Wastewater Treatment Projects

Phase 2 of our consultation on the Secondary Treatment Upgrade (Bioreactors) and Biosolids Management Renewal projects was conducted from November 2022 – July 2023 and included:

- two sessions with **Icon Water's Expert Panel** - a group of eight experts and academics with background associated with the water cycle, the environment and meteorology
- an **environmental forum** with local conservation and environmental groups
- an online **community survey** completed by over 3,250 Canberrans
- presentations to local **community councils**.

The purpose of the engagement was to educate the broader community about the projects, test ideas and seek feedback.

Thank you to those who participated!

This document provides a summary of what you told us and our response.

What we heard…..

Overall, the findings of phase 2 were consistent with phase 1. Participants:

- showed general support for chosen technologies
- demonstrated a desire to understand other technology options considered
- were interested in where technologies are utilised elsewhere (both in Australia and globally)
- had a keen interest in how investments are funded (with the need for affordability to underpin decision making)
- understood the importance of environmental impacts (including circular economy opportunities).

See our **project page** to find out more about other shortlisted technology options and information on where technologies are used elsewhere. We also developed a **factsheet** to explain how projects are funded.

Expert panel 23 October and 3 November 2022

The panel accepted Icon Water's assessment of the four shortlisted options that were considered for the bioreactors at Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre (LMWQCC) and Icon Water's preferred option being membrane bioreactors.

The panel accepted the five shortlisted options that were considered to renew the biosolids treatment process at LMWQCC. The panel emphasised the need for biochar market when considering gasification as a treatment option for biosolids.

Environment forum 24 May 2023

Participants had a keen interest in the role that Icon Water's treatment process plays in protecting local waterways. There was general support in principle for the selected solutions.

Participants also had an interest in the insights gained through the Citizens' Panel from phase 1. The group noted that, to form a more informed opinion, they would need more information on the alternative options considered, where the technologies were being used elsewhere in the world, and more detailed cost information.

Online community survey 30 May – 24 July 2023

Invitation to participate in the survey was emailed to Icon Water customers and promoted via social media. 6,162 customers and community members participated with the survey with 3,277 responding to all questions.

We received responses from 112 suburbs. 7% of respondents lived in suburbs with proximity to LMWQCC (Hawker, Higgins, Holt, Latham, MacGregor, Page, Scullin, and Whitlam).

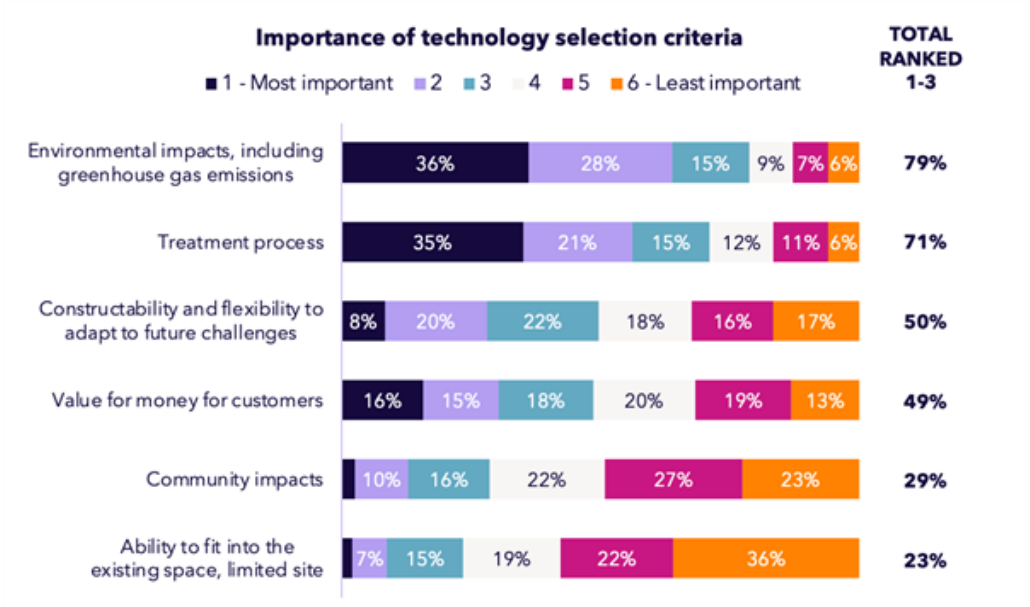
Respondents understand the need for the infrastructure upgrades, the potential benefits, and the concept of spreading the costs over time.

Secondary treatment upgrades - Bioreactors

88% of respondents support Icon Water's selected technology solution being use of a membrane bioreactors.

In considering technical assessment criteria for suitable treatment solutions, respondents were asked to rank the criteria we used. Overall, respondents indicated that environmental impacts (including greenhouse gas emissions) were of the greatest importance to them.

Those who expressed concerns about the solution explain their lack of understanding of the technology and a desire for more information about alternative options.



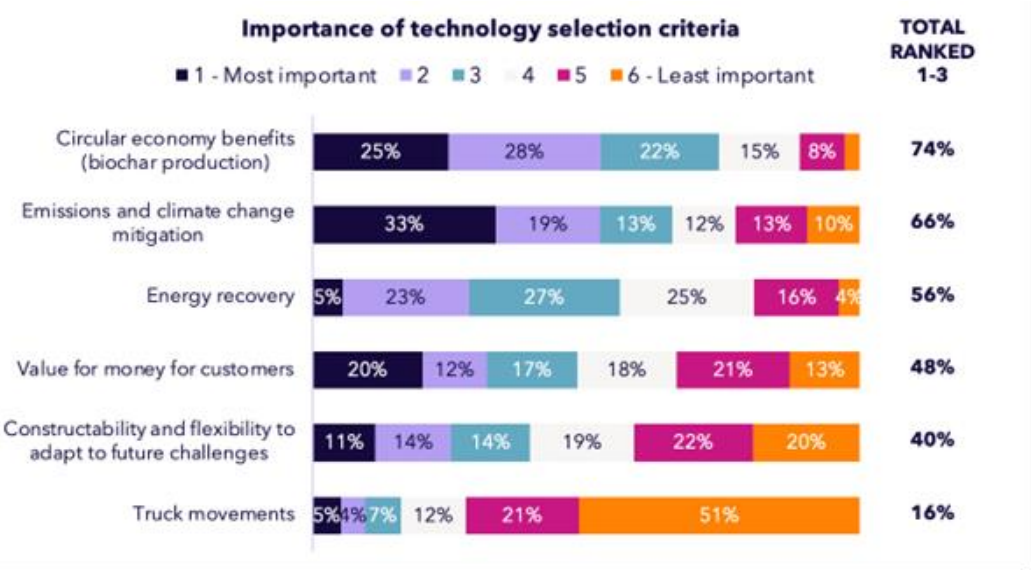
Please note the charting has rounded raw numbers.

Biosolids treatment

91% of respondents either somewhat or strongly support Icon Water selected technology solution – gasification.

Respondents acknowledge the need for improvements to the current system, express trust in the experts who have evaluated the technology and appreciate the potential environmental benefits of the selected solution.

In considering technical assessment criteria for suitable treatment solutions, respondents were asked to rank the criteria we used.



Please note the charting has rounded raw numbers.

The key concerns expressed by some participants about the solution included the need for more information about alternative options, and the potential cost implications to customers.