

Water for our Future: how can we create a water future that balances all our needs?



Highlights at a glance

Barwon Water undertook a two-year engagement process to work with customers, stakeholders, regional leaders, youth and Traditional Owners to tackle a complex water security dilemma resulting from our changing climate.

Through the *Water for our Future* program, Barwon Water explored how it could create a secure water future in the face of a hotter, drier climate and rapid population growth. As Victoria's largest regional urban water corporation, water security and planning are critical to supporting 320,000 permanent residents and up to 545,000 people during peak holiday periods.

The program worked to empower a broad and diverse range of customers to have their say on the future vision, criteria assessment, water options and strategy development. The key output of the program will be a 2022 Urban Water Strategy* that outlines water security plans for the next 50-years. (*to be finalised in May 2022).

Unlike standard engagement approaches, *Water for our Future* continued to design and deliberate with a community panel at multiple stages. This enabled the broader community to continue to share feedback for the panel to consider. Each phase built on previous work from the community, ensuring collaboration and empowerment throughout.

The multi-phased engagement included:

1. Phase 1 – Community vision and criteria

- a. Wider engagement through online surveys, focus groups, workshops, community events
- b. Community panel (52 members, over 1,600 combined hours across four days of deliberation)
- c. Regional leaders forum

2. Phase 2 – Ideas / options assessment

- a. Wider engagement through online survey for 11 high-level options
- b. Customer and Environmental Advisory Committee workshop
- c. Community panel (41 members, over 1,100 combined hours across 3.5 days of deliberations)
- d. Regional leaders forum

3. Phase 3 – Strategy development

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- a. Wider engagement through online surveys
 - b. Community panel (26 members revised the draft content in a full day event, 208 combined hours)
 - c. Regional leaders forum

4. Phase 4 – Feedback and reporting

- a. Linked in with the 2023 Price Submission wider engagement phase
- b. Online survey to understand willingness to pay.

Key outcomes showing impact of engagement:

- The community panel said they believed the draft strategy reflected [the vision](#) they developed in Phase 1 (60% love it, 40% like it).
- After the two year process, 100% of panelists felt 'confident' or 'very confident' their recommendations would be implemented by Barwon Water and 100% said Barwon Water was 'very trustworthy and accountable' (compared to 30% and 10% before the panel).
- We heard clearly that our customers and community want us to protect the environment and support healthy rivers. This resulted in strategy actions to prioritise water recovery for the Moorabool River (Victoria's most flow-stressed river) and begin investigating a gradual shift to climate-independent sources of water.

Key engagement takeaways:

- Complex topics can be broken down if participants are given a clear roadmap, time and good information.
- Online engagement offers real value – it's often more inclusive, and generally more accessible.
- Early and continued involvement of deliberative panel complements wider key stakeholder engagement – providing an opportunity to build trust in the process, communicate back and sense-check what you're hearing both ways.

Key search words: *Public, utilities, community vision, deliberative engagement, inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower*

1.0 Objectives

Identify organisation, sector and geographical location

Barwon Water is Victoria's largest regional urban water corporation.

Our region of responsibility stretches over 8,100 square kilometres, from Little River and the Bellarine Peninsula in the east, to Colac in the west, and from Meredith and Cressy in the north, to Apollo Bay on Victoria's south-west coast.

Outline the engagement objectives, purpose and scope – what decisions needed to be made?

Purpose:

Water for our Future recognises that with a hotter, drier climate and population growth, we need to think differently about how we use water and where it comes from.

Barwon Water was faced with a real water security dilemma and needed to find or save up to 5 billion litres of water – over and above the 35 billion litres our region currently uses – every five years for the next 50 years.

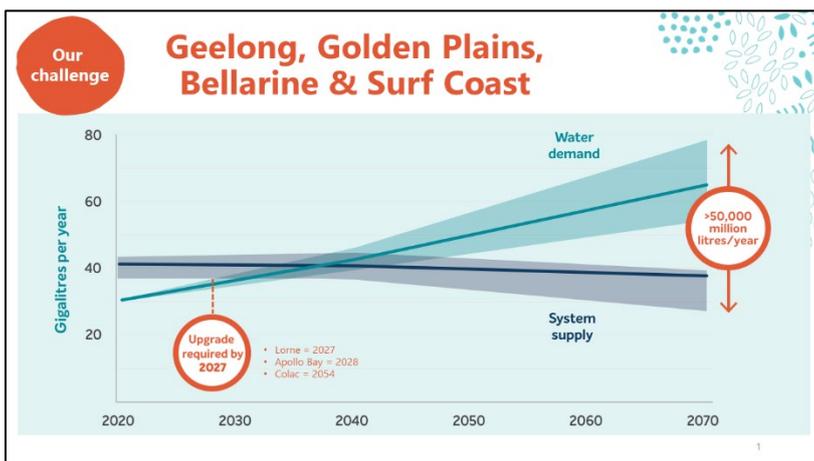


Image 1 Our challenge – demand is increasing whilst supply is decreasing

Recognising that rainfall is a reducing source opens up a range of new possibilities, including non-rainfall dependent options to supply water and innovative ways to save water.

Water for our Future is about taking up this challenge in partnership with our community and regional leaders to design a new water future for our region.

A future that not only ensures enough water comes out of the tap, but also harnesses the value of water to support the environment and healthy, sustainable, liveable and prosperous communities now and for years to come.

Although we can design solutions to the challenges we face on our own, we know we get better outcomes when we work in partnership with our customers and community. By aligning everyone's efforts, Barwon Water will deliver a 2022 Urban Water Strategy that reflects our community's vision and clearly says what needs to be done to secure our region's water future.

This project also informs the next 5-year action plan outlined as part of the upcoming 2023 Price Submission.

Our climate is changing; it is getting hotter and drier.

Less rainfall has a direct impact on our region's water supplies.

A warmer and drier climate also affects our region's environment – reduced flows down rivers creates stress on our waterways and ecosystems plus longer, drier summers affect liveability.

Demand for water is increasing: we need to find or save up to 5 billion litres of water – over and above the 35 billion litres our region currently uses – every five years for the next 50 years.

This challenge presents an exciting opportunity to rethink where our water comes from and how we use water.

Every Victorian urban water business must submit an Urban Water Strategy that outlines a 50-year plan to manage demand for, and ensure sufficient supplies of, drinking water to the Minister for Water.

Engagement objectives:

The engagement objective are outlined in the image below.

Engagement Objectives	
Barwon Water will endeavour to meet and measure success of the engagement process using the following set of key objectives.	
1	To engender community and stakeholder trust and confidence in the engagement process (even if not everyone 'loves' every outcome).
2	To support informed discussion across our community, build 'water literacy' and encourage people to value and understand the importance of water.
3	To ensure community members, stakeholders and staff who are interested in participating are aware of and understand the process and have the opportunity to contribute and be heard.
4	To include and capture a diverse range of perspectives and ensure representative views are included in the process.
5	To engender broad community and stakeholder support for and build understanding and acceptance of costs involved in the preferred options.
6	To ensure that the engagement process is supported by key strategic partners (including government departments, LGAs and agencies).
7	To produce panel recommendations that are within project scope and are sufficiently 'grounded in reality', ensuring Barwon Water is able to implement or respond to them.
8	To elicit panel recommendations that directly influence and are clearly reflected/responded to in the Urban Water Strategy.

Image 2 Eight engagement objectives were identified for the program

Scope

Engagement was across five phases, with wide and deep engagement activities across phase 1 to 4.

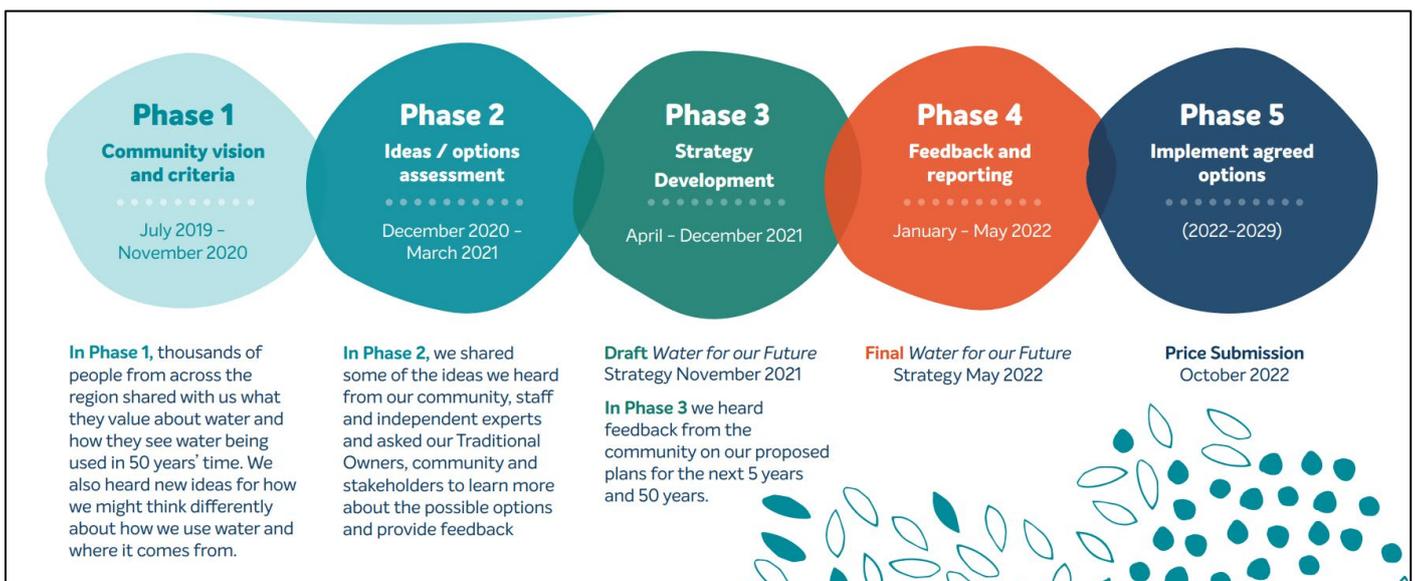


Image 3 A five phase engagement program was developed

Describe what role the public had in the decision-making process (including an outline of the affected stakeholders, stakeholder sentiment (engaged, disengaged, distressed, outrage), whether they provided input in designing how they would be involved and likely level of influence.)

