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## Major upgrade to improve Port Fairy's water quality

Wannon Water's Board has announced a major upgrade of the Port Fairy Water Treatment Plant to improve the town's water quality.

The project is part of the \$52.2 million Quality Water for Wannon Program which is jointly funded by the Australian Government, through its National Water Grid Fund, and Wannon Water, who will deliver the project on behalf of its customers and the Victorian Government.

Water treatment plants at Portland and Heywood will also be upgraded in the five-year project. The three communities are all supplied with deep groundwater which is high in naturally occurring mineral salts. While the water is safe to drink and the supply is very reliable, many people find the taste is less palatable and this leads to reduced consumption.

Managing Director Andrew Jeffers said the program would mean a lot for households in the three towns, reducing their cost of buying bottled water and maintaining appliances by around \$140 each year.

"The benefits will also extend more broadly across the region with an estimated \$1 million a year in public health savings, and improved economic and environmental outcomes," Mr Jeffers said.

Upgrading the water treatment plant by adding reverse osmosis was the only option to improve water quality in Portland and Heywood. However, in Port Fairy, Wannon Water investigated both an upgrade of the treatment plant and the construction of a pipeline to connect to Warrnambool.

"Each option had strengths, however the local treatment option was the recommended approach based on all the assessment criteria," Mr Jeffers said. "This included the lower costs involved, the greater reliability of both water quality and water security, less upstream impacts on the environment, and greater flexibility for the future."

"We've sought feedback from customers and interested stakeholders over the past few weeks. The results have been overwhelming, with more than 75 per cent of people saying they love the project, and the majority favouring reverse osmosis as the preferred option."

Mr Jeffers said it was clear that customers were frustrated by the poor water quality and were wanting improvements as soon as possible.

The Board's decision now signals the start of a detailed design and approvals process for Port Fairy. All three towns will have improved water quality by 2029.

**ENDS**