

South East Water Customer and Community Advisory Council

Terms of Reference

Prelude

South East Water had a Customer Engagement Council as an independent voice to advise and challenge South East Water during the preparation of its 2017 price submission. Building on the success of that Council, South East Water is establishing an on-going Customer and Community Advisory Council with a wider remit.

South East Water wants the Customer and Community Advisory Council to be community-facing and have:

- a clear purpose;
- independence;
- transparent operations;
- good governance; and
- diversity of views and membership.

1. Purpose

The Customer and Community Advisory Council is to constructively challenge South East Water in all areas of its operations and planning. It should be customer-centric in its thinking and plan its own agenda to enhance how South East Water services its customers, community, partners and stakeholders, both now and into the future.

2. Areas of focus

The agenda of the Customer and Community Advisory Council is to be self-determined, however it should consider:

- how South East Water is engaging with its customers, communities, partners and stakeholders;
- delivery of promised customer outcomes;
- South East Water's strategic plans and its implementation of government policies;
- community education (to shape attitudes and behaviour) and customer experience;
- water affordability and customer assistance;
- indigenous, recreational and environmental values;
- existential challenges such as population growth and climate change; and
- South East Water's research to understand the above issues, track customer satisfaction and the resultant changes.

3. Membership of the Customer and Community Advisory Council

Council members will be selected based on their skills and experience, with an expectation that some members can also *broadly* represent the interests of South East Water customers, communities, partners and stakeholders. (South East Water has other specific ways of engaging with these groups and quantifying the views expressed.)

The Customer and Community Advisory Council as a minimum will include a representative from the Aboriginal community and a member of the South East Water Board. There will be an equal gender representation.

4. Appointment of members

South East Water will invite and select the initial members of the Customer and Community Advisory Council. New members will be endorsed by the Service Solutions committee.

In consultation with the Customer and Community Advisory Council, South East Water will invite applications for replacement members or to expand membership.

South East Water will select an independent chair. The chair will be a member of the Council (other than a South East Water representative) selected by South East Water.

Appointments to the Council will be for 2 years with a possible 2-year extension.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The South East Water Customer and Community Advisory Council will:

- provide guidance, counsel and leadership advice in line with the purpose and areas of focus listed in these terms of reference;
- contribute to the development of initiatives to assist South East Water's delivery of enhanced water availability and more liveable communities;
- raise current and emerging issues affecting water supply, sewerage, recycling and demand in South East Water's region; and
- participate in the review of South East Water's strategies, operational plans and pricing submissions.

The Customer and Community Advisory Council may proactively request information from South East Water to help inform its advisory role.

Participation in South East Water's Customer and Community Advisory Council does not prevent members from publicly advocating personal views on water issues.

Customer and Community Advisory Council members are expected to bring to the attention of the Council Chair any conflicts of interest which may arise during the deliberations of the Council.

The Chair's role will be to ensure members:

- actively participate in discussions and offer their opinions and views;

- treat others with respect;
- act with integrity;
- attend each meeting where practical;
- adhere to confidentiality requirements when South East Water advises they are presenting members with confidential information; and
- put the operation of our Council ahead of personal interests.

6. *Actions arising from the Customer and Community Advisory Council*

Actions will be recorded in the minutes of Customer and Community Advisory Council meetings, with follow up responses or subsequent actions by South East Water reported back to the Council.

Where advice provided by the Customer and Community Advisory Council is not adopted by South East Water, South East Water will provide an explanation to the Council.

The agenda, key discussion points and actions arising from the Customer and Community Advisory Council will be disclosed on the South East Water website, once approved by the Customer and Community Advisory Council.

7. *Operation of the Customer and Community Advisory Council*

The Council will meet quarterly. If circumstances arise in which timelines are tight, the Council may consider a matter out-of-session via email, for formal endorsement at the next quarterly meeting.

South East Water will provide secretariat services to the Council, including preparation of agendas (in consultation with the Council), and recording and disclosing actions from Customer and Community Advisory Council meetings.

An honorarium of \$500 per meeting will be paid to council members and an honorarium of \$750 per meeting paid to the chair.

8. *Review of council*

South East Water will complete a 360 degree review of the council after 12 months of operation.

9. *Review of the terms of reference*

The Terms of Reference are draft until reviewed and endorsed at the first meeting of the Customer and Community Advisory Council, and endorsed by the Service Solutions committee.

The Terms of Reference can be updated annually by the Customer and Community Advisory Council for re-endorsement by the Service Solutions committee.