

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Water

Minister for Police and Emergency Services



Thursday, 14 March 2019

CLEAR PATH FOR OTWAY WATERWAYS REMEDIATION PLAN

Minister for Water Lisa Neville has welcomed a decision by Barwon Water to withdraw a groundwater extraction licence application while work continues on a remediation plan to repair the environmental impacts of past extraction in the region.

In August 2018, Minister Neville requested a legally enforceable remediation plan to improve and protect the health of key waterways in the Otways and directed no further extraction occurs until remediation is complete.

Responding to feedback from the community, Barwon Water have taken the common-sense decision to remove any confusion caused by having an extraction licence application under active assessment, while work to deliver the remediation plan continues.

This decision now means there will also be no application to renew Barwon Water's licence to extract water for urban supply - responding to community concerns and making the process clearer.

Work on the remediation plan is already underway, with input from community members, stakeholders and independent technical experts.

The Boundary Creek and Big Swamp remediation community and stakeholder working group will continue to play a central role in developing the remediation plan.

The group is made up of representatives from the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA), Colac Otway Shire Council, LAWROC, PALM (People for a Living Moorabool), Upper Barwon Landcare Group, Boundary Creek landowners, Traditional Owners and other interested community members.

Last year, Minister Neville also directed a review of the permissible consumptive volume (PCV) for the area – the amount of groundwater that can be extracted - to determine if a change should be made. The review will recommend setting the PCV at a level that protects of the Gerangamete groundwater resource.

The Victorian Government's investment in large-scale infrastructure projects such as the desalination plant, the Melbourne-Geelong pipeline and the Anglesea borefield now means Geelong's water supply is more secure than ever before and less reliant on groundwater.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"While Geelong's water storages are extremely low right now, we do not need to extract water from the Barwon Downs borefield, thanks to projects like the Melbourne to Geelong pipeline."

"Withdrawing the licence application is a common-sense move that will mean everyone's focus is on the critically important rehabilitation work that needs to happen in the area before we can even consider further extraction."

Quote attributable to Member for South Barwon Darren Cheeseman

"I want to thank the local community for their continued engagement and passion for the health of these waterways. Work is already underway, and it will be great to see this continue to take effect."

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