

Forrest wastewater investigation

Community visioning workshop

The Process

Dec 2016 – Forrest Community requests wastewater investigation

Jun 2017 – Barwon Water & Colac Otway Shire confirm project

Sep 2017 – Consultants Engaged

Nov 2017 – Site Audit Completed

Dec 2017 – Community Open House & Visioning Workshop

Feb 2018 – Options Identification Workshop

Apr 2018 – Options Assessment Workshop

Jun 2018 – Project completed preferred option identified



TOILETS
FOR CUSTOMERS ONLY
PUBLIC TOILETS
ARE LOCATED ONE
BLOCK AWAY ON
STATION STREET

AGENDA

1. Introduction and Project Background
2. Project drivers
3. Success visioning



Why are we here today?



Project Scope

What's In

- Understanding the wastewater problem
- Listening to community goals and aspirations affected by wastewater
- Scoping a range of potential solutions
- Outlining costs and benefits of various options
- Explaining how stakeholders would be affected

What's Out

- Issues outside of wastewater
- Deciding on the growth potential of Forrest township
- Debating the validity of commercial and tourism activities for the region

Principles of Collaboration



Forrest wastewater investigation

Community feedback results

What we asked

We created an online survey hosted a community open house and invited you to share your feedback on:

- What makes Forrest special
- How you felt about wastewater issues (if any)
- What wastewater issues you experience the most (if any)
- What outcome you were seeking from the wastewater investigation

In summary, we heard

Leafy green /
country feel
Natural
landscape

There is a
significant
problem and
something
needs to be
done about it
now

There is a
problem and
needs to be
fixed eventually

Bad smells
Polluted
environment
Risks to
public health

Protection of
local
waterways and
environment

Avoiding costs
to the
community
and residents

What we heard at the open house

Concerns about nearby rivers being polluted, particularly after major increases in population.

Shortage of public amenities such as public toilets

Any option or proposal should try and be alternative to traditional sewerage systems.

Cost of any wastewater option / proposal needs to be considered in light of affordability and impact.

Ensuring the town can manage the surge period of tourists.

Forrest Wastewater Audit Findings

Visioning Workshop
12 December 2017



Domestic Waste Water Management Plan

- Council required to develop a Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) under State legislation:
 - To assist with the management of on-site disposal of effluent (where land is not connected to a reticulated sewerage system)
 - Establish preferred approaches to monitoring the condition and management of on-site effluent treatment systems, enforcement, and direction for planning decisions
- Council adopted its DWMP in 2015



Waste Water System Audits

- Important step under DWMP is for Shire to carry out system audits - inspections of existing domestic waste water systems throughout the Shire
- These audits provide evidence of how individual systems are performing and inform of common issues across a settlement
- The audits gather a range of data relating to land-use (residential - holiday rental – commercial), operation, design, size, locality and performance of systems



Forrest Waste Water Audits

- Forrest township has been prioritised for auditing as part of the DWMP implementation program
- Information gained will inform the Forrest Waste Water Investigation project.
- The investigation has come about from the advocacy by the community who identified waste water as a high priority for the township



Audits Scope

- 113 properties were audited in Forrest township over 4 weeks
- Findings have been categorized into three risk ratings: High, Medium and Low.
- Properties were found to have a range of different systems and disposal methods including sand filters, AWTs, outhouses, urine separating, split system and standard all waste systems disposing to offsite discharge, absorption trenches, surface and sub surface irrigation.



Outcomes

- Large number of properties are not retaining waste water on site & are discharging to the environment (ie. drains or waterways)
- A large number of systems appear to have been altered/installed without Council approval & do not meet regulatory requirements
- A large number of properties are not having service/ water tests undertaken or desludging of systems, resulting in the failing of disposal fields
- Buildings constructed over existing systems is significantly impacting the ability to service, desludge and maintain them.
- Increasing tourist accommodation & commercial actives resulting in over loading of existing systems at peak times of the year.



Findings

- Risk ratings based on the DWMP framework, dependent on the risk they pose to both public health and the environment.
- High risk rating = systems that are non compliant and result in offsite discharge of both Black water and Grey water and are not serviced, water tested or desludged.
- Medium risk rating = systems that discharge only grey water offsite and may retain black water onsite and are not serviced, water tested or desludged.
- Low risk rating = systems that are retaining waters onsite but require servicing or desludging and have minor non compliance



Findings

Risk Rating	Numbers
High	39
Medium	21
Low	31
Unknown	20
OHS	12
Total audits conducted	113



What does this mean?

