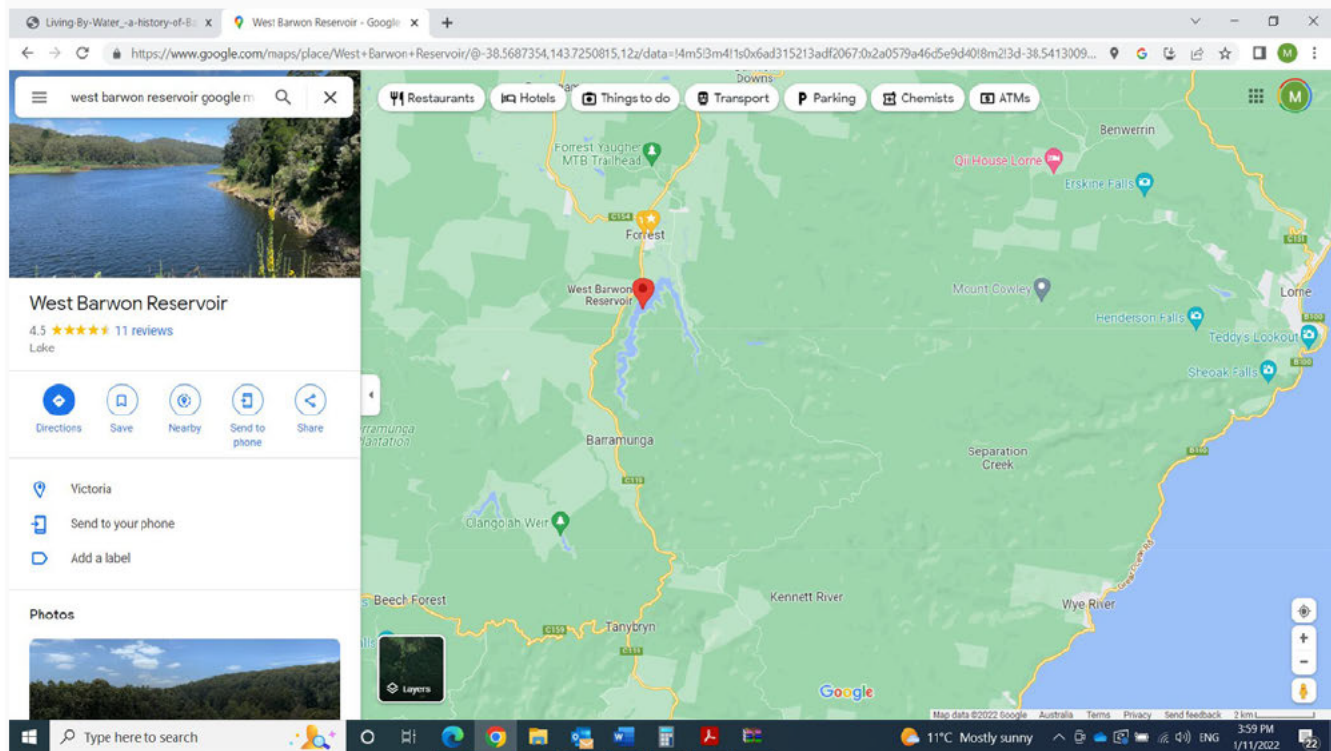
Yours sincerely,

Geoff Kennedy

President, Forrest & District Community Group



We have included a map, so that you can see the location and significance the West Barwon Reservoir to our township and the population of Geelong. The West Barwon Reservoir is Barwon Water's major water catchment for Geelong.



## Colac Otway

Dear Peter & Strategic Engagement Team,

Please find a joint response on behalf the Joint response Forrest & District Community Group (FDCG) | Forrest Public Reserves Committee (FPRC) to points & priorities detailed in the Colac Otway Draft Public Toilet Strategy.

Our comments refer specifically to the township of Forrest.

The FDCG and the Forrest Public Reserves Committee see Forrest as a HIGH and URGENT priority, and would like to see each of these points addresses in the final DRAFT.

We would welcome a meeting with Council Officers or the Consultants to address these points.

*Page 9 Figure 3: Forrest Caravan Park Public Toilets image by definition is a campground facility*

*Page 10 Figure 5: Forrest Caravan Park Disabled Toilets image is misleading and does not adequately illustrate the view from the street for users of this facility. We have attached a street view image, and wayfinding / signage information which shows how difficult this public toilet is to locate.*

Page 14. Legislative and Policy frameworks are largely dated and do not reflect the growth in tourism across the past 10-years or the post-COVID domestic tourism forecasts.

