

Colac Renewable Organics Network

The Colac Renewable Organics Network (Colac RON) is helping our water reclamation plant in Colac run on clean, green and low-cost energy.

Australian first

We're working with the Colac-based Australian Lamb Company and Bulla Dairy Foods to take organic trade waste and convert it into renewable electricity.

The solid and liquid waste is added to a large, covered pond where natural bacteria breaks down the waste and transforms it into biogas that is captured and converted into renewable energy.

Project benefits

The Colac RON will deliver significant environmental, economic and community benefits to the region, including:

- reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 6,300 tonnes per year
- produces 5.5 gigawatt hours of clean, green, low-cost energy each year
- reduces the high energy cost of treating sewage and wastewater, helping to keep Barwon Water customers' bills affordable
- creates 17 construction jobs and 45 ongoing jobs
- limits landfill and reduces our carbon footprint.



Image caption: Aerial view of the Colac RON's covered ponds

Next steps

In further exciting news for the project, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) has announced \$50,000 circular economy funding for concept design of a possible stage three of the Colac RON.

We'll investigate the feasibility of processing solid organic waste in the Colac region, which could mean taking kerbside organic waste collected by Colac Otway Shire, or other solid organic waste from Bulla Dairy foods, ALC, Colac Area Health, and wood packaging business CMTP.

We're committed to listening and learning from our community. We'll continue to develop the project and keep our community updated.

Regional Renewable Organics Network

About a third of the waste, we throw out at home is organic material, mainly food scraps, which create greenhouse gases when sent to landfill. We're planning a world leading Regional Renewable Organics Network (RRON) facility at the Black Rock Water Reclamation Plant in Connewarre.

The planned facility will take household food and garden waste, local commercial and industrial organic waste and organic materials from wastewater treatment and safely convert it into products that capture carbon (biochar) for high value use in agriculture and advanced sustainable materials, and at the same time produce renewable energy.

In doing so, it will divert volumes of organic waste away from landfill, reduce emissions and help reverse the cycle of burning fossil fuels.

Key benefits include:

- The facility will process 40,000 tonnes of organic waste annually.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 10,000 to 15,000 tonnes annually.
- Produce 60,000 gigajoule (Gj) of renewable energy each year.
- Create 75 construction jobs and 36 ongoing jobs.
- Produce biochar for use in agriculture and opportunities for agribusiness and manufacturing.

About Barwon Water

Barwon Water is Victoria's largest regional urban water corporation. We have a proud history supporting regional prosperity by providing excellence in water, sewerage and recycled water services to our customers and the community for more than 110 years.

We deliver high-quality, affordable and reliable water services to more than 340,000 permanent residents – reaching up to 545,000 people during the peak holiday periods.

92% of our customer base is residential, with the remaining 8% a mixture of commercial, industrial, and agricultural customers.

Around 30% of metered consumption is attributed to non-domestic customers.

Our region of responsibility stretches over 8,100 square kilometres, from Little River and the Bellarine Peninsula in the east, to Colac in the west, and from Meredith and Cressy in the north, to Apollo Bay on Victoria's south-west coast.

Stay informed.

Stay up to date by visiting our website: <https://www.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/about-us/major-projects/renewable-organics-networks>