

Berri Barmera Waste Water Reuse Project

This project had its inception in 1999 when investigations began into repairing or replacing the ageing effluent lagoons at Barmera. Around the same time, Hardy Wine Company (HWC) was looking for alternatives to dispose of excess waste water from its growing operations at the Berri winery near Glossop.

When reviewing all of the councils STEDS in Berri, Barmera, Glossop, Monash and Cobdogla, it was found that all were in need of significant spending and the idea of combining all those waste flows with input from the winery could be more cost effective than dealing with each problem in isolation.

After years of design, costing, review and remodelling, the project is finally in a position to be put into place over the coming two financial years.

The project will see a large treatment facility constructed on council owned land east of Barmera (opposite the Riverland Field Days site) where winery waste water will be treated together with town effluent from Barmera, Cobdogla and Loveday. Treated water will be delivered back to the Barmera Golf Course and to the Riverland Field Days for irrigation of their turf.

At the Berri end, the existing treatment lagoons at Moritz Road will be upgraded and a secondary treatment process put in place to enable treated water to be used on the Berri Golf Course and playing fields at Glassey Park as well as some smaller parks and reserves within Berri.

The two ends of the scheme will be linked by a pipeline so that irrigation demands at one end can be supplemented from the other if required. Effluent from Glossop and Monash will be directed to an upgraded treatment lagoon at Brown Road, and once treated, water can be delivered on to Berri or Barmera depending on demand.

Other potential irrigation sites are being investigated and may be included in the project as it develops over the coming 12 – 18 months.

The winery component of the project has been implemented ahead of schedule to accommodate demands in their waste flows. This year's crush was a record 209,000 tonnes, equating to 209 million bottles of wine, so the spending of \$2.3M by HWC in fast tracking their component was an easy decision.

Final design details on the pipeline routes, potential irrigation sites and operational issues of the balance of the project will be completed by November 2005, at which time Council will need to consider the alternative commercial options it could use to implement the project.

One option is to have the current project developers, United Utilities Australia (UUA) build and operate the reuse component of the scheme with that being funded by a substantial loan from the Local Government Finance Authority.

The second alternative under consideration is for UUA to build, own and operate the scheme for a period of 25 years, after which the asset would be transferred to Council. This type of Build, Own, Operate, Transfer (BOOT) project is being used more and more in government and local government circles where substantial sums of capital are required for major infrastructure.