- Whilst high level of non-compliance identified, it simply recognises a condition that has existed for several years
- Council will need to work with land owners on high priority risks to address public health/nuisance
- Audit results are significant input to discussions on wastewater treatment options for Forrest
 - Will help inform direction of current project
 - Help community understand the extent of current problem



Brochure

Help protect your health and the environment

Poorly maintained septic systems are a serious source of water pollution, may present health risks and cause odour and vermin problems.

By looking after your septic system you can do your part in helping to protect the environment and the health of your family.

Management of the treated water from your septic system is your responsibility.

WARNING SIGNS

You can look for the following warning signs that signal there are troubles with your septic system

- Water that drains too slowly
- Drain pipes that gurgle when air bubbles are forced back through the system
- Sewage smells
- Water backing up to your sink
- Waste water surfacing / pooling in the yard.
- Collapsed or sunken drainage trenches

Immediate attention will protect your health, the environment and ultimately save you money.

Do's and Dont's

- Do** Grow suitable plants over the drainage field
Contact Shire Office for advice.
- Do** Have the septic pumped out (desludged) every three years
- Do** Keep records of inspections and maintenance
- Do** Practice water conservation
- Do** Repair leaking taps and toilets immediately

- Don't** Use bleaches and cleaning products excessively
- Don't** Allow oil or grease to enter the system
- Don't** Allow storm water to discharge into a septic system or over a drainage field
- Don't** Cover the drainage field with paving concrete or buildings or other structures.
- Don't** Place non-biodegradable objects into the system

Questions? Our friendly staff look forward to helping you.

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Waste Water Your Septic System

Photograph by Alan Charnichael


Colac Otway
SHIRE





DECENTRALISED WATER CONSULTING

Why is the Forrest Wastewater Investigation Important?

FORREST COMMUNITY HOUSE

12 DECEMBER 2017

BEN ASQUITH



DECENTRALISED WATER CONSULTING

What are we doing?

- Community feedback and audit results support common themes.
- We are also looking at:
 - Water use data (including seasonal):
 - Household occupancy and type (census data):
 - Water quality data (limited – help needed):
 - Climate and land capability:
 - Suitable, available land for on-site containment.
- Interested in any information or data anyone may be aware of.



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Initial Findings

- Audit results reflect a number of legacy issues for small towns.
- Historical town planning.
- Available on-site management technologies.
- Historical legislation and regulations.



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On-site Containment Potential

Long-term On-site Containment	Percentage
Partial but not full on-site containment possible	56%
Full on-site containment possible at higher cost	19%
Full on-site containment possible	25%



