



TOWN WATER RISK REDUCTION PROGRAM

Terms of Reference

Stakeholder Advisory Panel

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Context

In December 2020, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) established the two-year Town Water Risk Reduction Program (the “Program”) to work together with the sector to identify long-term solutions to the most fundamental barriers facing local water utilities.

A central element of this program is its partnership approach which aims to recognise and leverage the wealth of expertise within councils, local water utilities and relevant government agencies, and to provide opportunities for these stakeholders to design and refine better solutions in collaboration with the department.

The establishment of a Stakeholder Advisory Panel (the “Panel”) for the Program is one of the core components of this partnership approach.

Acknowledgment of Country

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live and work and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

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Purpose and scope

The purpose of the Panel is to be a forum for key sector stakeholders and regulators to:

- “sense-check” the Program’s scope, approach and progress
- provide direction and feedback to the program team on the Program’s strategic approach, risks and overall engagement approach as well as high-level policy issues;
- be a sounding board for the program team on issues that cannot be resolved in more focused stakeholder working groups, e.g. because they raise higher-level policy questions, are sensitive or relate to multiple workstreams;
- provide advice to the program team regarding policy and technical issues that the more focused stakeholder working groups should consider in relation to their work.

Membership

The Panel has the following members:

- Town Water Risk Reduction Program Director (Chair)
- Local Government NSW
- NSW Water Directorate
- Executive officer of a Joint Organisation with strong interest in urban water services
- Manager of a council local water utility
- General manager of a council with a local water utility
- General manager of a county council
- Sector consultant
- NSW Health Water Unit
- Environment Protection Authority
- Office of Local Government (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – Planning and Assessment)
- Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Water – Water Utilities Branch

Operation, transparency and accountability

Discussions within the panel meetings may involve sensitive information. Outputs from meetings will include:

- Comprehensive minutes
- Publicly available communiqués capturing the high-level points and issues raised by the Panel for further consideration by the program team

Role of Chairperson

The Director of the Town Water Risk Reduction Program will chair the Panel. The Chair is responsible for:

- Establishing the Panel,
- Ensuring the Panel operates within the term of reference, is effective, furthers its purpose and stays within its scope;
- Scheduling meetings and inviting members
- Sharing all relevant documents for discussion
- Ensuring that members are informed of any change in scope or focus;

- Manage professional and timely meetings in accordance with the agenda
- Inviting experts to attend the meeting as required;
- Ensuring documentation of actions and outcomes from the meetings, including in the form of minutes and publicly available communiques.
- Overseeing and managing secretariat support

Role of members

Members are expected to have relevant knowledge and experience in the local water utility sector.

Members will:

- Offer frank advice from their professional perspective as well as, where applicable, from the perspective of their organisation or parts of the sector;
- Be interested in, committed to and actively involved in the work of the Panel;
- Approach issues in an open, professional and collaborative way;
- Appreciate the needs and requirements of all stakeholders;
- Work across parties and within their organisation or parts of the sector to help ensure the success of the Program;
- Raise issues for consideration through the Chair;
- Undertake work out of session as required.

Secretariat

The program team will provide the secretariat support for the Panel.

This support includes:

- Preparation of agendas and minutes.
- Preparation and making public of Panel documents (presentations, outcomes summaries, public communiques)

Concurrence from members of the Panel is to be obtained for Panel documents to be made public.

Concurrence is to be sought by the Secretariat by distributing relevant documents to panel members to comment/object (with a nil return or no comment from panel members taken to be concurrence).

Meetings

Meetings of the Panel are to be held as convened by the Chair. It is expected that the Panel meets approximately once every month, with some additional meetings in the program establishment phase.

Conflict of interests

All members of the Panel and other attendees of meetings of the Panel must declare actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, related to the performance of their responsibilities as a panel member.

A conflict of interest is a conflict between the public duty and private interests, which could improperly influence their responsibilities.

Once conflict has been identified, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – Water will assess whether the interest is such that it needs to be specifically managed, in that it is likely to, or is likely to be perceived to, have the potential to interfere with proper decision making. If it is

considered that the interest is one that requires management, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – Water will consider options and, together with the affected panel member, implement necessary management actions.

The secretariat will maintain a conflict of interest register, recording any interests disclosed and how any conflict is managed.

Confidentiality

All material dealt with by the Panel will be treated as confidential, unless otherwise determined by the Chair.