

**Essential Services Commission draft decision  
Barwon Water price review 2023**

Friends of the Barwon is an independent community organisation dedicated to the health of the Barwon River system. We were represented at the recent forum on this matter.

Page 21 of the draft decision table 4.4 shows adjustments to Barwon Water's proposed operating expenditure.

Friends of the Barwon has concerns about several of the adjustments proposed as follows;

**B1.1 -more expensive water sources turned on-Melbourne to Geelong pipeline**

Comment: the augmentation of this water supply was required under the Central and Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy. (CGSWS). It was the intended pathway to return water to the flow stressed Moorabool, and potentially also to the flow stressed Barwon Rivers. This adjustment would represent a major reversal of the intentions of the CGSWS.

**B1.4-East Barwon River willow tree removal**

Comment: Barwon Water are to be commended on the efficient and thoughtful completion of stage one works in the East Barwon river. This project has been essential for water security for Geelong as well as benefiting the Upper Barwon riparian environment. Friends of the Barwon would not like to see the completion of these works retarded in any way.

**B2.1 -a reduction in readiness investigations for future major water supply**

Comment: there is a lack of transparency in State Government deliberations on this vital topic. Climate change will necessitate new sources of manufactured water being delivered to the Victorian water supply. Barwon Water have shown with their 'Water for the Future' project a willingness to share information with the community and should be given funding for their investigations to continue.