

# community update

## november 2017



## Merimbula Sewage Treatment Plant and Deep Ocean Outfall

### Bega Valley Shire Council is proposing to upgrade the Merimbula Sewage Treatment Plant (STP).

Bega Valley Shire Council is taking action. Advice from the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and the community is the existing beach-face outfall and dunal exfiltration ponds at Merimbula Sewage Treatment Plant are not sustainable. Council is working with AECOM to develop a concept design and environmental assessment for a deep ocean outfall and upgrade of the STP.

This long-term investment will improve the water quality of our iconic coastal environment.



## Project background

Sewage from Merimbula and Pambula is treated at Merimbula STP. The treated sewage, or effluent, needs to be reused or disposed of. We reuse as much effluent as possible for irrigation at Pambula Merimbula Golf Course and farmland at Oaklands. The remaining effluent is disposed using either the:

- dunal-exfiltration ponds
- beach-face outfall.

Originally the outfall extended out into the ocean and beyond the waves, but it was destroyed by a large storm in the 1970s. Since then, the beach-face outfall (shown on the front of this newsletter) has been discharging effluent across the centre of Merimbula Beach.

## Options assessment

The beach-face outfall and dunal exfiltration ponds have caused community concern around their impact on the aquatic environment and public health. The EPA required Council to investigate better disposal options. To do this, Council, state government agencies and a community focus group reviewed a full range of options before agreeing a deep ocean outfall is the preferred effluent disposal option. Compared to other options the deep ocean outfall has:

- the greatest environmental benefit
- least construction and operational impacts
- is more socially, environmentally and economically sustainable in the long term.

## What's happening now?

The next step is to develop a concept design and environmental assessment of the deep ocean outfall and upgrade of the STP. Council is working with engineering consultants AECOM. We aim to finish this process by 2019.

## What does it involve?

To prepare the concept design and environmental assessment we must:

- assess options for upgrading the STP
- select an alignment for the deep ocean outfall
- design the upgrades and deep ocean outfall
- prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which looks at all the social, economic and environmental impacts
- get regulatory and statutory approval.

After approval, Council will be able to seek funding for detailed design and construction.

## Community Working Group

Council will create a community working group (CWG) of representative local community members. They will work with the project team to assess options for upgrading the STP and select an alignment for the deep ocean outfall.

For more information on the CWG, please visit the project webpage.

## We want to hear from you

Community input is a key part of this project. We encourage you to get involved at all stages of the project. You will have opportunities to access information and provide input through:

- **drop-in community information sessions**
- **project website:**  
[begavalley.nsw.gov.au/MerimbulaSTPupgrade](http://begavalley.nsw.gov.au/MerimbulaSTPupgrade)
- **toll-free phone number:**  
1800 317 028 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday)
- **email:**  
[merimbulaSTPupgrade@begavalley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:merimbulaSTPupgrade@begavalley.nsw.gov.au)



For more information visit our website at [begavalley.nsw.gov.au/MerimbulaSTPupgrade](http://begavalley.nsw.gov.au/MerimbulaSTPupgrade) or email [merimbulaSTPupgrade@begavalley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:merimbulaSTPupgrade@begavalley.nsw.gov.au)

Please send all correspondence to Merimbula STP PO Box 492, BEGA NSW 2550  
If you have any questions about this newsletter please call 1800 317 028