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Figure: Forrest Township

Water quality monitoring



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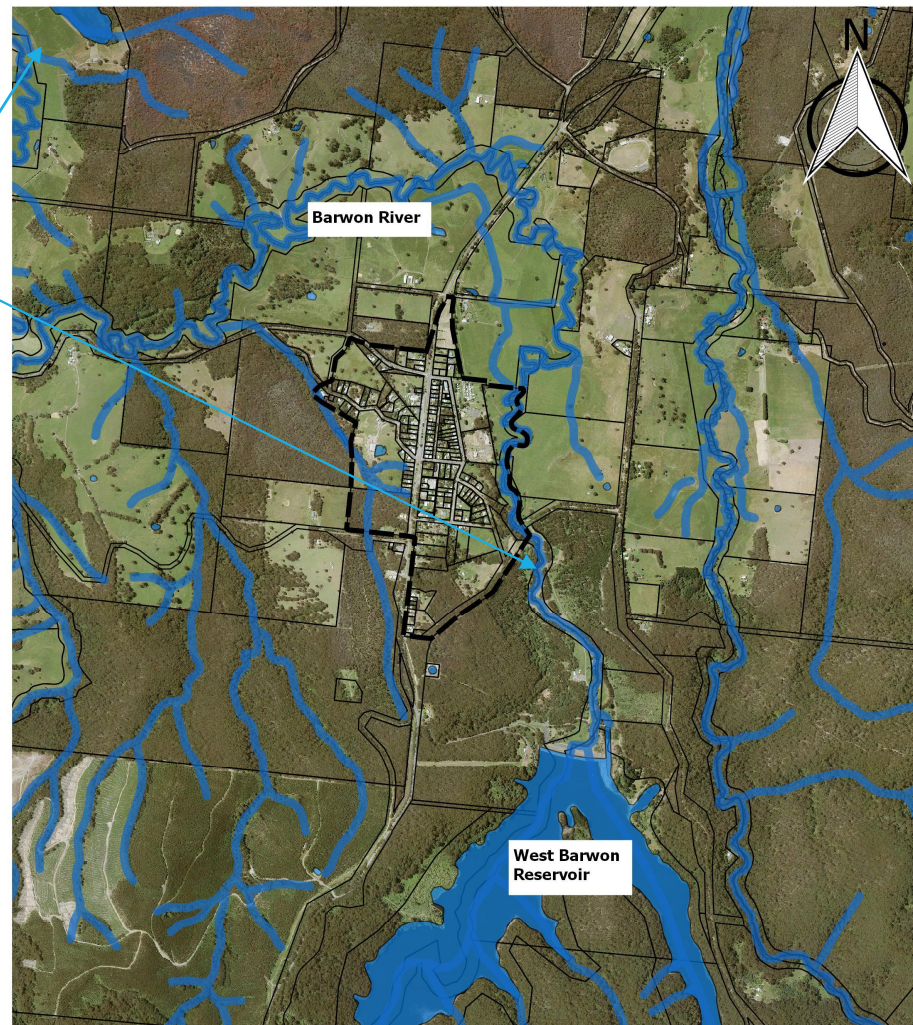
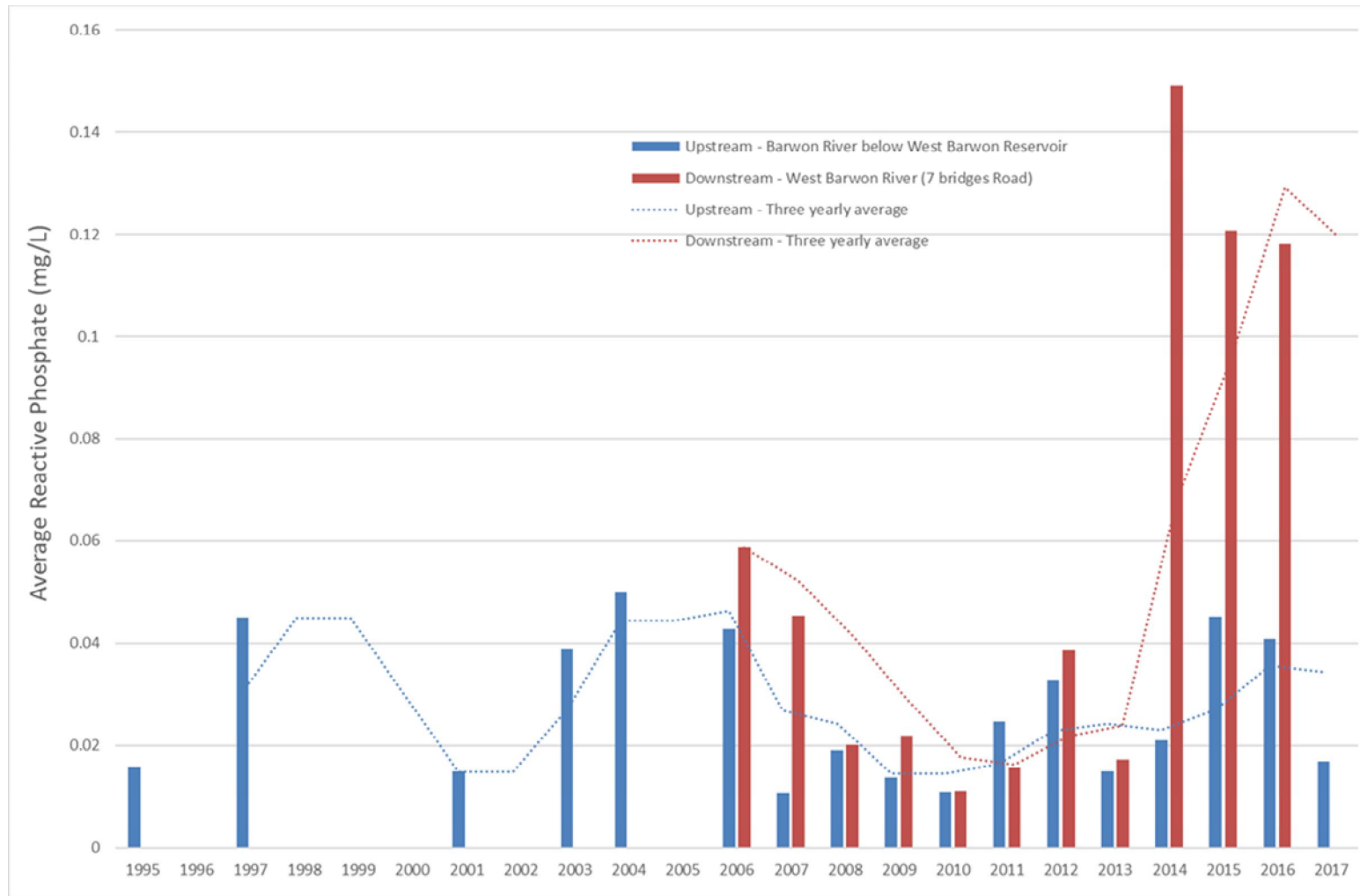


Figure: Forrest Township Locality

Existing water quality data



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What will this achieve?

