

Community Advisory Committee Charter

This document outlines the role, objectives and responsibilities of the Community Advisory Committee ('the Committee') and Sydney Water. The Committee has been established to replace the previous Customer Council.

1. Introduction and context

Under Section 5.15 of the *Sydney Water Act 1994* ("the Act"), Sydney Water has the following requirements:

- (1) An operating licence must also include terms or conditions that require the Corporation to establish and regularly consult with one or more Customer Councils, each consisting of persons appointed from time to time by the Corporation.
- (2) The Corporation is to consult with the Customer Councils from time to time, as the Corporation thinks fit, in relation to the provision of the systems and services referred to in this Part.

To date, Sydney Water has had an established Customer Council that has met the requirements of the Act and previous versions of our Operating Licence. Sydney Water's new *Operating Licence 2019-23* mandates a review of the established Customer Council be completed by 30 June 2020. The *Operating Licence 2019-23* also requires Sydney Water to conduct direct customer engagement with our customers that is relevant, representative, proportionate, objective, clearly communicated, and accurate.

In response to each of these requirements, a review of the Customer Council was conducted in 2019. Following this review, it is proposed that the Community Advisory Committee ('the Committee') is established to replace the Customer Council.

The Committee will act as the main indirect engagement channel within Sydney Water's broader customer engagement portfolio, in addition to the direct engagement activities with customers and other end users and other customer insights activities. This program aims to bring the voice of our customers into our corporate, business, and strategic planning processes so that decisions and outcomes are shaped by our customers' priorities and preferences.

2. Objectives

The Committee has the following objectives:

- to provide a forum for representatives of key customer and community groups to examine and provide input on Sydney Water's customer engagement and decision-making, including raising and contributing to topics for discussion during customer engagement

- to promote just, equitable and effective delivery of Sydney Water's services for customers
- to assist Sydney Water's engagement with communities and groups that are harder to reach directly, and ensure their interests are recognised
- to build trust between Sydney Water and its customers by fostering an open and honest approach to discussion of Sydney Water's services
- to provide a forum for facilitating two-way communication between Committee members and Sydney Water
- to provide an ongoing conduit for Committee members to raise matters and/or provide feedback on behalf of their constituents and receive appropriate recognition from Sydney Water.

3. Role of the Community Advisory Committee

The Committee plays a pivotal role in helping Sydney Water to make customer advocated decisions. The focus of the Committee is to:

- contribute to key strategic and regulatory decisions, documents and processes, where relevant
- contribute to and help shape Sydney Water's direct customer engagement roadmap to ensure that customers are being engaged and their preferences are reflected appropriately
- help ensure Sydney Water's direct customer engagement capability is effective and representative, and able to influence Sydney Water's decisions
- ensure that Committee members' constituents' needs are represented in Sydney Water's direct engagement program.

4. Committee member responsibilities

Committee members will:

- attend meetings quarterly 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 Committee meetings to inform discussions
- reflect the views of the customers and groups they represent
- give feedback from Committee meetings to their member agency and the wider community where appropriate
- respect the views of other Committee members
- respect the confidentiality of all material provided
- suggest agenda items in advance of meetings by email to customercouncil@sydneywater.com.au in order to refer issues or matters of interest
- abide by this Charter

- respect the position they hold with regard to access to information from Sydney Water, and not use their position as a Committee member in any way for personal, organisational, or political gain.

Sydney Water acknowledges Committee members' right to make public comment, other than on confidential material or matters. Members must advise the Chair or their representative or any impending media items relating to the Committee or Sydney Water.

5. Sydney Water responsibilities

Sydney Water agrees to:

- ensure the Committee's advice and recommendations are provided to relevant Sydney Water staff for consideration
- 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 Committee meeting
- publish the ratified meeting minutes from previous Committee meetings on Sydney Water's website
- actively monitor communication channels and respond to questions or comments from Committee members out-of-session
- provide a Chair and appropriate support for effective administration of the Committee
- recognise Committee members' advice on how the operation of the Committee could be improved
- work within the framework of this Charter
- provide appropriate induction for new members, including providing written background material on the Committee
- actively develop ongoing mechanisms to engage with customers and Committee members.

6. Membership criteria

The Community Advisory Committee will initially be formed from the member bodies of Sydney Water's previous Customer Council. Member bodies must satisfy the following criteria:

- be a formally constituted entity
- operate within Sydney Water's area of operations
- be non-party political in nature
- be non-profit making.

The member body is responsible for nominating a representative to the Committee who satisfies the following criteria:

- be able to comment on their constituents' needs and preferences in relation to issues associated with Sydney Water
- an interest in ensuring the best outcome for Sydney Water's customers
- an ability to report their views and those of their organisation to Sydney Water
- an ability to give feedback from Committee meetings to their member agency and the wider community, where appropriate
- a commitment to work within the bounds of this Charter.

Appointment of members to the Committee is at the discretion of the Chair or their nominee. Sydney Water will confirm the appointment of new member bodies in writing.

Sydney Water, at its discretion, may also invite a customer engagement expert to advise Committee members on best practices in customer engagement and provide independent quality assurance for Sydney Water's engagement methodology.

7. Membership vacancies

If a member's position on the Committee 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 relevant community organisations.

Sydney Water reserves the right to alter representation on the Council 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 Committee. Termination of a member could result from:

- missing three or more consecutive meetings without an apology
- misconduct, such as inappropriate behaviour in meetings, or abuse of their position on the Committee for personal 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 Committee or Sydney Water
- a member becoming an employee of Sydney Water or a direct provider of goods or services to Sydney Water.

Membership of the Committee may be terminated at the discretion of the Chair or the Managing Director. Notification of the termination of a member will be made in writing to the member body as well as direct to the member.

8. Meeting administration

Committee meetings are held quarterly, usually in February, May, August and November. Meetings are typically 4 hours in duration, commencing at 9.00am at Sydney Water's Head Office.

Sydney Water's General Manager, Customer, Strategy and Engagement or a nominated representative will Chair each Committee meeting. The Chair will be supported by relevant Sydney Water staff members. Committee members can contact Sydney Water via email at customercouncil@sydneywater.com.au.

Sydney Water will provide members with a copy of the agenda and papers for each meeting at least three days prior to the meeting. All Committee members have the right to raise agenda items and should do so well in advance of the relevant meeting. Draft minutes will be recorded and issues to members prior to the following meeting.

Time will be allocated during each meeting for an update on actions from the previous meeting and for members' question time. Sydney Water will follow up on any questions that cannot be answered immediately answered as soon as practical.

9. Funding and resourcing

The Committee is resourced by Sydney Water, including executive support, meeting venue, 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.

Members will be paid sitting fees for each meeting, and may be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses agreed to by Sydney Water.

10. Authority

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