

# Customer and Community Advisory Council

## Terms of Reference

31/03/2023



# 1. Purpose

The Customer and Community Advisory Council constructively challenges South East Water's consideration of and engagement with stakeholders, customers and community in all areas of its operations and planning. It is customer-centric in its thinking and plans its own agenda to enhance how South East Water services partners and engages with the Traditional Owners whose Country it operates within, 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 self-determined, however it should consider:

1. how well South East Water is engaging with its customers, communities, partners and stakeholders
2. how South East Water is partnering with the Traditional Owners and is including their cultural values within strategies, projects and operational activities
3. delivery of promised customer outcomes
4. South East Water's strategic plans and its implementation of government policies
5. community education (to shape attitudes and behaviour) and customer experience
6. water affordability and customer assistance
7. recreational and environmental values
8. existential challenges such as population growth and climate change
9. 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 are 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 includes a representative from the Aboriginal community and a member of the South East Water Board. There is an equal gender representation and a diversity of views in its membership.

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1 Customer and Community Advisory Council role**

The South East Water Customer and Community Advisory Council:

1. provides guidance, counsel and leadership advice in line with the purpose and areas of focus listed in these terms of reference
1. contributes to the development of initiatives to assist South East Water's delivery of enhanced water availability and more liveable communities
2. raises current and emerging issues affecting water supply, sewerage, recycling and demand in South East Water's region
3. participates 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 their participation on the Council and in deliberations of the Council.

### **4.2 Chair's role**

The Chair's role is to ensure members:

1. actively participate in discussions and offer their opinions and views
2. treat others with respect
3. act with integrity
4. attend each meeting where practical
5. adhere to confidentiality requirements when South East Water advises they are presenting members with confidential information
6. put the operation of our Council ahead of personal interests (but subject to known declared professional conflicts that are notified to the Council).

## **5. Appointment and cessation of members**

### **5.1 Appointment of members**

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

Appointments to the Council are made by South East Water in its discretion and are for four years with a maximum of two terms.

### **5.2 Appointment of independent Chair**

The independent chair is a member of the Council (other than a South East Water representative) selected by South East Water.

### **5.3 Cessation of membership**

A member:

1. may resign by prior written notice to the Chair;
2. is deemed to have resigned where (in each case as determined by South East Water acting reasonably):
  - a. they become insolvent, bankrupt or otherwise unable to pay their debts as and when due and payable; or
  - b. the organisation which they represent enters any form of administration, liquidation or winding up or is otherwise unable to pay its debts as and when due and payable; or
  - c. the member fails to attend:
    - i. 3 consecutive meetings without an apology; or
    - ii. the member dies; or
    - iii. the member:
      - A. is found guilty of a serious criminal offence or breach of a relevant professional standard; or
      - B. engages in any conduct (whether during participation in the Council or in another capacity) that will or may:
        - I. disrupt the operation of the Council or its meetings;
        - II. embarrass South East Water, the Council or any employee or member of either; or
        - III. bring any of the aforementioned into ridicule or disrepute.

## **6. Performance of the Council**

The performance of the Council is reviewed annually ensuring the Council is representative of South East Water's broad customer base and has the skills and expertise to constructively challenge South East Water's strategic planning and operational performance.

## **7. Actions arising from the Customer and Community Advisory Council**

Actions are recorded in the minutes of the 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 are disclosed on the South East Water website, once approved by the Customer and Community Advisory Council.

## **8. Operation of the Customer and Community Advisory Council**

The Council meets 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 provides 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 is paid to council members and an honorarium of \$750 per meeting paid to the chair.

## **9. Review of council**

South East Water will consider a review of the effectiveness of the council annually taking into account the effectiveness of Customer and Community Advisory Council for South East Water as a business.

## **10. Review of the terms of reference**

The Terms of Reference can be updated annually by the Customer and Community Advisory Council but must be endorsed by the Customer Service Solutions Committee in order to be effective.