

Water Price and Service Review

2023-28

Community Panel Charter

1. BACKGROUND

As part of the cycle for determining its pricing path for the next five years GWMWater will build on its normal customer and stakeholder framework with an intensive engagement program that will help influence and shape the future of the organisation and the services that we deliver to our customers.

Every five years GWMWater is required by the Essential Services Commission (ESC) to review and develop a plan that outlines its proposed customer service standards, future capital works program and expenditure; and pricing solutions to fund those services and assets.

This plan and submission process is titled the 2023-2028 Pricing Review and is due to be submitted to the ESC by mid-2022.

Customer and community consultation and input will be critical to the planning process and in determining the actual content and impact of the review.

As part of its most recent Pricing Review which was submitted to the ESC in 2017, GWMWater utilised a Community Panel (also known as Deliberative Panel) to complement its existing engagement framework. Once again GWMWater is seeking to appoint a Community Panel to provide opinion, advice and recommendations on its pricing proposals and matters of significance for its 2023-2028 Pricing Submission.

Like all water businesses, GWMWater is required to demonstrate it has engaged appropriately with customers and the community on matters relating to price and service. In developing its submission for the 2023-2028 Pricing Review in accordance with the ESC “Performance, Risk, Engagement, Management, Outcomes” (PREMO) model.

2. PURPOSE

The Community Panel will act as an independent panel representing GWMWater’s broader customers and will report to the Board of GWMWater. The Panel’s purpose is to help inform GWMWater of community preferences and concerns regarding service provision and a future pricing model and, as such, will make recommendations to the Board within the scope of this Charter.

The Panel will fulfil an important role and have a significant voice in driving the Pricing Review consultation and engagement program.



3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Community Panel will:

- act as a direct link between GWMWater customers and the Board,
- receive advice and information from GWMWater in either written reports or presentations to inform them of the elements of GWMWater's Pricing Proposal 2023-2028 so that they can challenge, question or support the elements from the perspective of the broad customer segment which they represent, and
- provide advice and recommendations to the Board of GWMWater to assist it in its deliberations when finalising GWMWater's Price Submission 2023-2028 to the ESC.

Recommendations from the Panel to the Board of GWMWater, whilst not binding, will be considered by the Board and when not accepted either in part or in full, an explanation and justification for the Board's position will be provided to the Community Panel for further consideration prior to finalisation and lodgement of the Price Submission to the ESC.

Any recommendations from the Community Panel not adopted by the Board will be noted in the final Price Submission and likewise any propositions made by GWMWater and not supported by the Community Panel will also be noted in the final price submission.

The activities and effectiveness of the Community Panel will be assessed regularly by the Board at each of its monthly meetings to ensure that it continues to fulfil the requirements and expectations of this Charter and represent the views of a 'typical customer' when deliberating on pricing proposals put to it by GWMWater.

Administrative support will be provided by GWMWater as required.

If and as required, the Community Panel may request additional information or clarification from GWMWater to assist it in its deliberations. The Community Panel can also, if it feels the need, seek clarification or interpretation from the ESC by requesting that GWMWater seek such clarification or interpretation on behalf of the Community Panel.

The Community Panel will complement the existing engagement and consultative processes which have been developed and implemented over the past several years for the purpose of reflecting Customer needs and expectations in GWMWater's 2023-2028 Price Submission.

These processes include:

- biannual customer and stakeholder workshops,
- customer surveys,
- issue specific focus groups,
- interactive feedback opportunities on the GWMWater website, and
- customer feedback forms.

The Community Panel will have the opportunity to examine and test the observations and directions that GWMWater has taken from these engagement and consultative processes to ensure that they reflect customers' needs and expectations.

4. COMPOSITION

The Community Panel will be chaired by an independent person nominated and appointed by the Board for a 12-month period.

The independent chairperson will have no current association with GWMWater other than they may be a customer and they will not have been a Director or an employee of GWMWater for at least the past three years.

The Community Panel will be comprised of up to fifteen people who represent the broad demographic segments of GWMWater's customer base and will be selected following an Expression of Interest process.

Selection of individuals to make up the Community Panel will be made by the Chairperson in consultation with the Chairperson of GWMWater, with the aim of representing the following customer segments, but not limited to:

- urban residential property owners from towns where a fully treated water supply is available and a sewerage system operates,
- urban residential property owners from towns where only a regulated water supply is available,
- urban residential tenants from towns where a fully treated water supply is available and a sewerage system operates,
- urban residential tenants from towns where only a regulated water supply is available,
- urban non-residential customers from towns where a fully treated water supply is available and a sewerage system operates,
- urban non-residential customers where a regulated water supply only is available,
- indigenous community representative,
- broad acre farmers who are customers of GWMWater,
- intensive agricultural operators who are customers of GWMWater,
- mining or extraction customers,
- manufacturing customers,
- sporting clubs which receive a supply of water from GWMWater,
- recreational water operators (Lake Committees of Management) who receive a water supply from GWMWater,
- welfare or support sector agencies to represent the views of customers who may experience financial hardship, and
- environment.

5. MEETINGS

The Community Panel will meet as required in the period leading up to the submission and final acceptance of GMMWater's Price Submission.

At the discretion of the Chairperson of the Community Panel, meetings may either be in person, virtual (i.e. Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other platform) or a combination of both to suit the needs of panel members.

It is not anticipated that the Community Panel would be required to meet on more than five occasions in this period.

The Chairperson will be remunerated in accordance with agreed Government Guidelines for casual Committee Appointments and Panel Members will be appropriately compensated. Both the Chairperson and the Panel Members will be able to claim travel and legitimate out of pocket expenses including meals and accommodation if required.

6. REPORTING

The Community Panel will report to the Board as required on its activities, observations, advice and recommendations, and immediately should it become aware of any major matter affecting GMMWater or the Price Submission process.

7. MEDIA COMMENT

Responses to requests from the media in respect to the proceedings of the Community Panel will be handled by the Chairperson in consultation with the Managing Director and/or the Chairperson of GMMWater.