

Customer and Community Reference Group Charter

1. Overview

This Charter outlines the role, objectives and responsibilities of the **Customer and Community Reference Group** ('the CCRG'), an independent group of customer and community advocates established by Sydney Water.

Sydney Water aspires to put customers at the centre of our decision-making, planning and regulatory processes. We achieve this through an inclusive and transparent approach, which includes both direct engagement with our customer base and engagement with 'customer and community advocates' who represent the interests of our customers. The Sydney Water Act and Sydney Water's Operating Licence 2019-23 also require Sydney Water to consult with a 'customer council'.

In establishing the CCRG, which replaces the previous Community Advisory Council, Sydney Water aims to better meet our goal to be customer-centric, continue to meet our legislative and regulatory requirements; and address the increasing expectations of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to involve customers in the regulatory and broader planning processes.

Sydney Water has incorporated the CCRG as a key component of our customer engagement, planning and performance review activities. The purpose of the CCRG is to represent the views and opinions of customers and the wider community so that they can effectively influence business strategy and performance.

Sydney Water's integrated planning methodology, driven by customer and stakeholder insights is outlined below:

Customer engagement accompanies each step along the way in direction setting and business planning



2. Purpose

The CCRG works with Sydney Water at a strategic level to achieve the highest possible levels of customer focus within our practices. It supports Sydney Water to ensure that our business decisions, as set out in our strategy, enterprise plan and regulatory submissions, are in the best interests of all Sydney Water customers and the community and are shaped by them.

3. Functions of the CCRG

The CCRG will act as the main channel for engaging customer advocates within Sydney Water's broader customer engagement program, in addition to the direct engagement activities with customers and other stakeholders; and other customer insights activities.

The functions of the CCRG are to work collectively with Sydney Water to:

- provide direct feedback on existing customer service delivery and emerging customer issues and make recommendations
- contribute to and help shape Sydney Water's customer engagement plan (and co-develop materials for the customer engagement processes) to ensure that customers are being engaged and their preferences are reflected appropriately and to observe meetings.
- assist Sydney Water to identify and engage hard-to-reach customer groups
- ensure Sydney Water provides a range of genuine, understandable and realistic options to customers on business plan proposals
- provide strategic input into Sydney Water's strategy, enterprise plan and regulatory submissions; and engage with the Sydney Water Executive on these issues
- provide an assessment of the quality and the extent of customer engagement, and the degree to which this has been reflected in Sydney Water's strategic plans and regulatory submissions.

The CCRG will demonstrate its effectiveness through investigation of recommendations regarding Sydney Water's strategic plans and regulatory submission, evidenced through maintenance of meeting minutes and action register, detailing specific challenges made and issues raised, and the response/action taken by Sydney Water. The minutes and action register will be publicly available.

4. CCRG membership / composition

The CCRG will be made up of an independent Chair and up to 12 independent members who bring a breadth of skills and professional experience from different backgrounds, including consumer affairs, the water industry, infrastructure industry, environment, public policy and business.

The CCRG members will be generally representative of Sydney Water's customer base, to the most feasible extent possible. CCRG members can represent an agency or group or be individuals with expertise in the areas stated above.

It is important that members who represent a specific customer or community group can also credibly consider the perspectives of all customers, as well as engage in detailed and analytical discussion with our business.

The CCRG may invite non-members with specific expertise or who represent special interest groups to participate in meetings or workshops as needed.

Organisations or individuals representing special interests or customer groups that are not represented directly on the CCRG can engage with Sydney Water through a range of other channels including the direct customer engagement program, online surveys or by providing feedback on published plans, proposals and research findings via our corporate newsletter 'Sydney Water Talk'.

5. Chair role

The Chair will be independent. That is, the Chair will not be a current employee of Sydney Water and not be an active member of a political party or activist group. The Chair will not have any commitments or affiliations that may conflict with the interests of Sydney Water.

Specific duties of the Chair include to:

- plan and run CCRG meetings in accordance with the Charter
- ensure CCRG matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner
- impartially and objectively manage meetings and decision-making
- ensure governance protocols are adhered to
- support a collegiate approach enabling open and constructive participation
- plan for recruitment and renewal of the CCRG
- establish temporary sub-committees at their discretion, to analyse specific matters and issues in depth and report back to the CCRG
- liaise effectively with the General Manager, Customer and Stakeholder Engagement, as appropriate to develop agendas for upcoming meetings and keep an overview of Sydney Water's customer engagement, objectives and challenges
- summarise recommendations made from the CCRG that contribute to (and in some cases challenge) Sydney Water's direction and strategy
- act as a conduit between the members of the CCRG and Sydney Water to ensure effective communication
- sign and abide by a Conflict-of-Interest declaration
- sign a confidentiality agreement and maintain the confidentiality of material provided.
- respect the position they hold with regard to access to information from Sydney Water, and not use their position as a CCRG member in any way for personal, organisational or political gain.

In the absence of the Chair, the members will elect one of the CCRG members to act as Chair for the meeting.

