

APPENDIX A

Submissions and comments

We have consulted with DELWP, Barwon Water, the City of Greater Geelong and EPA, and we considered their views when reaching our audit conclusions. As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, we gave a draft copy of this report, or relevant extracts, to those agencies and asked for their submissions and comments.

Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the agency head.

Responses were received as follows:

DELWP	57
Barwon Water	59
City of Greater Geelong	60
EPA	61



Department of Environment,
Land, Water and Planning

PO Box 500, East Melbourne,
Victoria 8002 Australia
delwp.vic.gov.au

Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
Level 31, 35 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Ref: SEC015355



Dear Mr Greaves

PROPOSED PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT – SUPPLYING AND USING RECYCLED WATER

Thank you for your letter of 26 October 2021, providing the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) with an opportunity to comment on the proposed performance audit report *Supplying and Using Recycled Water*.

I appreciate the work of your office in conducting this audit, and I am pleased to confirm acceptance of all recommendations directed to DELWP. Our Management Action Plan for responding to the recommendations is enclosed.

As you have seen, the Victorian Government is exploring opportunities to increase the supply and use of recycled water where it is safe, suitable, and economically feasible.

DELWP has shown its commitment to deliver on *Water for Victoria 2016*, by co-funding on-ground recycled water supply projects, streamlining Environment Protection Authority regulations for recycled water use and increasing integration of water with land use planning. We have also established Integrated Water Management Forums across Victoria to bring together all organisations with an interest in water management, so that water-related decisions for the future are made collaboratively and with local needs and local communities in mind.

All of this work contributes to reducing pressure on our drinking water supplies, improving the health of our waterways and increasing the resilience and liveability of our cities and towns. The Victorian Government has committed to continuing this important program, with further funding to be spent over the coming three years.

DELWP is well placed to respond to the recommendations of this audit, and the actions to address these have already commenced.

Should you require any further information in relation to DELWP's response, please contact Nikki Gemmill, Acting Director Resilient Cities and Towns, DELWP on (03) 9637 8689 or via email at Nikki.gemmill@delwp.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



John Bradley
Secretary

7 / 11 /2021

Encl.

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be protected under the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. It will only be used or disclosed to appropriate Ministerial, Statutory Authority, or departmental staff in regard to the purpose for which it was provided, unless required or authorized by law. Enquiries about access to information about you held by the Department should be directed to foi.unit@delwp.vic.gov.au or FOI Unit, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, PO Box 500, East Melbourne, Victoria 8002.



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Supplying and Using Recycled Water Performance audit

DELWP's Management Action Plan

Recommendation	Agreed action	Completion date
<p>Recommendation 1: DELWP works with the water sector and EPA to develop and implement water education programs that consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • target different users, such as the community, industries, councils and the agricultural sector • improve the community, industries, councils and agricultural sector's understanding of water security and the benefits and risks of using recycled water • include consistent messaging about using recycled water and specify roles and responsibilities for education 	<p><u>DELWP accepts this recommendation.</u></p> <p>DELWP will work with the water sector and the EPA to identify opportunities to improve existing engagement and education programs to increase community confidence and recycled water uptake.</p> <p>This process will inform the need for and delivery of any future supplementary activities to be delivered by DELWP, water corporations and EPA, in line with the relative functions of these organisations.</p>	31 December 2022
<p>Recommendation 3: DELWP publicly reports statewide information to share knowledge and demonstrate how forums are delivering the expected outcomes of <i>Water for Victoria</i></p>	<p><u>DELWP accepts this recommendation.</u></p> <p>DELWP will address this by developing a public Integrated Water Management (IWM) 'report card', which will outline what has been delivered through the Victorian Government's IWM program under <i>Water for Victoria</i>.</p>	30 April 2022
<p>Recommendation 4: DELWP clarifies data reporting categories and considers separately reporting on council, residential and industrial recycled water use, as well as estimated drinking water savings</p>	<p><u>DELWP accepts this recommendation.</u></p> <p>DELWP will work with EPA, the water sector, and the Essential Services Commission (ESC) to confirm opportunities to clarify and improve data reporting categories.</p> <p>This will inform any changes to DELWP's annual Victorian Water Accounts.</p>	30 August 2022



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning

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Your reference: 34610 21

9 November 2021

Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor General
Victorian Auditor General's Office
Level 31
35 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Auditor General,

Re: Proposed Performance Audit Report Supplying and using recycled water

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed report on the performance audit, Supplying and using recycled water.

