

Opportunity to join working groups to improve the regulatory framework for local water utilities

We are calling for expressions of interest from members of the local water utility sector to join voluntary working groups and collaborate with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to design improvements to our regulatory approach to strategic planning and technical assessment and approvals.

A draft [Roadmap to an improved regulatory framework](#) for local water utilities has been developed following the regional and virtual engagement workshops with the sector. The Town Water Risk Reduction Program is committed to collaborating with local water utilities via dedicated working groups to design components of the improved regulatory framework.

We are calling expressions of interest (EOI) for members for these working groups that will collaborate to design the department's improved approach for the regulatory functions, assessment, and support:

- Working group 1 – Strategic planning
- Working group 2 - Technical assessment and approvals

More information about the working groups and how to express your interest in participating is below.

Note the working groups are voluntary and no remuneration will be provided.

Working group 1 – Strategic planning

The Strategic planning working group will collaborate to design an improved approach to strategic planning that will enable and support local water utilities to implement robust, evidence-based strategic planning for water supply and sewerage services to meet the needs and expectations of their customers. Changes to be considered by the working group may include but are not limited to the following areas:

- objectives, scope, expectations for strategic planning
- setting outcomes-focussed requirements for service levels, performance standards, application of integrated water cycle management principals, secure yield, demand management, asset management, workforce planning, financial planning, drought and emergency resilience, community engagement and customer rights and protections
- assessment process and guidance materials.

Aligned with the Roadmap, we expect the working group will collaborate to design a set of draft materials for wider consultation with local water utilities including:

- outcome focussed requirements for strategic planning by December 2021
- guidance materials by March 2022
- regulatory assessment processes by March 2022.

The working group is expected to review draft materials after consultation and assist in the finalisation of all materials.

Due to the tight timeframes, working group members will need to commit to at least two days per month to attend meetings, collaborate on the development and review of the regulatory and guidance materials up to June 2022.

We are seeking EOIs from individuals for the Strategic planning working group from either of the below:

- councils and local water utilities
- joint organisations
- consultants that work in strategic water planning service provision, integrated water service planning or water utility related regulatory reviews.

That have experience and skills in some of the following areas:

- developing strategic water servicing plans for local water utilities
- asset management
- analysis of secure yields and demand management
- community engagement for strategic water planning
- review of regulatory frameworks for water utilities.

Working group 2 – Technical assessment and approvals

The Technical assessment and approvals working group will focus on changes to the department's approach for the regulatory functions and assessment for water infrastructure that require approvals under section 60 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The working group will collaborate to design an improved approach that focusses on a due diligence assessment process that:

- has clear objectives, defined scope, criteria, outcomes and expectations
- includes approval requirements and processes so that they are proportionate, and risk based
- is clear, transparent, and accountable
- considers opportunities for independent assessment and 'exempt and complying' approvals.

Aligned with the Roadmap, we expect the working group will collaborate to design a set of draft materials for wider consultation with local water utilities including:

- clear objectives and scope for infrastructure approvals by 31 December 2021
- outcomes focussed requirements for strategic planning by 31 December 2021
- assessment criteria and processes by 31 March 2022.

This working group is expected to review draft materials after consultation and assist in the finalisation of all materials.

Due to the tight timeframes, working group members will need to commit to at least two days per month to attend meetings, collaborate on the development and review of the regulatory and guidance materials up to June 2022.

We are seeking EOIs from individuals for the Technical assessment and approvals working group from either of the below:

- councils and local water utilities
- joint organisations
- industry associations
- consultants that design procure or build water infrastructure for local water utilities,

That have experience and skills in some of the following areas:

- design and review of water infrastructure that meets public health requirements, NSW environmental targets and is at scale for local water utilities in NSW
- technical assessment, options analysis and procurement of water infrastructure for local water utilities.

How to express your interest

You can express your interest in participating in one or both the working groups by sending an email to the Town Water Risk Reduction Program team regional.town.water@dpie.nsw.gov.au with the subject line EOI - Working group by **COB Thursday 9 September**. In the email you should:

- identify your name, position, and the organisation that you work for
- clearly identify the Working group you are interested in joining
- indicate in 400 words or less your interest in this working group, what contributions you can make, your skills, years of experience and relevant experience you would bring to the role
- confirm that you can commit to contributing the equivalent of at least two days per month to working group activities.

We will consider the following criteria in assessing your EOI and the membership of the working group based on your:

- individual skills
- relevant experience
- years of experience
- diversity of experience and skills within the working groups.

We will reply to all applicants by Monday 20 September 2021.

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