Barwon Water was committed to giving customers the maximum levels of influence at each stage.

Promise and scope				
<p>At Barwon Water we are committed to securing our water future in line with the purpose of our Strategy 2030 - to be an enabler of regional prosperity. Our vision for regional prosperity not only encompasses economic, social, and environmental elements, but also recreational and cultural elements, including enhancing Aboriginal values. <i>We will work to deliver on this promise as we move through each step in the planning and engagement process.</i></p> <p>The highest level of engagement through this process is EMPOWER (on the International Association for Public Participation Engagement Spectrum).</p>				
PHASE	Phase 1 Community vision and criteria setting	Phase 2 Options and ideas assessment	Phase 3 Strategy development	Phase 4 Strategy finalisation and feedback
PROMISE & LEVEL OF INFLUENCE	<p>We will involve the community in discussions around aspirations and concerns relating to our challenge and provide an ongoing opportunity for people to contribute to the conversation.</p> <p>We will work with our community to empower them through a randomly selected, broadly representative panel of community members. The panel will define a vision in response to our challenge and we will adopt the vision that our community defines.</p> <p>We will collaborate with the community via the panel to incorporate community views to the maximum extent possible in defining success criteria to assess our options. (Involve – Empower - Collaborate) By November 2020</p>	<p>We will build on the ongoing dialogue with our community to explore a wide range of possible options that reflect our community concerns and aspirations.</p> <p>Assessments will be made against the community's vision and criteria, as well as other technical inputs.</p> <p>We will look to our community for advice, innovation and recommendations and incorporate community feedback into our decisions to the maximum extent possible. (Involve - Collaborate) By March 2021</p>	<p>Taking into account our community's feedback, views and recommendations, we will develop our draft 2022 Urban Water Strategy and check in with our community to ensure we 'got it right' and have incorporated community views to the maximum extent possible. (Consult - Collaborate). By December 2021</p>	<p>We will listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how community input guided the finalisation of the 2022 Urban Water Strategy.</p> <p>We will commence conversations with our community on our 2023 Price Submission and how we will fund the solutions outlined in our 2022 Urban Water Strategy to ensure we deliver a secure and affordable water future for the region. (Inform - Consult) December 2022 onwards</p>
THE COMMUNITY WILL BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE	<p>The vision and success criteria for how we access and use water in our future.</p> <p>How we will engage them throughout the entire program.</p> <p>A broad range of ideas for consideration.</p>	<p>Identification of a short-list of preferred ideas and options to inform the development of the draft 2022 Urban Water Strategy.</p>	<p>Any changes or adjustments to the draft 2022 Urban Water Strategy before it is finalised.</p>	<p>Barwon Water's accountability to continue to report back and deliver on what's agreed.</p> <p>Involvement in the delivery of the options as they are implemented.</p> <p>The process for the next Urban Water Strategy and Price Submissions.</p>
BARWON WATER WILL...	<p>Provide a range of data to support the conversations with the community.</p> <p>Remain committed to an open and transparent process.</p> <p>Provide a range of opportunities for the community to participate.</p>	<p>Support and conduct a range of technical assessments on options and maintain wider state government relations.</p>	<p>Listen and adapt the draft 2022 Urban Water Strategy based on what the community tells us through the 'check-in' process.</p>	<p>Make final decisions on key actions required and the costs associated with the delivery of the 2022 Urban Water Strategy.</p>

Image 4 A snapshot from the engagement strategic roadmap document outlining our promise and scope

A “closing the loop” report provided at the final panel session clearly outlined to the panelists how their vision, criteria and recommendations had been incorporated into the draft *Water for our Future Strategy*. This event provided panel members with an opportunity to check whether Barwon Water had appropriately considered community views in developing the draft *Water for our Future Strategy* and make recommendations on the draft strategy before it was finalised by Barwon Water.

CATEGORY	GROUPS/COHORTS
Broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers (residential) • Customers (business) • People living/working in the region who aren't customers
Target groups (those who may be less likely to participate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth • CALD • People of all abilities • Lower socio-economic status
Strategic partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Owners • Water sector (DELWP, Water Corporations, VEWH/CCMA) • Regional leaders (G21, Councils, Youth Councils)
Government (other)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State government departments • Land managers and other government agencies • MPs
Key stakeholder and interest groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and industry groups and associations • Environmental groups • Health and education • Tourism groups • Local not for profits • Other community organisations/associations
Internal audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project control board • Council working group • Water working group • Government working group • Broader staff

Image 5 The project had a wide-ranging audience

Explain the reasons for the use of the particular participation process – including whether there were any legislative requirements to engage (as applicable)

Every Victorian urban water business must prepare an Urban Water Strategy that outlines a 50-year plan to manage demand for, and ensure sufficient supplies of, drinking water.

A deliberative panel was chosen as the core 'deep engagement' approach so the strategy would be influenced by diverse people who would not ordinarily be involved with Barwon Water, and were demonstrably representative of the broader Barwon Water catchment.

Water authorities in Victoria are required to submit their Urban Water Strategies to the Minister for Water. Stakeholder engagement is a core requirement as outlined in the [Guidelines for the development of urban water strategies](#).

Supporting communications/materials developed

- a custom *Water for our Future* website and engagement platform
- online 'pulse check' survey and 'ideas lab'
- pop-up events
- conversation kit
- interactive token game
- media releases
- social media posts
- online, print and radio advertising
- email newsletters
- messaging on Barwon Water water bottles and mobile 'hydration station'
- animations and videos
- community workshops (in-person initially, online during Covid-19 restrictions)
- regional leaders' forums (in-person initially, online during Covid-19 restrictions)
- council working group presentations and correspondence
- 'student voice' program
- deliberative panel online portal to enable participant conversations between sessions, easy access to learning materials and session outputs.

2.0 Methodology

Plan engagement

Outline project governance model and engagement program (including input from participants as applicable)

A Project Control Board (PCB) governance model was applied. The PCB met fortnightly to review and guide progress of the program. It was responsible for agreeing and endorsing budget, program and scope. The program was divided into four streams, each with a sponsor and work package leads.

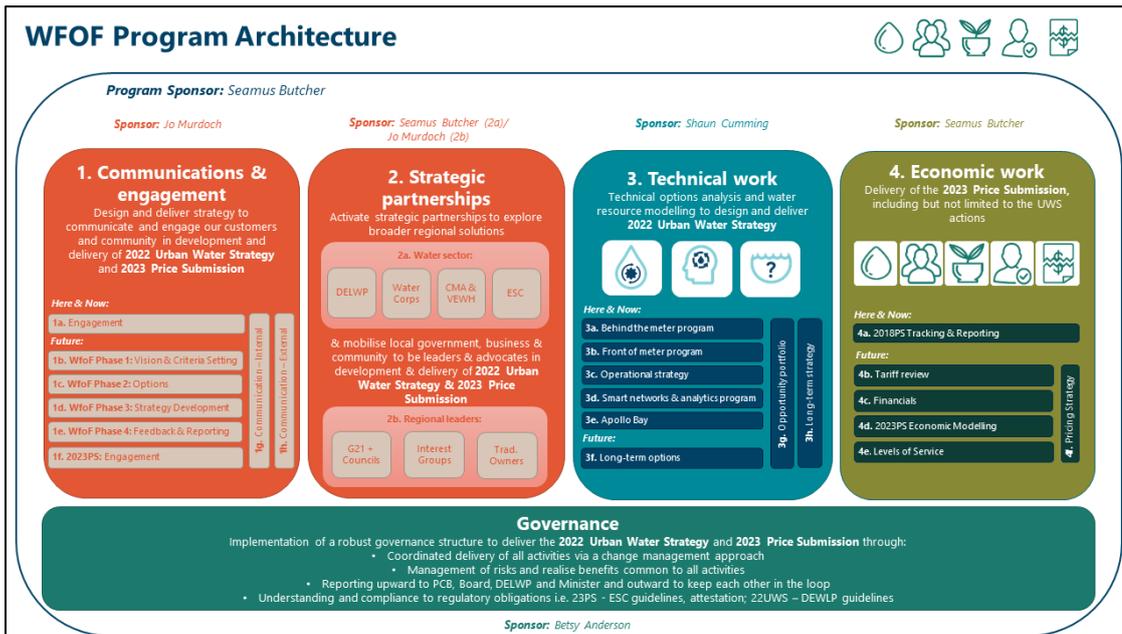


Image 6 Program architecture

MosaicLab designed and facilitated several phases of the engagement, including regional forums, community workshops and the deliberative panel. MosaicLab also provided guidance and a review of the engagement program Barwon Water designed.

