

# Regional Renewable Organics Network

Community Conversations  
2022-2023

# Overview

**Our region is growing and the waste we generate is too.**

**Barwon Water is planning a world leading Regional Renewable Organics Network (RRON) facility at Black Rock Water Reclamation Plant in Connewarre.** The planned facility will take household food and garden waste, local commercial and industrial organic waste and organic materials from wastewater treatment. This waste will be safely converted into products that capture carbon for high value use in agribusiness and sustainable manufacturing and construction materials, and at the same time produce renewable energy.

The RRON will deliver significant environmental, economic and community benefits to the region.

Following earlier community engagement in October-November 2021, we have continued to share information, and listen and learn from our community as the project progresses. Community conversations continue to inform and support future stages of the project.

This report provides a summary of the activities undertaken from early 2022 to mid-2023 to continue the conversation with our community, customers and stakeholders.

## Engagement Activities

The following activities have occurred during the period of February 2022 to June 2023 to share project updates and understand community and stakeholder interests in the project:

- **Dedicated project website:** <https://www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/rron> was established as a central place to share project information and collect feedback through engagement tools including interactive map and Q+A function. The webpage includes fact sheets, frequently asked questions, a sign-up tool for project updates and contact information for the team
- **Interactive online map:** setup as part of the first engagement stage, the map allows anyone to drop a pin onto a map showing the project area. Participants could zoom in and out to locate a position on the map to leave a comment or a photo. This has remained open for feedback during 2022 and 2023.
- **Geelong Show Information Stall:** between 13-16 October, 295 visitors and conversations were held between the wider community and project team members. Sentiment through this activity for the project was positive, in particular towards recycling and carbon sequestration benefits.

- **Net Zero Event Information Stall:** In April and May 2023, Barwon Water hosted a stall at the City of Greater Geelong Net Zero Forum to raise awareness of the project. There was both an industry focused day and a community focused day.
- **Community Group Briefings:** The RRON project team reached out to a range of local community interest groups to provide a project update, understand any areas of concern or interest and answer questions. The following briefings occurred from May-July 2023:
  - Queenscliffe Climate Action Now
  - Barwon Heads Association
  - Breamlea Community Gardens Committee
  - Geelong Sustainability Committee
  - 13<sup>th</sup> Beach Residents Association
  - 13<sup>th</sup> Beach Residential Lot Owners Association
- **Barwon Water Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC)** presentation in August 2023

### Communication and Promotion Activities

- Project Update Newsletter: in late 2022 and early 2023 a newsletter was distributed, providing a project update, an overview of previous engagement findings, and information on future opportunities. This went to surrounding neighbours, anyone who had participated and provided contact details in the first engagement stage, and known community interest groups . Where an email was available this was sent as an e-newsletter, otherwise was posted in hard copy format.
- Media release announcing the signing of waste supply agreements with local Councils (City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire Council, Borough of Queenscliff and Golden Plains Shire Council) – August 26 2022
- Refreshed Project Factsheet with up to date information
- Biochar Factsheet created and promoted
- Your Say RRON website refresh including updated and new FAQs