

Appendix #4

Table 4.1: Community feedback

Omissions or corrections
Update information on Neighbourhood House
Hospitals and high school are both located within 30 minutes, not 1 hour
Change wording around horse riding community
Horse riding grounds were established in the 1980s
Tennis club omitted from community groups
Forrest Learning Centre opened in 1996

Content reframing
More of an emphasis on the healthy environment outside of the tourism context
The plan should be more socially oriented
Plan is for Forrest and District but there is little information regarding the District
Reorganise sections so that economy is not listed first
Community Advantage section only discusses tourism
A broader range of Human Capital should be explored (only 3 groups mentioned)
Projects should involve the community and achieve visible results
Include discussion of diversifying the economy to avoid having Forrest become an exclusively tourist town
More recognition of Indigenous people and culture
Give more prominence to local voices
Include accountability for this plan, as well as the 2012 plan

Water authority feedback

1. Executive Summary – page 7 – Integrated Water Management Plan Incorporating New Wastewater Infrastructure

Barwon Water is committed to an ongoing partnership with the Forrest community and Colac Otway Shire as we investigate opportunities for wastewater improvements in Forrest. Whilst we are dedicated to working towards a solution together, we are realistic about the timeframes involved in the investigation and funding of a proposed wastewater scheme. This process may take years and has not stalled as stated in the draft Plan. We ask the community to continue to work together with us and Colac Otway Shire on this project in a coordinated way.

The purpose of the current economic analysis, which is underway, is to identify the appropriate funding model to deliver the preferred wastewater option. We suggest that the preparation of an integrated water management (IWM) plan for Forrest maybe be a long-term goal for the community to consider, if it wishes. Further we suggest that to deliver an IWM plan for Forrest at this point, which incorporates wastewater, would complicate and dilute the focus on the pressing issue, being wastewater, not to mention greatly extend the time taken to deliver needed wastewater improvements.

Response

We have replaced the text describing the project as stalled with “[Barwon Water] *is currently undertaking an economic analysis to identify an appropriate funding model.*” We have also clarified the distinction between the wastewater strategy and an Integrated Water Management Plan and modified the final sentence to read “However, an integrated water management plan is relatively new idea and *incorporating it within the wastewater strategy would delay the wastewater project. Wastewater infrastructure is an urgent priority.*”

2. Community Ideas for Town Improvement Towards 2030 – page 12

We are very supportive of the community being engaged and taking ownership by suggesting ideas which will potentially improve the town and district.

We note one idea put forward around potentially opening up access to the West Barwon Reservoir for non-motorised recreation such as canoes and kayaks. While this idea may appear straightforward on the face of it, it may be very difficult to actually achieve. There is a range of obstacles or issues which would need to be overcome first such as potential risks to drinking water quality, operational and capital expenses (both on site and in the water treatment process) and government policy around protection of the catchment.

Response

We acknowledge that recreation on West Barwon Reservoir would be difficult to achieve, but we believe that this presents a recreational opportunity that we would like Barwon Water to support. This idea was not included in the Plan as an idle suggestion – co-author Sharon Bradshaw has previously presented these ideas to a Barwon Water board meeting.

3. Topography and Landscape – page 23 – Boundary Creek

The draft text in this section is largely accurate, however there is one sentence we would suggest is reviewed and reworded to improve accuracy, being:

[“Ecological impacts of this have included loss and/or reduction of fish, crustacean and mammal species in the Barwon River and its creeks; fish kills along the Barwon River; bushfires in the peat wetlands; and habitat erosion caused by toxic flows.”]

This is a broad statement not supported by scientific evidence. Based on the studies undertaken to date, ongoing impacts from Big Swamp are confined to the downstream reach of Boundary Creek and the Barwon River immediately downstream of Boundary Creek. It is not impacting the whole of the Barwon River and its creeks as inferred by the current wording.

We note mention in this section that the Remediation and Environmental Protection Plan will run until 2023. To clarify this, this Plan does not technically have an end date but rather we anticipate seeing successful outcomes from remediation within 10 years of implementation. The majority of the actions will be implemented by 2023, however ongoing monitoring will continue well beyond 2023.

Response

We have modified the sentence identified to read “Ecological impacts of this have included loss and/or reduction of fish, crustacean and mammal species in the Barwon River and its creeks, and fish kills along the Barwon River; although sampling in 2020 indicated that the river has recovered from the 2016 fish kill event.” We have also modified the last sentence of this section discussing the time

frame of the remediation project to: "This plan will run until 2023, and monitoring will continue beyond this time. Improvements are anticipated within 10 years of the commencement of remediation".

4. Recent Projects in Forrest and District – page 40 – Forrest Wastewater Investigation

We suggest you might consider adding "... and Economic Assessment" to the title of this section.

To confirm, so far the investment in this project has been in the order of \$200,000 and the current estimate of the capital cost is \$10.1 million. We would prefer that the Plan didn't use the work 'ask' in reference to 'total infrastructure ask'.

Response

As suggested, we have changed the heading to add "...and Economic Assessment" and changed the subheading from "total infrastructure ask" to "total infrastructure estimate."

5. Drivers for Change – page 53 – Wastewater

We suggest that you consider re-wording this paragraph in relation to any perceived limitations on additional development in town resulting from ageing septic systems. While we understand the intention of the point being made, this is not actually the case, as development could go ahead provided it complies with Council's wastewater management guidelines.

Response

With respect to limitations on development in Forrest, we submit that there are very few developments which would be able to meet Council's wastewater management guidelines due to failing septic systems at the current time. [Text here detailing which properties cannot currently be developed.]

We stand by our statement that insufficient wastewater management in Forrest is a significant limiting factor on housing and economic development. Further to this, we would like to re-emphasise to Barwon Water the need for urgency and speed in resolving the wastewater issue, as many residents are sceptical of a positive outcome.