Describe engagement methods and delivery, sequencing and anticipated participation levels/targets (and display as applicable)

The multi-phased engagement included:

1. Phase 1 – Community vision and criteria

- Wider engagement through online surveys, focus groups, workshops, community events
- Community panel with 52 community members, over 1,600 combined hours across four days of deliberation
- Regional leaders forum

2. Phase 2 – Ideas / options assessment

- a. Wider engagement through online survey for 11 high-level options
- b. Customer and Environmental Advisory Committee workshop
- c. Community panel with 41 community members, over 1,100 combined hours across 3.5 days of deliberations
- d. Regional leaders forum

3. Phase 3 – Strategy development

- a. Wider engagement through online surveys
- b. Community panel with 26 members, revised the draft content in a full day event (208 combined hours)
- c. Regional leaders forum

4. Phase 4 – Feedback and reporting

- a. Linked in with the 2023 Price Submission wider engagement phase
- b. Online survey to understand willingness to pay.



Image 7 Our engagement roadmap

Outline the enabling factors/conditions and how participation was supported to ensure inclusion

We wanted to make participating as easy as possible, particularly when Covid-19 restrictions forced the program entirely online.



Attending community markets with our “pop-ups” (pre Covid-19) meant we were a visible presence – we took our show on the road rather than hoping people would find us online. iPads at the events allowed increased access for community members to complete surveys.

People unable to attend a workshop could share their views via an online ‘conversation kit’.

Image 8 An interactive token game was used at pop-up events

The *Water for our Future* ‘student voice’ program was integrated into our existing education program.

The Community Panel was independently selected from across Barwon Water’s region to reflect latest census data on age, gender and location. Recruitment was managed by an independent third-party.

Covid-19 restrictions meant all panel sessions were held in an online environment (Zoom). To facilitate participation, we provided technology support (including laptops/internet access where required), posted hard copies of documents, delivered Zoom training and provided “care packs” containing tea, coffee and snacks.

The panel facilitation team followed the code of ethics for public participation practitioners. To support inclusion, the panel designed working agreements and were offered regular opportunities to give feedback on the process including anything constraining or obstructing their participation.



Image 9 Panel overviews from initial recruitment to participation across the three panels

Describe data collection tools

- Online surveys/polls and free text options on our dedicated project website
- Events/workshops/forums (face-to-face pre-Covid 19 restrictions and online after)
- Formal research to further explore the views and preferences of more than 1000 residential and business customers, conducted via focus groups and an online survey in March 2020, and an additional online survey in August 2020
- The *Water for our Future* Community Panel met 11 times.

ACTIVITY				LED BY
'Pulse Check' survey		511	participants	Barwon Water
Online 'Ideas Lab'		46	ideas	Barwon Water
Interactive token game at community pop up events		3,200	tokens	Barwon Water
Community letters		6	letters received	Barwon Water
'Free text' responses		219	through survey, face-to-face engagement and social media	Barwon Water
Regional Leaders Forum November 2019 (Face-to-Face)		52	participants	MosaicLab
Two face-to-face community workshops* in Torquay and Bannockburn <i>*Five workshops were originally scheduled, but were reduced due to COVID-19 restrictions</i>		34	participants	MosaicLab
Three on-line community workshops (in Colac, Apollo Bay and Geelong & Bellarine)		43	participants	MosaicLab
Customer research including focus groups and online survey		1000+	participants	Barwon Water
Geelong Chamber of Commerce event		129	participants	Barwon Water
Phase 2 online engagement, see https://www.waterfuture.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/what-we-ve-heard-from-our-community				Barwon Water

Image 10 Examples of phase 1 data collection methods as outlined in MosaicLab's Process Report

Outline resources such as budget, timeframe, internal delivery and contracted support

- Engagement budget was approximately \$400,000* over four years (facilitation support, research, community activations). ***Not for publication**
- Engagement timeframe (including preparation) June 2019 to May 2022.
- Two dedicated Communications and Engagement resources plus support from the broader C&E team as required.
- MosaicLab engaged to facilitate workshops, regional forums and community panel. A third party was involved in the survey reporting.

Alignment with IAP2 Core Values for the practice of public participation

IAP2 Core Values	Example of how this was considered in the design of your project methodology
1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process	<p>Stratified selection to ensure the panel was demonstrably representative i.e. a mini Barwon Water public. Participants who moved interstate during the process withdrew as they were no longer going to be affected by the outcome of the decisions of the panel.</p> <p>Engaging with regional leaders regularly meant they were also part of the solution alongside community.</p>
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision	<p>The process clearly stated the level of influence that participants had. For the panel process the vision component was set at 'empower' and all other parts were set at 'collaborate'. For all other wider engagement activities, the level of influence was stated as 'Involve'. For key stakeholders such as the First Nations community and other organisations (i.e. councils, government authorities) there was a 'partnership' arrangement established.</p>
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers	<p>The deliberative panel process ensured regular communication between the panel and decision makers. After each session, any questions left unanswered were provided to Barwon Water who would write a response. During each of the three panels, Barwon Water would provide a response document to let the panel know what they understood the panel recommendations to mean, providing an opportunity to seek clarification on any areas that remained unclear. Key decision makers also spoke with the panel at these times and at other stages in the process. It was important to ensure the decision makers were presenting to inform but not influence or direct the panel in any way. Broader community input was also sought at key stages between panel sitting days. This enabled a continuous flow of information between the broader community, regional leaders, the panel and Barwon Water.</p>
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision	<p>During the panel recruitment process there were lower numbers of expressions of interest for Apollo Bay (geographically distant in terms of Barwon Water's service area). Additional promotion occurred in that area to ensure representation in the final pool. This also was applied to youth (15-24) and connecting with local secondary and tertiary organisations assisted. By having a continued presence in the smaller communities (pre COVID) and inviting in members of these areas into workshops and the panel process we continued to reach beyond the usual people involved.</p>
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate	<p>Participants in any part of the engagement process were asked to provide feedback and indicate ways that Barwon Water could improve its engagement with them. This continuous evaluation process enabled us to adapt over this period of the project.</p> <p>At the end of each panel day the panel members were asked to tell the facilitation team what they wanted or needed to support participation. Where we could adapt we did, where we couldn't we let them know and why.</p>
6. Public participation provides participants with the	<p>Informed deliberation was a key element of the panel's success. It was important to give highly readable, succinct information to the</p>

<p>information they need to participate in a meaningful way</p>	<p>group for such an in depth panel. Written materials were carefully crafted to ensure accessibility by Barwon Water in collaboration with MosaicLab and key speakers joined the panel for informative Q and A sessions. The panel also had opportunities to nominate their preferred speakers and topics which was then organised by Barwon Water, e.g. Panel 1- 12 speakers selected by Barwon Water, 11 selected by the panel.</p>
<p>7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision</p>	<p>Panel 3 was a key phase in advising the deliberative panel how their input affected the Urban Water Strategy and went further, asking panel members how comfortable they were with the outcome and for any further feedback.</p>

“The community must be along on the journey”
 - Barwon Water Board Director

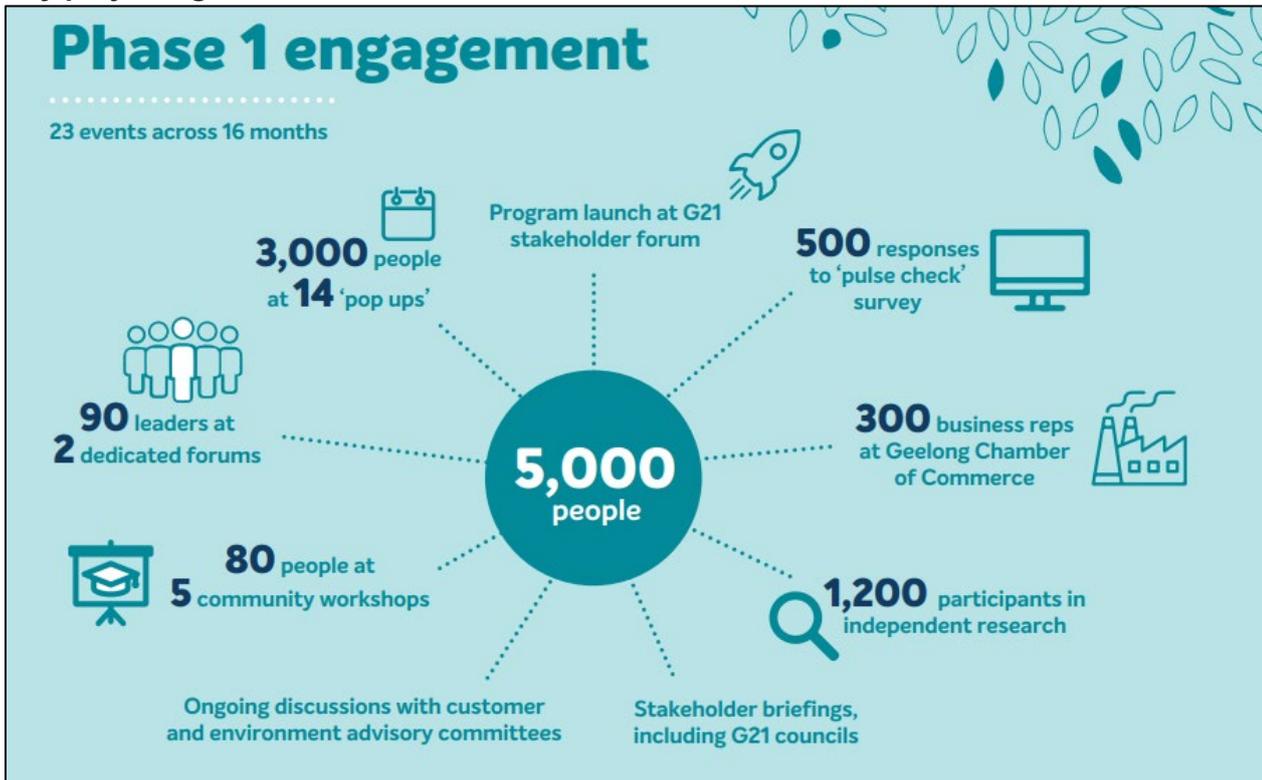
“Our *Water for our Future* panel has been absolutely paramount in helping work with us on this challenge”
 - Barwon Water Managing Director

