

Media Release

The Hon Harriet Shing MP

Minister for Water
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy
Minister for Equality



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NEW TRIAL WILL TRANSFORM WANGARATTA'S GREEN WASTE INTO SOIL

A new program to help reduce carbon emissions by converting household sewage and green waste into biochar, a carbon-rich material made from biomass, is to be trialled in Wangaratta. If successful, the trial could lead to a major new facility and the creation of jobs for the region.

Minister for Water Harriet Shing launched the trial in Wangaratta today, alongside North East Water and the Rural City of Wangaratta. Gippsland Water and the Intelligent Water Network are project partners in this trial.

The ground-breaking trial will see biosolids from Wangaratta's wastewater treatment plant mixed with the city's green waste then processed into biochar in Melbourne. The carbon-rich form of charcoal is used in to improve soil health and boost agricultural productivity.

This project stops these valuable resources going to landfill and provides potential for future carbon sequestration and the trade of carbon offsets.

If the Wangaratta waste streams are proven to be suitable during the trial, a local facility will be considered to process large volumes of biochar for possible use on the region's farmland with the potential to generate jobs for the region.

The trial will also inform the planned expansion of Gippsland Water's organics recycling business at Dutson Downs, one of the largest circular economy operations in Victoria.

North East Water, Gippsland Water and the Intelligent Water Network will invest \$160,000 in the first stage of the trial with the Rural City of Wangaratta.

Victoria's water sector is leading the charge towards reaching its target of net zero emissions by 2035 and helping create a thriving circular economy for Victoria.

Quote attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

"The Biochar trial opens major opportunities for the circular economy and the wider water sector. If successful, it could be adopted by others to convert waste into an environmentally friendly and valuable commodity."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"The trial is a great use of resources and could open great opportunities for further investment and job creation in North East Victoria."

Quote attributable to North East Water Managing Director Jo Murdoch

"This innovative trial has the potential to capture thousands of tonnes of carbon annually to offset emissions and also create a high strength carbon rich soil enhancer for agricultural purposes."

Quote attributable to Rural City of Wangaratta Mayor Dean Rees

"This is a particularly exciting project and again demonstrates Council's commitment to excellence and innovation in the waste management space, and follows the success of the organics processing facility at Bowser."

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