

Somers Water Recycling Plant Mark 2.5 PYROCO trial



We're involved in a new wastewater management project called PYROCO that converts leftover biosolids headed for landfill into low-contaminant biochar.

We're trialling this technology at our Somers Water Recycling Plant.

About the PYROCO technology

PYROCO is a special heating technology that turns wastewater solids (called biosolids) into a useful product called biochar. It works by heating the material to very high temperatures without oxygen.

The technology breaks down contaminants which are hard to remove using normal treatment. It then creates biochar which is nutrient-rich and useful for farming, construction and advanced carbon materials.

Next stage of trials

Since 2017, we've been working with RMIT University on trialling the technology. We're now ready for its next phase (Mark 2.5) in building and testing it on a larger pilot scale at our Somers Water Recycling Plant.

The trial will operate within Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) requirements for noise and odour.

We've included some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) in the following pages to help you understand the next steps of the project.

Need to get in touch?

You can reach our project team via email engagement@sew.com.au or call 1800 403 777.

Key facts



This new innovative technology uses a process called pyrolysis, whereby high temperatures destroy contaminants in biosolids.



Sustainability is a priority and we're trialling this new technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the treatment process.



Find out more

Scan the QR code or visit southeastwater.com.au/projects to find out more info about this project.



Frequently Asked Questions



What will the trial consist of?



The trial will involve the build and operation of a pilot scale PYROCO Mk2.5 facility, designed to convert biosolids into biochar.



What are the benefits of this trial?



The trial will assess the efficiency of the process at a pilot scale. If successful, it could provide a long-term solution to a global waste challenge while producing biochar, a useful product with potential applications across multiple industries.



Where are the key milestones of the project?



We're currently in the early planning phase of the project, working through design, approvals, which will include a submission to the EPA and construction requirements.

Once we obtain approvals, we anticipate construction of the plant will be late 2026 with operation to start in 2027. We'll keep the community informed once we confirm more details and finalise plans.



How will the trial impact the community?



Visual amenity - neighbouring residents may notice new above ground infrastructure as a result of the trial. All structures will remain within EPA guidelines.

Noise - We'll design the trial to not exceed EPA noise level limits. Noise assessments indicate these will remain compliant from this trial.

Odour - Modelling shows that the pilot facility is not expected to significantly change the overall odour levels at the Somers WRP. Odour will remain within EPA guidelines.

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Why was this location selected?



A detailed assessment of suitable South East Water sites was undertaken. Somers plant scored the highest overall, particularly in areas such as available space, minimal operational impacts, and the ability to minimise impacts on the surrounding community.



Where will the trial be located at the Somers WRP?



The location of the site is shown below on the map.



Will the environment be affected by this upgrade?



We'll create and implement a comprehensive Environmental Management Plan (EMP) before construction starts. Regular environmental monitoring and auditing will make sure the EMP is being adhered to.



Are there any impacts to the local community during construction?



During construction, we anticipate you may notice:

- Construction crews in the area
- Increased truck movements on certain roads
- Periods of noise when heavy machinery is being used, including reversing beepers.

South East Water and the appointed construction partner will work with the community to minimise construction and environmental impacts. We don't anticipate any direct impacts to residents however should any arise, we will contact those people directly prior to construction commencing.

How to get in touch


Report a leak or check interruptions
mysupport.southeastwater.com.au/LIVE

Faults and emergencies 13 28 12 (24hrs)

Account enquiries 13 18 51
(8am – 6pm, Mon – Fri)

TTY users 13 36 77 (ask for 13 18 51)

Interpreter service

 Languages other than English
03 9280 0779

Jika Anda membutuhkan seorang juru bahasa, telepon 03 9280 0779

Εάν χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα, επικοινωνήστε με το 03 9280 0779

Follow us on socials for updates



Project contact

1800 403 777
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southeastwater.com.au

*Map is not to scale

Somers Water Recycling Plant

SOUTH BEACH ROAD

Location of Mk 2.5 trial