“It feels like collectively we have done this good thing for Geelong and surrounding areas”
 - Community panel member

“It’s really satisfying, getting to talk to all these people you wouldn’t normally talk to and hear their ideas”
 - Community panel member

“I participated in the panel for two reasons. Worry about the future of water, and second a sense of civic duty”
 - Community panel member

Key project figures



Phase 3 engagement

Promotion and information on the draft Water for our Future strategy over 2 months



*across Phases 1 to 3



A snapshot of Community Panel members from one of their online deliberation days



Participants from the Regional Leaders forum discuss water future options for the panel to consider



Cover of one of the key information inputs for the panel and wider engagement

3.0 Manage Engagement

- Outline the specific challenges (risks and constraints, engagement history if relevant) and describe how you responded to the challenges. Describe if modifications were required to overcome unintended outcomes

Challenge	Response
Complex topic with many different possible solutions	<p>The problem was broken down into bite-sized pieces:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the vision for the future 2. ideas to solve the vision 3. criteria to assess ideas 4. assessment of the ideas (included clustering and naming ideas) 5. deciding the best mix of final solutions for inclusion in the Urban Water Strategy. <p>Opening with the 'vision' component (which required less material to define it) meant participants could easily start their journey before moving through the project steps.</p>
A large number of diverse ideas to solve the overall problem (where we get our water for the future) ranging from 'towing icebergs from Antarctica' to 'building a new desalination plant'	<p>An open agenda to share solutions meant participants were not 'led' by Barwon Water (BW) but encouraged to offer <i>any</i> solutions. These would then be discussed and reviewed by the panel. This approach meant a diverse set of ideas and solutions emerged.</p> <p>Through the deeper panel process, panelists were provided with expert speakers (curated by BW) and then enabled to ask for their own 'expert speakers' to help fill information gaps. Any research reports requested, and answers to questions, were provided with data and evidence from not only BW but from outside 'trusted' and requested sources of data. While all 600+ ideas (suggested by the broader community) were provided to the panelists to review, it was deemed important to help them digest this information effectively for their time together. To that end, BW carefully reviewed each idea and clustered like ideas together. If any particular idea from the list was needed in more detail, BW was willing to provide an assessment against that particular idea.</p>
A long timeframe over which the engagement occurred	<p>Breaks in the process, follow-through on outputs and engaging sessions were used to ensure the participants stayed the course. There was drop-off from the start of the process to the end (as expected).</p> <p>Recruitment of a larger group to begin with mitigated any issues with group size over time.</p>
An intense number of days all delivered online	<p>The days included engaging activities, small group work, significant breaks and a clear sense of purpose. This meant that most participants</p>

	<p>stayed the course and contributed well throughout each full day session online.</p>
<p>A complex final document output (the Urban Water Strategy) that can be hard to explain</p>	<p>The information was broken down in a way that described choices and trade-offs. This included using metaphor (yes and no buckets), challenge calculator (to determine how much water had been saved or found through options), clustering of ideas and finding representative options to describe these clusters. Careful curation of the information managed to achieve not only transparency but also made it digestible and understandable for the participants.</p>

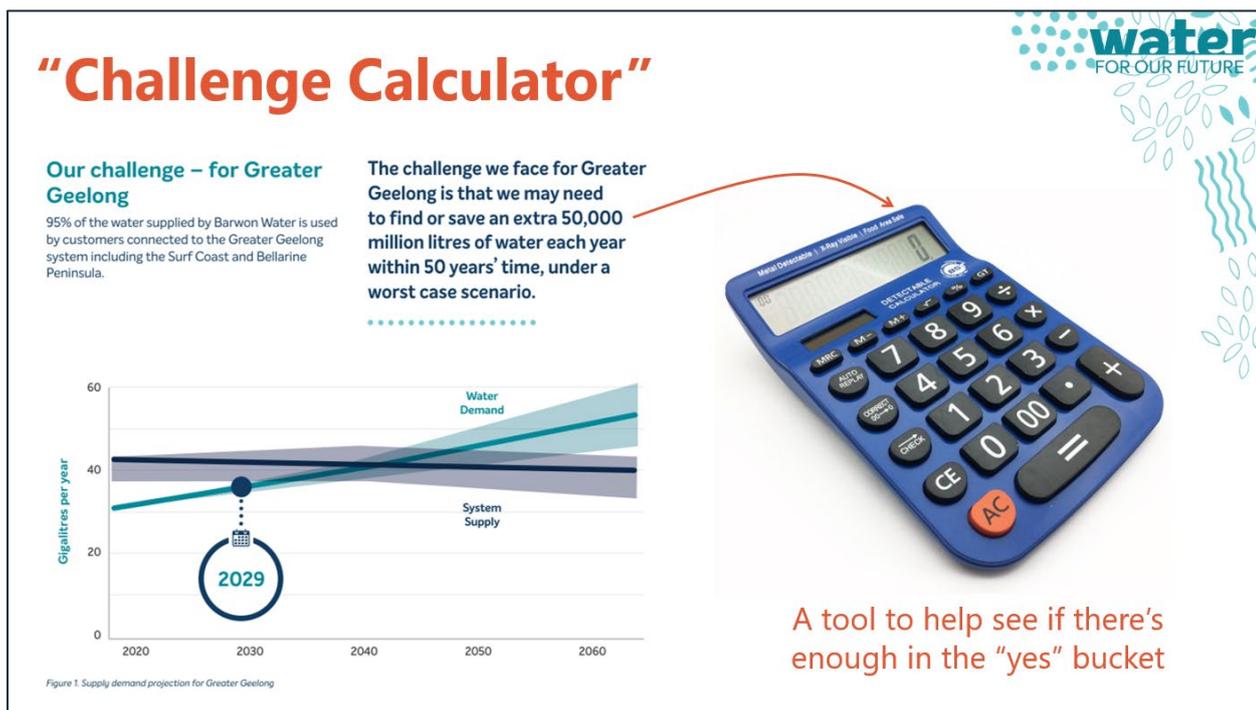


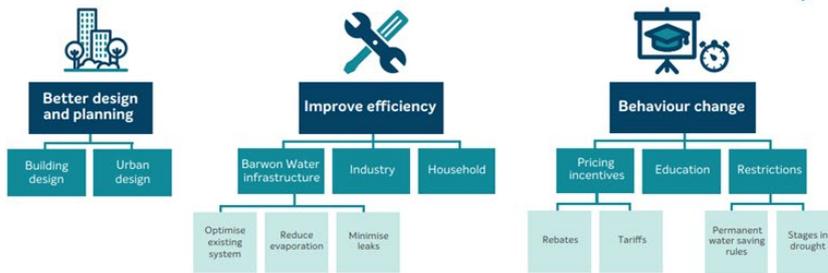
Image 11 A challenge calculator was developed to help determine how much water was saved or found through the options considered by the panelists

Describe the approach to data collection, management, analysis and generating the findings

Throughout the program we reported back on “what we heard”. We shared findings from our qualitative and quantitative research. The outputs from each phase of engagement became inputs for the following phase.

This information was provided on our dedicated website for all to review as well as to the panel to help with its deliberations.

Smarter water use...



Definitions of scale:

- Regional – whole-of-system scale (e.g. Greater Geelong)
- Local – suburb or township scale
- Household – building or household scale

Finding more water...



3

Image 12 Over 600 ideas were sorted and grouped into 11 themes to help the community digest the information

Phase one engagement

- ☐ ['What we heard' report - phase one community engagement - September 2020 \(3.51 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- ☐ [Water for our Future Geelong & the Bellarine, Apollo Bay and Colac Online Community Workshops \(786 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- ☐ [Water for our Future Torquay and Bannockburn Community Workshops \(1.41 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- ☐ [Water for our Future Regional Forum Report - 6 December 2019 \(1020 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- ☐ [Water for our Future research - community preferences report - September 2020 \(1.93 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

Phase two engagement

- ☐ [Water for our Future Regional Forum #2 report \(687 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- ☐ [Water for our Future - Customer and Environmental Advisory Committee workshop report \(2.15 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- ☐ [Water for our Future - Council Working Group workshop report \(1.67 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- ☐ [Water for our Future - phase 2 wider engagement report \(1.25 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- ☐ [Water for our Future - Phase 2 community and stakeholder engagement reports combined - updated 16 Feb \(5.55 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

Phase three engagement

- ☐ [WFOF Regional Leaders Forum 3 - Summary_FINAL.pdf \(153 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- ☐ ['What we heard' report - phase three community engagement November 2021 to January 2022 \(2.14 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

Image 13 A selection of engagement reports shared online

4.0 Outcomes, impact and insights

Reflection and evaluation of engagement

We have heard and learned a lot from thorough engagement with our community over the past few years. Overwhelmingly, we have been inspired by the considered, informed and forward-thinking views our community has contributed. It gives us confidence that our region understands and is willing to partner in the shared responsibility of managing our most precious resource.

We adopted the vision (image below) as written by the panel (according to the empower level of engagement in the International Association of Public Participation engagement spectrum) and used the panel's recommendations about criteria to the greatest extent possible (Collaborate)

The panel also created a set of principles for guiding the implementation of strategy actions. These will be adopted and applied during future Barwon Water works.

- Care for Country and Connect to Country, under the guidance of Traditional Owners
- Do no harm, as far as reasonably practicable.
- Protect, preserve and improve the environment.
- Minimise disadvantage to community and the environment.
- Establish and monitor baseline social and environmental measures – if offsets are to be used they should be treated with caution and closely monitored.
- Be a good corporate citizen.

