Terms of Reference

South East Water Customer Engagement Council

Purpose
The purpose of the South East Water customer engagement council (the council) is to act as an independent body that will advise and challenge South East Water’s 2016-17 customer engagement program. This will help ensure customer’s need and expectations are reflected within South East Water’s strategic business decision making including guiding the development of the 2017 pricing submission.

Definitions
For the purposes of engagement South East Water defines a customer as someone who purchases or directly uses our services. The community is defined as the broader population that is impacted by our business decisions.

Council objective
To ensure the effective and transparent implementation of South East Water’s customer engagement program the council will:

1. Challenge the robustness of customer engagement planning. This requires the council to consider the following:
   - The approach to customer engagement will capture the diversity of customers (and communities);
   - Information provided to customers is appropriate for effective engagement;
   - The customer engagement plan is consistent with our proposed level of engagement (IAP2);
   - Customer engagement reflects best practice in the utility sector; and
   - Customer engagement will meet expectations of the economic regulator.

2. Assess if customer research has been accurately interpreted. In particular the council will ensure:
   - South East Water’s interpretation of customer research meaningfully reflects their insights as well as capturing the range of perspectives that may be applicable to different issues.

3. Ensure business decisions are transparent in reflecting customer insights. The council will:
   - Ensure South East Water is accurately portraying the extent to which customer insights have impacted business decisions, particularly in relation to the pricing submission; and
   - When required for specific matters provide input regarding the appropriateness of business decisions relevant to customer engagement.
4. Challenge the robustness of the implementation of engagement and communication. The council will:
   - Provide input into the development of South East Water’s communication plan providing feedback to customer’s (and the community) and stakeholders regarding the impact of the engagement on business outcomes; and
   - Where relevant, the council will provide input into the development of South East Water’s engagement plan where this is needed to support implementation of business decisions.

**Decision making**
In regards to decision making the council will be presented (for endorsement) summary reports addressing objectives two and three as stated above. The council will provide feedback on summary reports addressing objectives one and four.

Decision making at council meetings will strive first for consensus and then default to simple majority votes. Where an individual council member wishes to record their opposition to a majority decision, this will be recorded and communicated to South East Water.

**Term**
The council will be expected to operate under these Terms of Reference effective from 6 December 2016 until October 2017. In the lead up to formal commencement these Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the council.

**Membership**
The council will have an independent chair (David Heeps) and individuals have been invited from the following organisations:
- Consumer Utility Advocacy Centre
- Consumer Action Law Centre
- Australian Industry Group
- Behaviour Works (Monash University)
- Urban Development Institute of Australia – Vic
- Victorian Multicultural Commission
- South East Water’s General Manager Customer

It is expected that the council will be supplemented with additional experts or advisors relevant to specific discussion areas, as agreed with the council.

South East Water will have attendees to provide information to the council, as well as observers, with limited representatives.
Governance

- All meetings will be chaired by David Heeps who will be responsible for the general operations of the council;
- South East Water will provide secretariat services to the council;
- The agenda and papers for each council meeting will be emailed to members, not less than three working days before each meeting;
- Minutes of each meeting will be taken and a draft distributed no later than one week after each meeting;
- Meetings will be held bimonthly or on a ‘needs to be basis’; and
- If required subgroup meetings will be arranged outside of these times at a time convenient to subgroup members.

Council members are expected to:

- Actively participate in council discussions and offer their opinions and views;
- Treat all persons with respect and have due regard to the opinions, rights and responsibilities of others;
- Act with integrity;
- Attend each meeting where practical; and
- Declare conflicts of interest.

Release of information

South East Water intends to describe the council, the membership of the council and the terms of reference on its website and in the release of information regarding the customer engagement program, such as in the price submission. Prior to releasing references to the council or council input, South East Water will seek the approval of the council for these references.

Council members will not release or publically discuss information that is presented to the council or the deliberations of the council, without the permission of South East Water or unless this information is in the public domain. South East Water anticipates releasing significant information from the council process to the public domain as a contribution to the body of knowledge regarding leading edge customer engagement and will acknowledge the role of the council.

Remuneration

Remuneration will be paid to council members. The proposed remuneration will be $500 per meeting.

Amendment, modification or variation

This Terms of Reference may be amended, varied, modified or terminated in writing after consultation and agreement by council members.