6. Member role

Specific duties of the CCRG members are to:

- attend scheduled meetings, including sub-committee meetings as required, and actively participate in discussions. If a member is unable to attend, a representative should be sought to attend in their place if possible.
- review and discuss material circulated out-of-session
- read and prepare comments on any papers provided in advance of CCRG meetings to inform discussions
- accurately reflect the views of the customers and groups they represent and provide feedback from CCRG meetings to their respective representative groups
- consider the impacts of Sydney Water decisions with respect to the entire customer base
- participate in strategic planning workshops with Sydney Water employees as required
- suggest agenda items in advance of meetings by email to CustomerReferenceGroup@sydneywater.com.au
- sign and abide by a Conflict-of-Interest declaration and Code of Conduct
- sign a confidentiality agreement and maintain the confidentiality of material provided
- respect the position they hold with regard to access to information from Sydney Water, and not use their position as a CCRG member in any way for personal, organisational or political gain.

7. Public Comments by Chair and Members

Sydney Water acknowledges the CCRG Chair and members' right to make public comment on their own behalf, other than on confidential material or matters.

The Chair and Members should not purport to represent the views of other members of the CCRG or Sydney Water outside meetings. Any public comment made on behalf of the CCRG must be pre-approved by the Chair and Sydney Water must be consulted prior to the release of any statements, publications or reports.

8. Sydney Water responsibilities

Sydney Water agrees to:

- ensure the CCRG's advice and recommendations are considered by relevant Sydney Water employees
- provide members with feedback on how their advice and recommendations have been considered
- provide the agenda, papers and any other relevant documentation in advance of each CCRG meeting
- publish the ratified meeting minutes from previous CCRG meetings on Sydney Water's website
- actively monitor communication channels and respond to questions or comments from CCRG members out-of-session
- provide appropriate support for effective administration of the CCRG
- recognise CCRG members' advice on how the operation of the CCRG could be improved
- provide appropriate induction for new members.

9. CCRG Governance process

- The Chair manages the CCRG agenda and meetings with input from members. The Chair will be supported by relevant Sydney Water employees.
- The General Manager, Customer and Stakeholder Engagement will be the Convenor of the CCRG.
- Administrative support will be provided by Sydney Water employees.
- CCRG core meetings will be held at a minimum quarterly but may be more frequent during periods of intensive customer engagement.
- Sydney Water will provide members with a copy of the agenda and papers at least 7 days prior to the meetings.
- All CCRG members have the right to raise agenda items and should do so well in advance of the relevant meeting.
- A quorum is achieved if the Chair is present, plus at least 4 other members.
- Ratified meeting minutes are published on the Sydney Water website.
- The CCRG is expected to operate in an open and transparent manner; however, there will be some limitations to transparency owing to commercial confidentiality and all members are required to sign a confidentiality agreement.
- CCRG members can contact Sydney Water via email at CustomerReferenceGroup@sydneywater.com.au.

10. Authority

The CCRG's role is that of an advisory body. It does not have a formal decision-making role or management accountability.

11. Charter review

This Charter is to be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains relevant and consistent with Sydney Water's objectives and responsibilities. Any modifications to, or replacement of, this Charter must be approved by the Sydney Water Managing Director.

Appendix 1

1. Time Commitment of the Chair

The time commitment for the Chair will be approximately 20 - 30 days per annum.

It is anticipated that there will be 6 meetings of the CCRG per annum, typically 4 hours long. In addition, the Chair will attend any sub-committee meetings or other ad-hoc meetings and workshops as required.

2. Time Commitment of Members

The time commitment for CCRG members will be approximately 10 days per year allowing for attending meetings and workshops. It is anticipated that there will be 6 meetings of the CCRG per annum, typically 4 hours long. An additional 5-10 days will be required if members opt to be part of temporary sub-committees.

3. CCRG member recruitment

Initial CCRG members will be recruited by way of an Expression of Interest process.

Submissions will be assessed by relevant Sydney Water General Managers, Heads of Business and the CCRG Chair.

Sydney Water will confirm the appointment of new members in writing.

4. Term

The term of the Chair would be for an initial 3 years with option to review for a further 2 years.

The initial term of members will be 3 years with option to review for a further 2 years.

5. Membership vacancies

If a member's position on the CCRG becomes vacant at any time, Sydney Water may request a replacement from the member organisation or select a new member organisation. Where appropriate, membership vacancies may be advertised on Sydney Water's website, or approaches may be made directly to individuals or relevant community organisations.

Sydney Water reserves the right to alter representation of the CCRG at any time and will notify member bodies in writing should this occur. Either Sydney Water or the member agency may terminate a member's tenure on the CCRG. Termination of a member could result from:

- missing two or more consecutive meetings without an apology
- misconduct, such as inappropriate behaviour in meetings, or abuse of their position on the CCRG for personal or political gain
- disclosing confidential information
- violating the intent and spirit of this Charter in any way
- not adequately representing the views of the member agency and/or the wider community
- acting in a way that is contrary to the values of the CCRG or Sydney Water
- a member becoming an employee of Sydney Water or a direct provider of goods or services to Sydney Water.
- the member no longer being able to meet the time commitments required for the effective running of the CCRG.

Membership of the CCRG may be terminated at the discretion of the Chair or Sydney Water's Managing Director. Notification of the termination of a member will be made in writing to the member body as well as directly to the member.

6. Funding and resourcing

The CCRG is resourced by Sydney Water, including administrative support, meeting venues, and out-of-session communications. Sydney Water will also provide any other reasonable support to ensure the efficient and effective use of Committee members' expertise, including attendance at the CCRG.

The Chair will be remunerated for fulfilling the role as independent Chair (meeting attendance, meeting preparation, report writing).

Members will be paid Sitting Fees for each meeting attended.

Chair and Members may be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses agreed to by Sydney Water.