At the time of writing, the 2022 Urban Water Strategy is being finalised for submission in early June. The final strategy will strongly reflect what we've heard from the community, including translating almost all of the options recommended by the panel into 24 actions for the next five years.

We also thought about what the panel put in the "No" bucket and translated that into actions. For example, instead of using more water from rivers we are proposing to try to improve river and environmental health. This also aligned with what we heard from our engagement with Traditional Owners throughout the process.

We met regularly with the Wadawurrung's dedicated Water Officer to discuss the program as it unfolded, and worked together with the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority to understand challenges and opportunities for both the Barwon and Moorabool Rivers. This led to the prioritisation of water recovery for the Moorabool River in the short-term, given its status as the most flow-stressed river in Victoria. We also met with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation Board of Directors to discuss these opportunities and longer-term options being contemplated across Wadawurrung Country.



Image 14 The panel's vision



Image 15 A diagram from the “closing the loop” report that shows how the panel recommendations were translated to options in the draft strategy

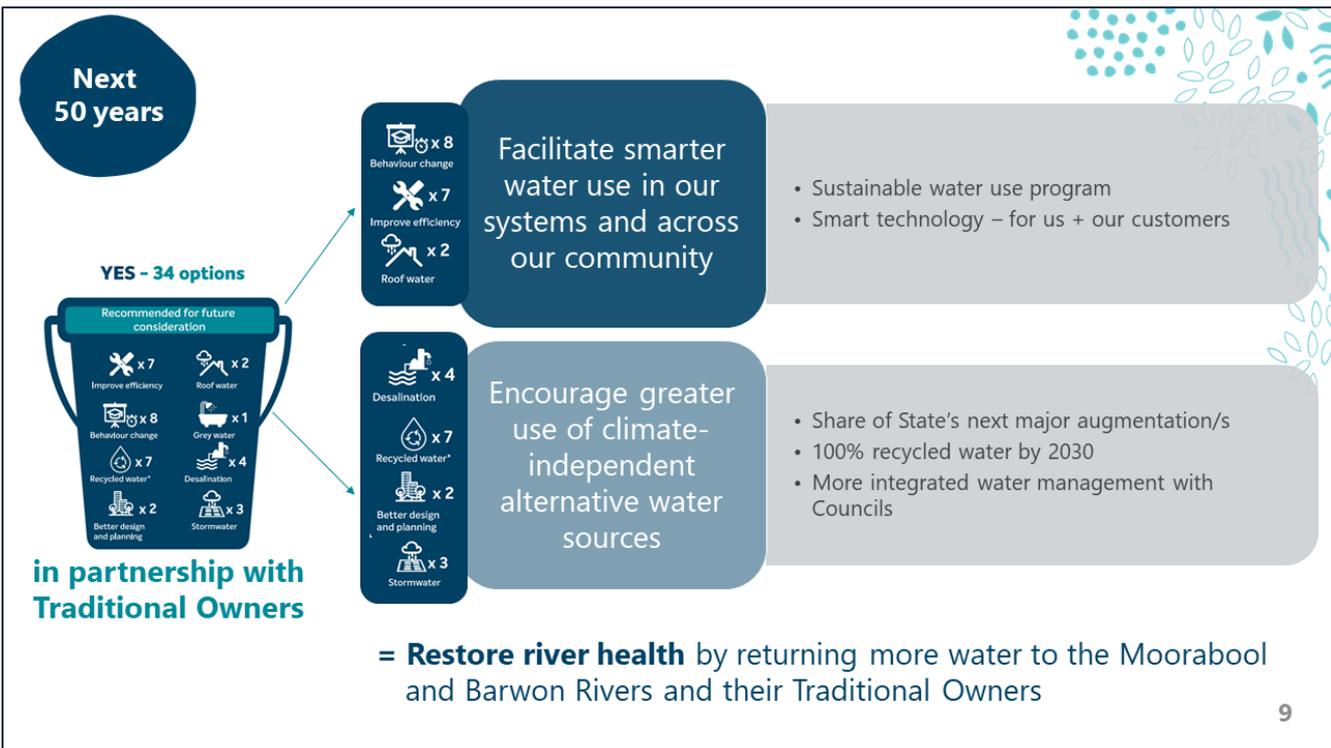


Image 16 The panel's recommended options also will feed into our 50-year plans

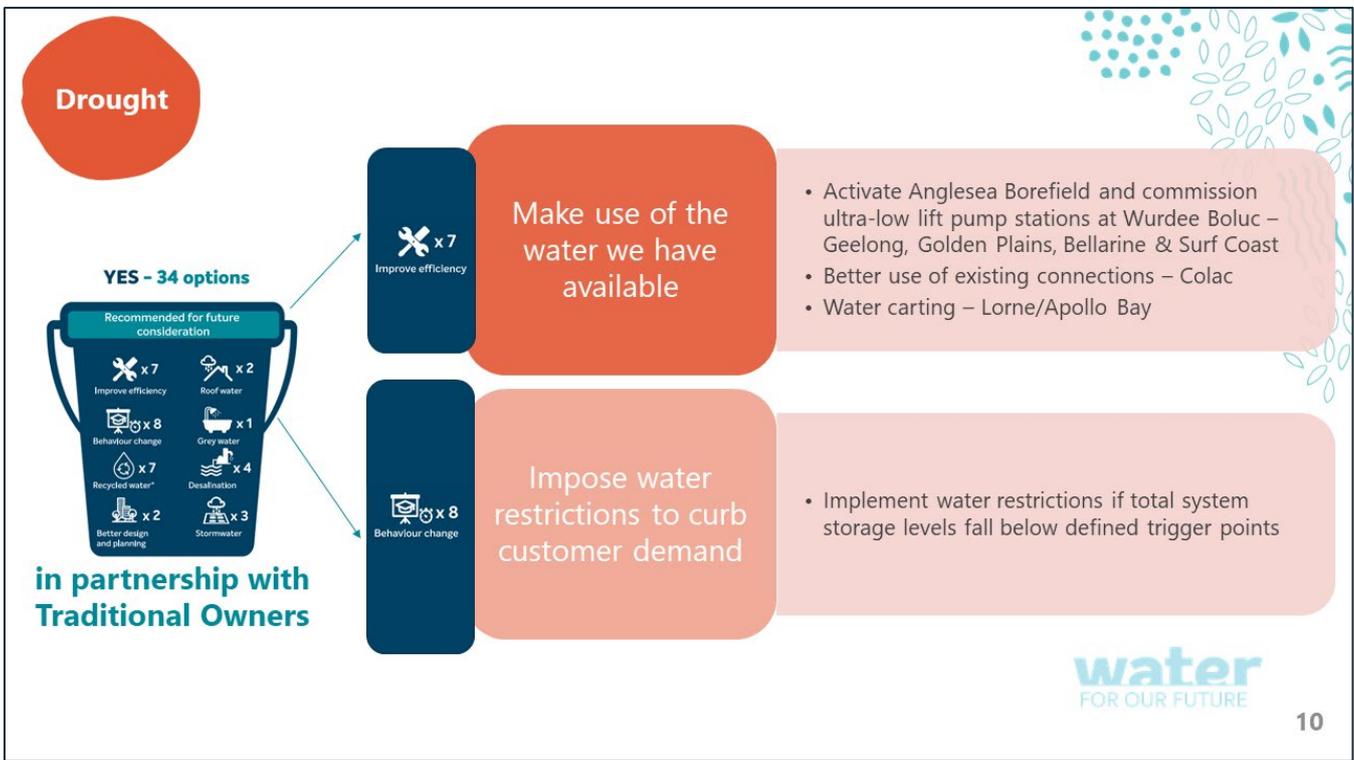


Image 17 The panel's recommended options also will feed into our drought response

