



We're embarking on a major project to improve the quality and taste of the water in Portland, Heywood and Port Fairy through our Quality Water for Wannon Program.

Although the tap water is safe to drink, many people in towns where there is a groundwater supply, such as Portland, Heywood and Port Fairy, find the taste less palatable because of the naturally occurring mineral salts.

This leads to reduced consumption, which has ongoing health implications. Households face increased costs through the purchase of bottled water and higher maintenance requirements on their home appliances.

There are environmental impacts due to the disposal of plastic water bottles and economic impacts for businesses and industry.

Understandably, customers who are paying an equivalent price for water services compared to other towns across our region want equitable water quality and taste. That's why we're really excited about the jointly funded Quality Water for Wannon Program.

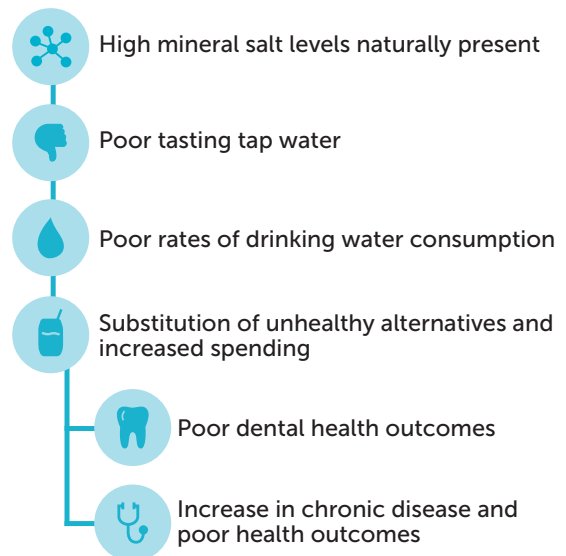
The program is funded through the Australian Government's National Water Grid Fund and Wannon Water, who will deliver the project on behalf of our customers and the Victorian Government.

As part of the federal funding agreement, water quality improvements in all three towns need to be completed by 2029.

The issue

Reduced consumption of drinking water from taps is resulting in adverse long-term health outcomes for the affected communities.

The salt content also means there are increased costs for residents, business owners and tourism.



How are we going to improve the water quality?

We'll be installing reverse osmosis (RO) technology into the water treatment plants in each town.

This process uses enormous amounts of pressure to force groundwater through a membrane (a filter with tiny holes).

The salt molecules from groundwater are generally too big to squeeze through the holes, but the water molecules are small enough to pass through.

This leaves most of the salt and minerals on one side of the membrane and fresh water on the other side. Reducing the total dissolved solids (TDS) levels below the taste threshold for most people (less than 300 milligram per litre (mg/L)) will improve the taste of the water and lessen the impact on household appliances.

While the upgrades are being designed and constructed, we'll also be working to educate and encourage our communities to choose the improved tasting tap water. This will ensure the positive health and economic benefits for them are robust and sustainable.