Barwon Water is committed to increasing the use of recycled water in our region, and supporting the Water for Victoria Plan as we tackle the impacts of climate change and seek to ensure the availability of water for the future. We welcome the insights presented in the report and will continue to collaborate with government and community stakeholders with the objective of optimising the use of recycled water.

Given there are no recommendations requiring Barwon Water's response, we do not wish to suggest any further changes to the report. Furthermore, I appreciate the efforts of your audit team and the professionalism of their approach and conduct during the audit under challenging circumstances.

I look forward to receiving the final report,

Yours sincerely,



Joanne Plummer
Board Chair, Barwon Water

Cc: Dallas Mischkulnig, Director, Performance Audit
Jenny Koong, Senior Manager, Performance Audit
Tracey Slatter, Managing Director, Barwon Water

Barwon Region Water Corporation
55 – 67 Ryrie Street, PO Box 659, Geelong, Victoria, 3220
T: 1300 656 007 E: info@barwonwater.vic.gov.au
www.barwonwater.vic.gov.au

Enabling regional prosperity

CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

WADAWURRUNG COUNTRY P: 03 5272 5272
PO Box 104, Geelong VIC 3220 E: contactus@geelongcity.vic.gov.au
www.geelongaustralia.com.au



Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
Level 31, 35 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

10 November 2021

Doc No: Record Number
Our Ref: 3461021
Your Ref: BND-21-4883

Dear Andrew,

Re: Audit report response – Supplying and using recycled water

Thank you for providing the proposed audit report on supplying and using recycled water for our response dated 26 October 2021.

Council officers have reviewed the report in detail and have confirmed that it is an accurate reflection of our role and approach to planning for recycled water.

We support the overall findings and recommendations of the audit. We note the recommendation for further guidance on role and use of recycled water for environmental flows. This action should be implemented as a priority by the government.

The City will continue to play an active role in the planning and delivery of integrated water management outcomes for our region. We look forward to continuing our strong working relationship with Barwon Water and DELWP on this topic. This work includes the preparation of a municipal integrated water management strategy and delivery of IWM outcomes in the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas.

Please contact Gareth Smith on 5272 4266 or garethsmith@geelongcity.vic.gov.au if you'd like to discuss further.

Yours sincerely



Martin Cutter
Chief Executive Officer



Our Ref: C302

Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Dear Mr Greaves

Proposed performance audit report - Supplying and using recycled water

I refer to your letter of 26 October 2021 to the Chair of the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) Governing Board, Professor Kate Auty, about the Victorian Auditor-General's Office's proposed performance audit report 'Supplying and using recycled water'. I have been asked to respond on her behalf.

I appreciate the work of your office in conducting this audit. EPA has considered the audit findings and accepts the recommendation directed to it. I note that activities are already underway in response to the recommendation, and I refer you to our enclosed action plan for further detail.

EPA understands the importance of alternative water sources and supports the use of recycled water. We encourage its use in a safe and sustainable manner to minimise the associated risks to human health and the environment, whilst maximising its social and economic benefit. EPA will continue to work with our partners to identify opportunities for increasing the use of recycled water to meet future water demand.

Thank you and your team for your constructive engagement throughout the audit.

Yours sincerely



Lee Miezis
Chief Executive Officer

29 /10 / 2021

Encl: EPA action plan to address recommendation

Environment Protection Authority Victoria
GPO Box 4395, Melbourne VIC 3001 DX210082
1300 372 842 (1300 EPA VIC) www.epa.vic.gov.au



EPA action plan to address recommendation from Supplying and using recycled water

No	VAGO recommendation	Action	Completion date
2	(Environment Protection Authority Victoria) works with DELWP to develop and implement guidelines to inform water corporations' applications for using recycled water for environmental flows (see Section 2.3).	Accepted. EPA and DELWP have already begun the development of a framework that informs water corporations of the information that should be collected, assessed, and provided when seeking approval for the use of recycled water for environmental flows. This framework is being developed by a joint working group which includes EPA, DELWP, the Department of Health, Melbourne Water, Barwon Water, and the North Central Catchment Management Authority. Key information from the framework will be published as an EPA guideline in mid-2023.	Guideline to be published in mid-2023, with implementation actions to follow.