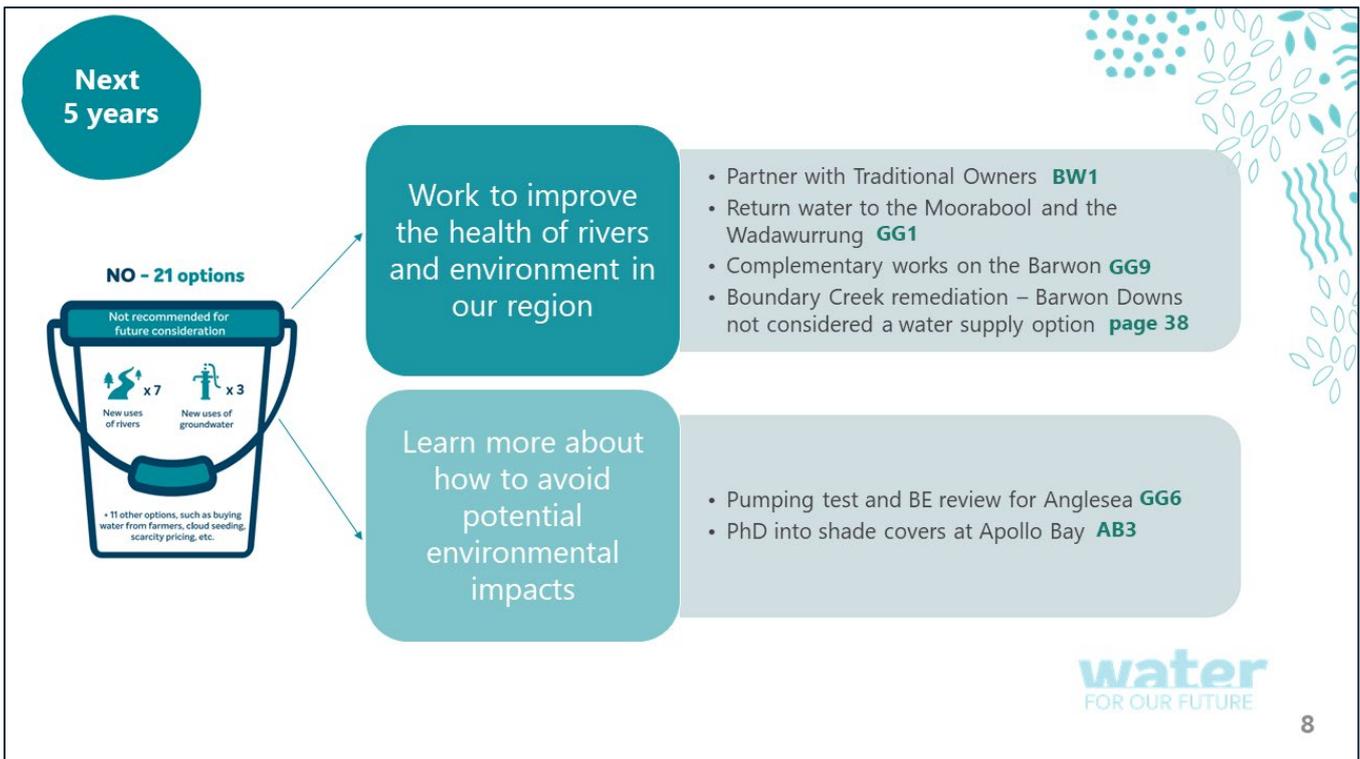


Image 18 We also looked at the “no” options and how we could use this feedback into the future

Outline the evaluation of the engagement undertaken, insights or lessons learned

Evaluation will be completed after the 2022 Urban Water Strategy has been submitted. A process report on the deliberative panel has been completed. It documents changes in participant perception of Barwon Water, the results of which are referenced in response to the following question.

Provide evidence about levels of participant, stakeholder and organisation satisfaction

Overall, the panel members were very positive about both the 5-year and 50-year actions proposed in the draft strategy, with 60 per cent saying “Love it” and 40 per cent of participants saying “Like it” when asked if the strategy reflected the vision they had developed in November 2020.

The strategy also was reviewed and discussed by 30 key community and regional stakeholders at our third annual Regional Leaders Forum on November 10. Participants were highly supportive of the 5-year and 50-year actions in the draft strategy (average of 4.09 and 4.10 out of 5 respectively).

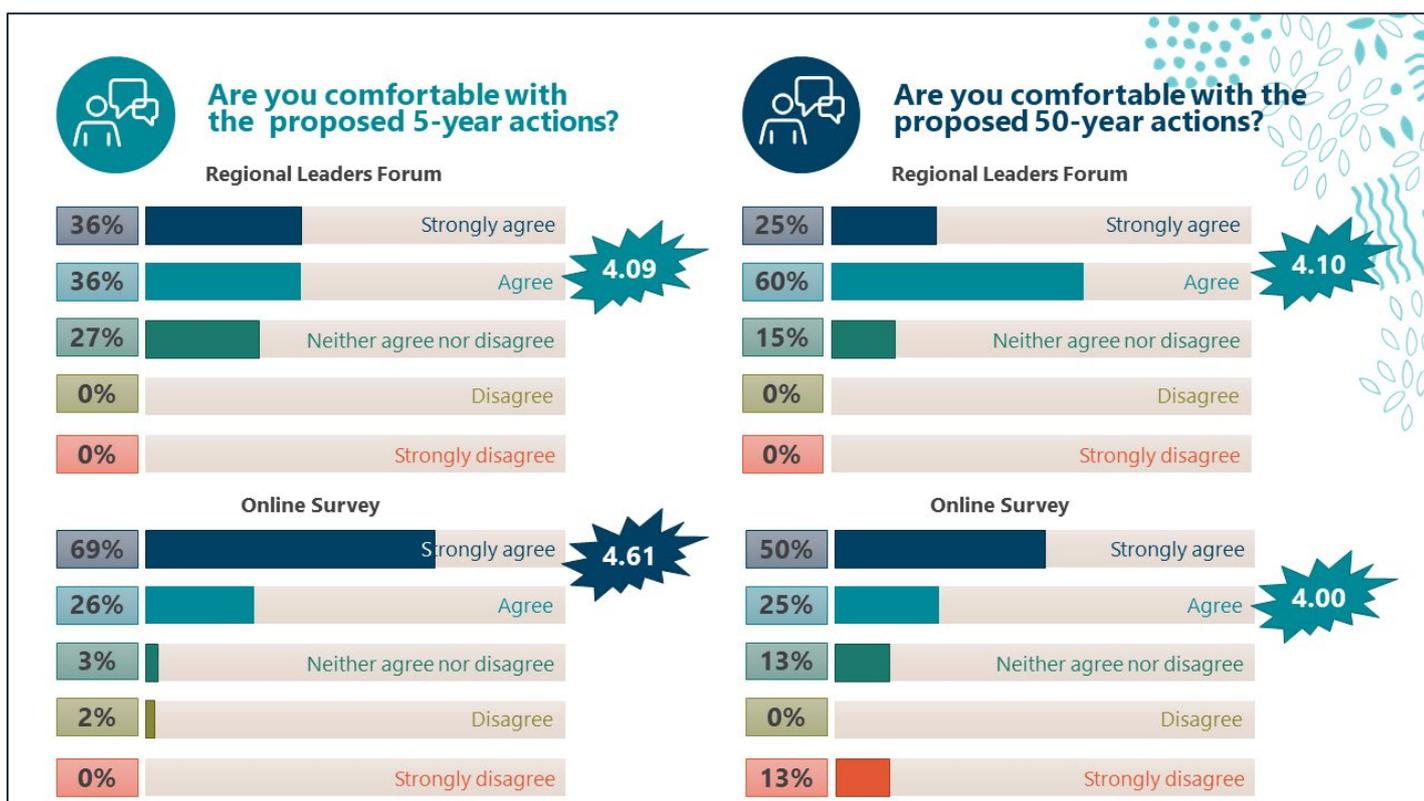


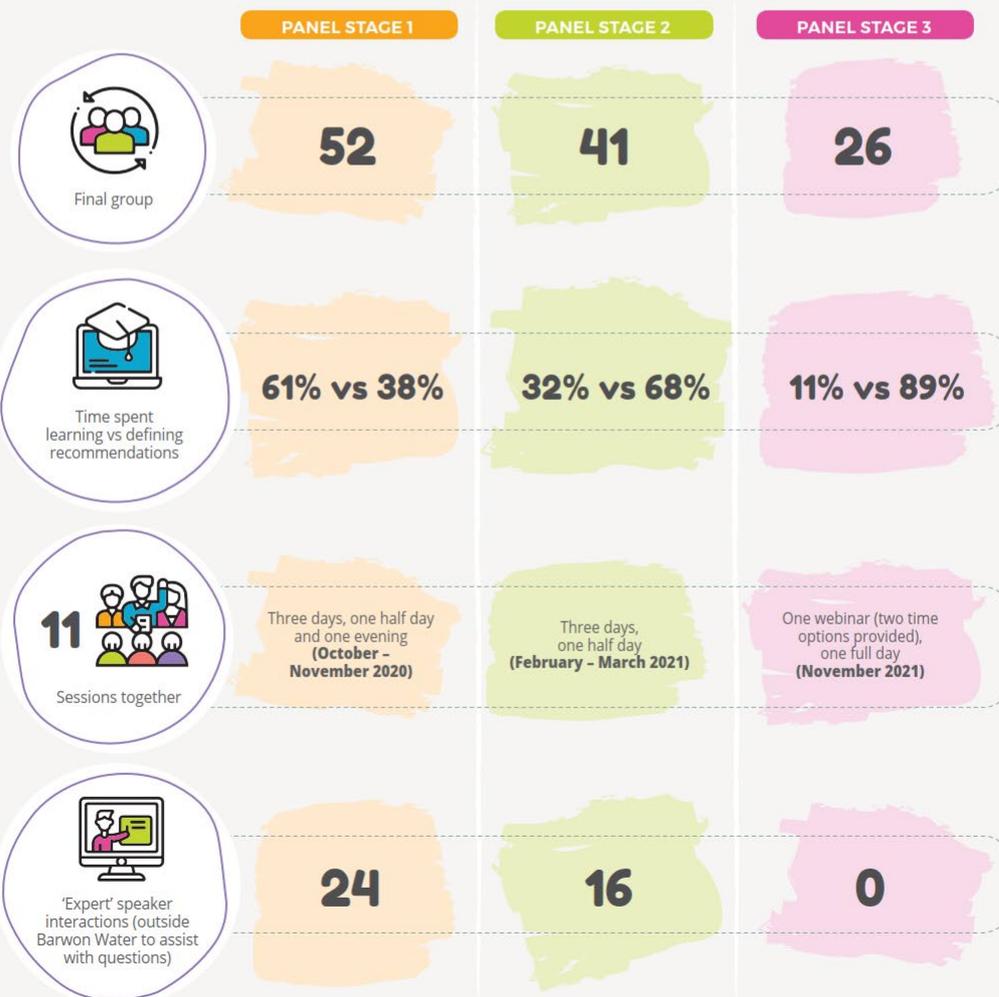
Image 19 The strategy also was reviewed and discussed at our third annual Regional Leaders Forum and online, receiving strong support.

The graphics below outline outputs and feedback from the panel members.

