

Stakeholder and community input into integrated water cycle management

It is crucial to seek stakeholder and community input into the integrated water cycle management (IWCM) planning process to ensure that outcomes will meet the needs of all involved.

Including stakeholder and community input will help achieve high-level objectives such as:

- determining what customers value and their willingness to pay for services. This helps to decide how services should be delivered and what trade-offs are needed between risk, reliability and affordability
- identifying the issues and influencing decision-making in the selection of a long-term urban water service delivery and pricing strategy
- engaging with the community on where it's water comes from, how sewage is managed, and the value of water in influencing sustainability outcomes
- achieving coordinated and efficient land use for developing infrastructure and creating positive liveability outcomes
- encouraging local ownership of the process and maximising broader community acceptance of IWCM outcomes
- promoting transparency and public accountability.

Seeking community and stakeholder input

The urban water service challenges faced by each community are different, and the level of engagement sought by different communities varies.

NSW Department of Industry recommends that water utilities work with their councillors, who are the elected representatives of the community, and consultants to adopt a community engagement strategy that suits the local circumstances and meets the IWCM engagement objectives.

When developing an appropriate community engagement and communication strategy, refer to the document *IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum*, which can be downloaded from the Local Government NSW website at lgnsw.org.au/amalgamation-toolkit/resources under the 'Community consultation' section.

Who to include in engagement activities

As a water utility, you should have a good knowledge of the interest groups in both the local and broader community who would be appropriate to consult with as part of the IWCM planning process.

The following list gives examples of stakeholders and community groups who may be relevant:

- councillors
- council staff, especially planning, building inspection, asset management and finance
- NSW Environmental Protection Authority
- NSW Health
- NSW Department of Industry (Water branch)
- Natural Resource Access Regulator
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment
- environmental groups
- Indigenous communities
- water service customers

- catchment management groups
- property developers
- local business chambers, including industry and business groups.

NSW Department of Industry expectations

We expect that an IWCM strategy will be driven by evidence-based and sound analysis, with stakeholder and community engagement occurring at key milestones throughout IWCM project. Typically these milestones are:

- the release of the draft IWCM issues paper
- during optioneering/scenario development
- the release of the draft IWCM strategy.

When developing the scope of work for the IWCM strategy, you should, in consultation with a NSW Department of Industry representative, identify the broad community engagement and communication strategy for the project along with the key milestone interaction stages.

More information

For further information, or to discuss any aspect of the IWCM planning process, contact your regional water utilities representative from NSW Department of Industry.

Refer to industry.nsw.gov.au/contact-us for contact details.