Page 45. TABLE 5. Whilst the Strategy speaks extensively of cubicle designs and fittings, there is little consideration given to where the effluent goes beyond the 'bums on seats' Discussions of fittings / fixtures, pg. 28 is given more prominence that where the waste goes.

Water treatment via septic system 28 / Water supply via main system 34

**This is a significant short fall understanding how to address the infrastructure needs and the resulting 10-year action plan. The DRAFT should not be approved until this matter is considered in the report with an associated action plan.**

Page 56. Strategic Recommendations Provision

Priority 1.

- Local tourist destinations including: key stops along the Old Beechy Rail Trail (Barongarook Hall, Colac Performing Arts & Cultural Centre, Kawarren, Gellibrand and Beech Forest), Forrest,

Birregurra, Lavers Hill, Paradise Reserve and at small retail or commercial precincts (which serve both the local community and local tourism)

Whilst we support and endorse the inclusion of recommended improvements for Forrest, we urge that the report considers the reconfiguration of an existing facility in Forrest as well as improvements to the current facility at the Caravan Park.

Forrest Caravan Park Toilets which are poorly located and underutilised, in comparison to visitation to the town.

Page 61. Action Plan

11 Forrest Caravan Park Investigate relocation and construction of a shared use facility at the Forrest Caravan Park Toilets in accordance with the recommendations in the Forrest Common Masterplan 2019 HIGH.

The current public toilets are poorly located. The FDCG and the Forrest Public Assets Committee support reconfiguring the toilets at the Forrest Hall as additional public toilets, until a permanent sewerage solution is achieved in Forrest. This would require an investment from Council for signage, regular emptying of septic and cleaning.

Future development of the proposed Forrest Gateway Project will also add to a more permanent solution.

Page 74. Forrest Common Masterplan (2019) we support the development of the Forrest Common, and an 2<sup>nd</sup> upgraded joint use Public Toilet facility at the current Forrest Caravan Park Public Toilet location, but it is essential to secure a location on the main street (Grant Street) in order to address the visitor amenity short fall for our highly trafficked tourism destinations that primarily serve regional visitors to, or passing through, the Shire.

Page 60. Action Plan, there are many, many high priorities included within the action list. Given the number or high priorities we see it unlikely that many will be addressed within the 1-3 year time frame.

The FDCG and the Forrest Public Reserves Committee see Forrest as a HIGH and URGENT priority and recommend COS consider entering into a Shared Service Agreement (SSA) for the following asset as a short-term solution 1 year.

42	Forrest Public Hall	Crown land	Committee of Management
----	---------------------	------------	-------------------------

High priority / short term 1 - 3 years

Medium term 3 - 7 years

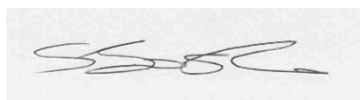
Long term\* 7+ years

Missing assets are illustrated below in RED,

EXISTING NETWORK

MAP REF.	NAME	OWNERSHIP	MANAGEMENT	USE TYPOLOGY	CURRENT SERVICE LEVEL	CONDITION
40	Forrest Caravan Park	Colac Otway Shire	Colac Otway Shire	Community Facilities		Poor
41	Forrest Mountain bike Trailhead	Crown land DELWP	Visitor Amenities	Regional		
42	Forrest Public Hall	Crown land	Committee of Management	Community Facilities - Limited Use		
43	Forrest Recreation Reserve	Crown land DELWP	Committee of Management	Community Facilities - Limited Use		
57	Lake Elizabeth Campground	Crown land	Parks Victoria	Campground		
82	West Barwon Reservoir	Barwon Water	Barwon Water	Visitor Amenities - Local		Well maintained
85	Yaugher Mountainbike Trailhead	Crown land DELWP	Visitor Amenities	Regional		
MISSING	<b>Forrest Community Hub, Forrest Neighbourhood House</b>	<b>Crown land DELWP</b>	<b>Committee of Management</b>	<b>Community Facilities - Limited Use</b>		
MISSING	<b>Forrest Community Hub, Grasstree Building</b>	<b>Crown Land DELWP</b>	<b>Committee of Management</b>	<b>Community Facilities- Limited use</b>		

Yours Sincerely,



Sharon Bradshaw

On behalf of the Forrest & District Community Group

***We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay our respects to their cultures and their Elders past, present and emerging.***