FAST FACTS

about the Barwon Water
Water for Our Future (WFOF) Panel

THE PROCESS



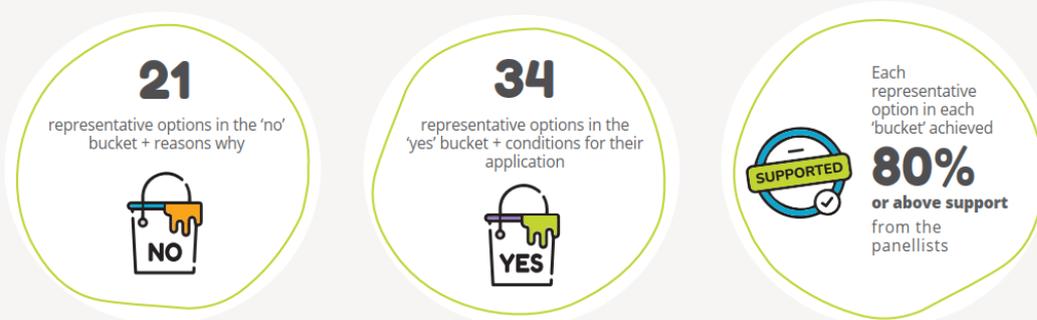
FAST FACTS

about the Barwon Water
Water for Our Future (WFOF) Panel

THE OUTPUT - PANEL STAGE 1



THE OUTPUT - PANEL STAGE 2



THE OUTPUT - PANEL STAGE 3

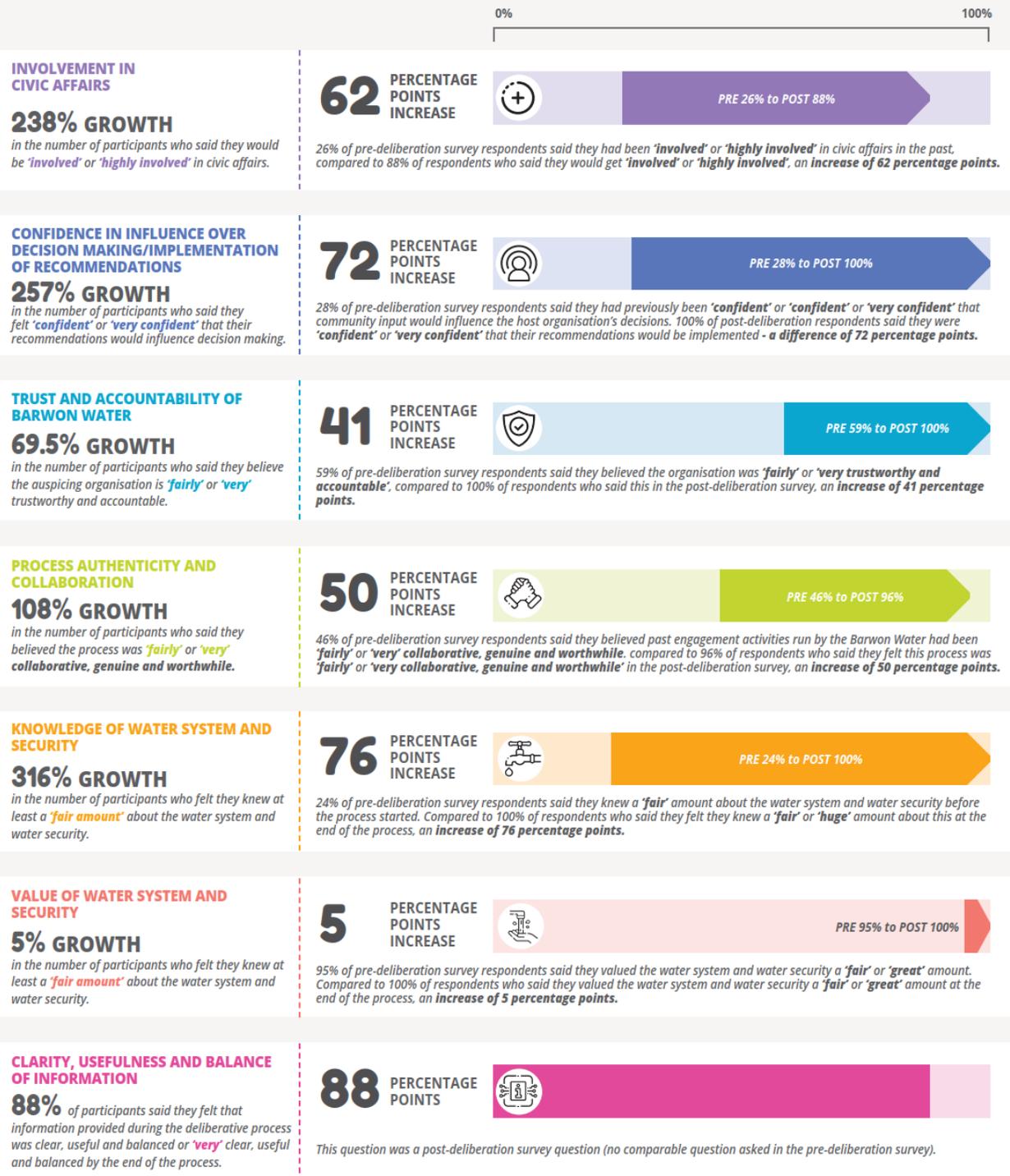


FAST FACTS about the Barwon Water Water for Our Future (WFOF) Panel

THE OUTPUT - PANEL STAGE 3

Overall levels of comfort with how Barwon Water had incorporated the vision and criteria, alongside the options into the UWS.

Participant experience and change over the life of the 3 panel stages



Innovation and Uniqueness

This project is one of the few international projects that has brought a deliberative panel together across multiple stages – a total of 11 sessions – seeing a project through from vision to draft plan. The amount of time that has been provided to this group to fully understand the issues and slowly unpack each step has demonstrated the power of slow conversations to solve complex issues. This project also demonstrated that consistent and regular engagement with stakeholders (regional leaders and others) with a clear roadmap to achieve an outcome can repair old wounds and build a regional approach to a large-scale and important issue.

Barwon Water can bring to the practice:

- A knowledge of applying deliberative processes from small scale to a larger, longer-term project (learning from our previous Price Submission 2018 process and building on it).
- Evidence of impact of processes such as these to help other organisations to build their skills and capacity in more genuine engagement.
- Building long-term regional leadership relationships that have helped share the dilemma.
- Examples of communication material that can help simplify complex topics into digestible material.