- Well defined and understood problem is easier to solve.
- Improves justifications for funding.
- Also guides identification of potential options.
- Nothings off the table – need to be willing to consider non-conventional solutions.
- May not be same solution for everyone – adaptability.



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Questions?

Ben Asquith

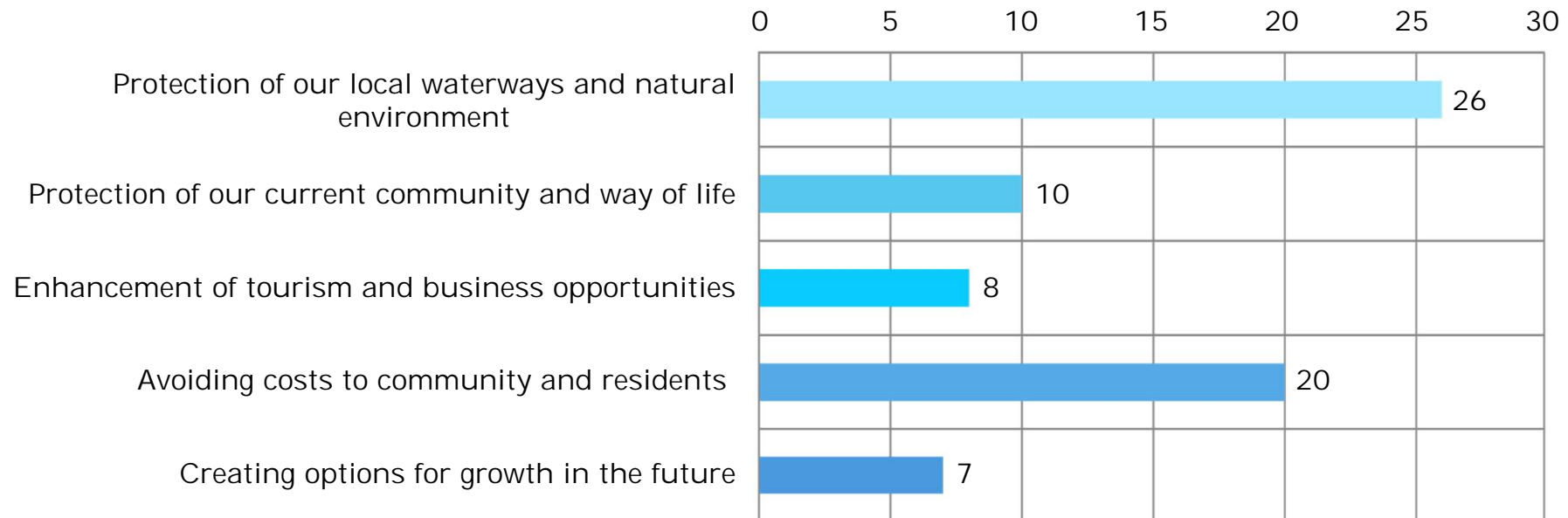
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How do we characterise a great wastewater system?



EXIT 1A

SUCCESS

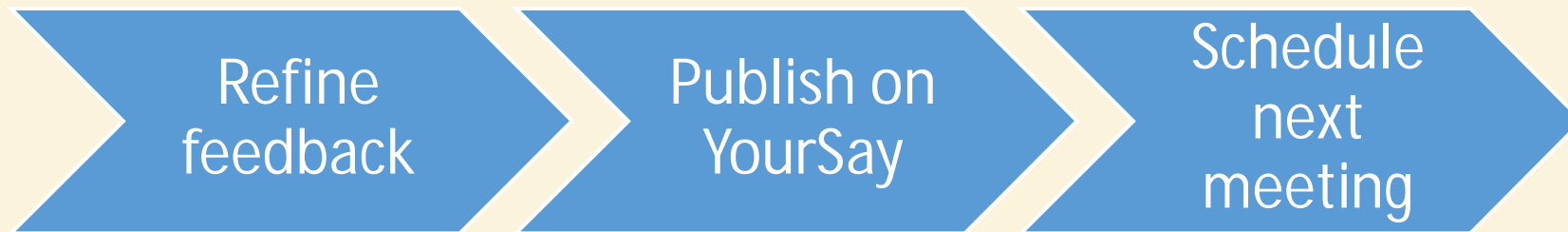
EXIT  **ONLY**

How do we measure success?

yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/forrest



Next steps...



Dec 2017 – Community Open House & Visioning Workshop

Feb 2018 – Options Identification Workshop

Apr 2018 – Options Assessment Workshop

Jun 2018 – Project completed preferred option identified

Thank you