Criteria Theme		Community & Social Outcomes										Environmental				Sustainability				Technology, Science & Innovation				Finance & Economics				
Criteria Heading	Social Impact & Equity (%)	Affordability & equity					Social benefits					Manage environmental impact		Zero emissions		Climate change adaptation		Circular economy		Sustainable usage		Technology & Innovation		New - added by Barwon Water		Cost benefit analysis		
Metric	Extent to which social benefits / impacts are leveraged across the community	Extent of private investment required by the community	Bill impact - household meter / occupier	Bill impact - household benefit	Bill impact - small business	Bill impact - large business	Health benefits	Social & recreational benefits	Employment benefits	Environmental impacts - water	Environmental impacts - land & biodiversity	Zero net emissions	Extent of climate / natural dependency	Ability to reduce / natural resources	Ability to promote informed water use	Time required for delivery / implementation / to when the water is available	Regulatory / legislative / capacity constraints	Additional cost	Containing / additional yield	Ability to be scaled up or replicated over time	Capex	Opex	Levelised cost					
Rank of Assessment	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Quantitative \$ annual bill increase	Quantitative \$ annual bill increase	Quantitative \$ annual bill increase	Quantitative \$ annual bill increase	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Qualitative R/A/G	Quantitative \$/Mln	Quantitative \$/Mln	Quantitative \$/Mln						
USE WATER SMARTER																												
1. Better design and planning																												
1	Improved plumbing standards and house efficiency star ratings			\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0				125			3000		5-10		544		\$ 67.2	\$ 600.0	\$ 280.0						
2	Northern and Western Geelong Growth Area (N/W) Plan			\$ 64	\$ 21	\$ 80	\$ 13,700				1,030			300		5-40		7700		\$ 540.0	\$ 2,226.0	\$ 2,940.0						
3	Headwater Balke Channel bulk embankment to Bolinda Channel			\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0				0			0		-1		100		\$ -1	\$ 250.0	\$ -250.0						
4	Optimise operation of Angelsea Biofield within existing embankment constraints			\$ 3	\$ 5	\$ 1	\$ 6	\$ 664						0		-1.3		2700		\$ 0.0	\$ 805.0	\$ 805.0						
5	Optimise operation of Melbourne Geelong Pipeline within existing embankment constraints			\$ 4	\$ 5	\$ 1	\$ 7	\$ 899			22			216		2		2822		\$ 12.2	\$ 460.0	\$ 548.0						
6	Reduce losses along Wurdee Buluk Inlet Channel			\$ 39	\$ 13	\$ 64	\$ 7,005				371			0		-10-20		400		\$ 200.0	\$ 200.0	\$ 26,670.0						
7	Wurdee Buluk Reservoir - shade falls			\$ 25	\$ 8	\$ 5	\$ 41	\$ 4,874			255			0		3-5		2720		\$ 122.0	\$ 300.0	\$ 5,095.0						
8	Water efficient showerhead program			\$ 1	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1	\$ 77			4			-40		0		140		\$ 0.8	\$ 1,800.0	\$ 1,510.0						
9	Waterwise gardens			Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown			Unknown			-40		0		350		Unknown	Unknown	Unknown						
10	Smart networks (digital metering) across Geelong system			\$ 7	\$ 2	\$ 3	\$ 11	\$ 1,350			59			0		0		840		\$ 32.0	\$ 336.0	\$ 4,480.0						
11	WaterFaster Program			\$ 7	\$ 2	\$ 3	\$ 11	\$ 1,337			9			0		1.5		450		\$ 5.0	\$ 8,300.0	\$ 8,300.0						
12	Form leakage detection program			\$ 1	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 2	\$ 28			2			-40		1.5		430		\$ 1.0	\$ 4,000.0	\$ 130.0						
13	Work with schools to help educate young people			\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1	\$ 70			0			-40		0		80		\$ -	\$ 2,875.0	\$ 2,875.0						
14	Gameification/competitive water use using smart meters and apps			\$ 1	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1	\$ 131			Unknown			-40		5-10		750		\$ -	\$ 666.0	\$ 666.0						
15	School Education Program			\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1	\$ 88			Unknown			-40		0		35		\$ -	\$ 8,000.0	\$ 8,000.0						
16	Subsidies for rainwater tanks			\$ 19	\$ 5	\$ 27	\$ 3,209				Unknown			-40		-10		221		\$ -	\$ 41,910.0	\$ 23,680.0						
17	Water efficiency grant program for major water users			\$ 4	\$ 1	\$ 3	\$ 7	\$ 854			Unknown			-40		5-10		355		\$ -	\$ 2,873.0	\$ 570.0						
18	Revised fixed service charge but higher volume charge			\$ -8	\$ 139	\$ -44	\$ 22,473				470			-40		2-7		944		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
19	Security pricing trial initiatives			\$ 169	\$ 169	\$ 338	\$ 16,938				470			-40		7-12		1712		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
20	Social allocation of water			\$ 1	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1	\$ 115			23			-40		7-12		588		\$ -	\$ 640.0	\$ 640.0						
21	Review the restriction curves			\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 23			470			-40		3-5		1000		\$ -	\$ 75.0	\$ 75.0						
22	Tighter permanent water saving rules			\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 23			470			-40		3-5		100		\$ -	\$ 103.0	\$ 103.0						
FIND MORE WATER																												
4. Desalination																												
23	Regional desalination plant for Geelong			\$ 353	\$ 160	\$ 839	\$ 99,574				3026			6079		5-10		50000		\$ 1,900.0	\$ 1,870.0	\$ 4,488.0						
24	New State desalination plant, shared between Geelong and Melbourne			\$ 472	\$ 162	\$ 794	\$ 95,945				3157			6000		5-10		50000		\$ 1,690.0	\$ 1,825.0	\$ 4,326.0						
25	Access desalination water from additional 300L upgrade of Victorian Desalination Plant			\$ 174	\$ 56	\$ 284	\$ 33,809				1281			6340		5-10		15000		\$ 690.0	\$ 1,670.0	\$ 4,789.0						
5. Recycled Water																												
26	Direct Potable Reuse from Black Rock Water Reclamation Plant to storage tanks			\$ 46	\$ 15	\$ 75	\$ 8,870				204			6078		10-20		9400		\$ 190.0	\$ 1,636.0	\$ 2,102.0						
27	Indirect Potable Reuse from Black Rock Water Reclamation Plant via Angelsea Supply Storage & Recovery to Werdeee Buluk			\$ 60	\$ 19	\$ 98	\$ 11,675				359			4412		10-20		6380		\$ 218.0	\$ 1,753.0	\$ 3,640.0						
28	Northern Water Reclamation Plant Clean-Pipe to Existing Suburbs			\$ 23	\$ 7	\$ 38	\$ 4,482				200			4558		5-10		700		\$ 108.0	\$ 1,884.0	\$ 12,250.0						
29	Recycled water for agricultural use			\$ 2	\$ 1	\$ 4	\$ 446				20			200		3-5		80		\$ 10.0	\$ 1,180.0	\$ 910.0						
30	Direct potable water to irrigate future urban growth areas			\$ 63	\$ 20	\$ 103	\$ 12,281				632			4500		10-20		3460		\$ 420.0	\$ 3,760.0	\$ 12,380.0						
31	Recycled water for river environmental flows			\$ 31	\$ 29	\$ 58	\$ 10,624				337			1000		1-3		0		\$ 483.0	\$ 1,162.0	\$ 863.0						
32	Sewer mining for public open space or industry			\$ 2	\$ 1	\$ 3	\$ 367				15			1000		1-3		180		\$ 75	\$ 1,540.0	\$ 4,038.0						
6. Onyx Water																												
7. Groundwater																												
33	Recharge on-site treatment for garden and toilet use			\$ 94	\$ 30	\$ 153	\$ 18,182				859			6000		3-5		1800		\$ 482.0	\$ 1,753.0	\$ 24,740.0						
34	Access Upper Eastern View Formation groundwater			\$ 4	\$ 1	\$ 2	\$ 795				16			1900		5-10		2000		\$ 8.0	\$ 804.0	\$ 1,030.0						
35	Recharge groundwater tanks			\$ 23	\$ 8	\$ 38	\$ 4,543				199			1900		5-10		2000		\$ 107.0	\$ 797.0	\$ 3,891.0						
36	Recharge water tanks to garden and toilet			\$ 26	\$ 10	\$ 50	\$ 7,053				327			3000		5-10		1400		\$ 176.0	\$ 893.0	\$ 8,910.0						
37	Roof water harvesting scheme for suburb			\$ 10	\$ 3	\$ 17	\$ 2,079				95			3000		10-20		842		\$ 51.0	\$ 302.0	\$ 910.0						
8. Stormwater																												
38	Recover stormwater for industrial estate			\$ 2	\$ 1	\$ 3	\$ 338				1200			1000		3-5		118		\$ 17	\$ 866.0	\$ 3,904.0						
39	Divert stormwater to recreational facilities or Public Open Spaces			\$ 0	\$ 1	\$ 3	\$ 6	\$ 696			32			1000		3-5		60		\$ 17.0	\$ 632.0	\$ 17,600.0						
40	Coro Bay dam			Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown				Unknown			Unknown		10-20		Unknown		Unknown	Unknown	Unknown						
41	Stormwater to Wurdee Buluk Reservoir			\$ 73	\$ 23	\$ 119	\$ 14,136				652			1900		10-20		1000		\$ 250.0	\$ 517.0	\$ 5,914.0						
10. Rivers																												
42	West Geelong Reservoir to West Barwon Reservoir via Chapsdale Channel			\$ 24	\$ 8	\$ 38	\$ 4,568				181			0		5-10		7200		\$ 104.0	\$ 250.0	\$ 1,910.0						
43	Colac Pipeline to Wurdee Buluk Channel via Barwon-Colac Transfer Main			\$ 1	\$ 0	\$ 1	\$ 11	\$ 21			2			0		3-5		1500		\$ 0.5	\$ 250.0	\$ 214.0						
44	Barwon River water and pump station at Winchelsea			\$ 3	\$ 2	\$ 9	\$ 1,026				39			300		3-5		3000		\$ 19.0	\$ 344.0	\$ 700.0						
45	Small dam behind Barwon weirs (Callahan, Dewings etc.)			\$ 8	\$ 3	\$ 14	\$ 1,621				76			0		10-20		1500		\$ 40.0	\$ 250.0	\$ 1,762.0						
46	Levee Close dam with pipeline to Wurdee Buluk Channel			\$ 43	\$ 16	\$ 78	\$ 9,288				328			101		10-20		8976		\$ 204.0	\$ 563.0	\$ 1,534.0						
47	Coastal River Diversion to Barwon System			\$ 17	\$ 6	\$ 29	\$ 3,397				173			0		5-10		1800		\$ 86.0	\$ 250.0	\$ 3,742.0						
48	West Geelong Dam Diversion & Diversion			\$ 30	\$ 10	\$ 49	\$ 5,878				200			0		5-10		4500		\$ 145.0	\$ 250.0	\$ 2,526.0						
49	Purchase water from Northern Victoria, trade by substation with Central Highlands Water			\$ 5	\$ 2	\$ 8	\$ 954				245			0		5-10		5000		\$ 0.2	\$ 879.0	\$ 629.0						
50	Purchase untreated water from existing allocations from the Victorian Desalination Plant			\$ 6	\$ 2	\$ 10	\$ 1,221				640			0		1-4		1000		\$ -	\$ 3,995.0	\$ 3,660.0						
OTHER																												
12. Other																												
51	Yeeba beign from Antarctica to Corio Bay			Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown				Unknown			Unknown		-10		Unknown		Unknown	Unknown	Unknown						
52	Cloud seeding			Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown				Unknown			Unknown		5-10		Unknown		Unknown	Unknown	Unknown						

High-level, preliminary information provided as a guide only - represents views of Barwon Water professionals and should not be viewed as definitive or exhaustive

Image 20 Detailed information was presented to the panel in a considered and easy to understand format

Acknowledgements and to find out more

We would like to thank Barwon Water for agreeing to share this case study and insights to advance engagement practice. This case study was co-authored by Cassie Milner, Rachael Brodie, Jessica Connor-Kennedy and Nicole Hunter.

At the time of publishing, Cassie and Rachael were employed by Barwon Water as Senior Communications Adviser and Strategic Engagement Adviser, respectively. Jessica is a Senior Facilitator with MosaicLab and Nicole is Co-Founder and Managing Director of MosaicLab.

Combined Cassie and Rachael have almost 20 years' experience in the water sector and expertise in communications and community and stakeholder engagement. Jessica and Nicole have a combined 35 years' experience in designing and delivering community and stakeholder engagement programs.

For more information about this project see:

- <https://www.waterfuture.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/user/barwonwater> (YouTube)
- <https://www.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/water-and-waste/urban-water-strategy>

To connect with the authors:

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- [Jessica Connor Kennedy](#)
- [Nicole Hunter](#)

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