

Customer Advisory Groups Charter

1 July 2025

Objective

WaterNSW is committed to positive and open engagement and consultation with customers and stakeholders.

The WaterNSW Act 2014 (the Act) establishes the objectives and functions of WaterNSW through an operating licence which requires WaterNSW to regularly engage with customers and the community.

How we go about this engagement is detailed in WaterNSW's Engagement Framework 2025 which is available on WaterNSW's website (www.waternsw.com.au).

The Customer Advisory Groups Charter is specific for WaterNSW customers and groups who represent their respective organisations on the Customer Advisory Groups. The Charter forms a key part of the WaterNSW's Engagement Framework.

Customer Advisory Groups

Charter

This Charter has been established by WaterNSW to apply to all Customer Advisory Groups and may be reviewed and updated by WaterNSW for the commencement of each new Customer Advisory Group term. Within the term of a Customer Advisory Group, WaterNSW and Customer Advisory Groups may propose amendments to the Charter, which to be effective, require the approval of both parties. Proposed amendments should be emailed to cag.support@waternsw.com.au and will be tabled at the next Customer Advisory Group meeting round for discussion and consideration by WaterNSW and all Customer Advisory Groups. Members are consulted on changes to the Charter.

Purpose

The Customer Advisory Groups provide a forum to exchange information, consult and provide an opportunity for advice from a customer point of view to WaterNSW, on an area basis. WaterNSW holds Customer Advisory Group meetings with a broad cross-section of our customers on issues, including but not limited to: system operations; pricing; asset operations and maintenance; WaterNSW involvement in Government programs; customers and stakeholder engagement; and other issues relevant to our performance and delivery of services to customers.

Areas

WaterNSW has established Customer Advisory Groups for the following areas (which aggregate catchments throughout NSW as per Appendix 1).

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Barwon-Darling | Border Rivers | Coastal-Hunter |
| Greater Sydney | Gwydir | Lachlan |
| Macquarie-Cudgegong | Murray-Lower Darling | Murrumbidgee |
| Namoi | Peel | |

Membership

Appointment and Selection Criteria

WaterNSW calls for nominations, determines and appoints membership of Customer Advisory Groups as follows:

i. membership is via nomination from a water user representative group/organisation that represents the interests of WaterNSW's customers, rather than by individual nomination.

ii. with the objective of including customer representatives from the following categories (where there are customers in this category for the area associated with the Customer Advisory Group); there is nothing precluding a Customer Advisory Group member representing more than one of these categories:

- stock and domestic water users
- regulated river water users
- unregulated river water users
- groundwater users
- environmental water users
- industrial and commercial water users
- public water utilities
- Aboriginal community representatives and cultural water users
- small/medium/large water users
- other relevant customer groups may be considered upon application.

iii. where necessary with consideration to:

- the relative number of customers which nominating organisations demonstrate their nominees represent
- licence type and geographic representation
- the inclusion of an alternate delegate nominee.

iv. to a minimum of five and a maximum of twenty members.

Term

The nominating group/organisation will be appointed for a five-year term (1 July 2025–30 June 2030) to align with pricing determination cycles. Nominated representatives may be changed during the term (refer to Vacancies).

Member role and responsibilities

As membership is customer representation based, the information and input provided by members will include demonstrable input from their nominating group/organisation and reflect a broader contribution of all customers from the categories being represented.

Members have an obligation to provide regular feedback to all water users forming their constituency and treat information declared to be confidential appropriately.

Members must be familiar with and comply with the Customer Advisory Groups Code of Conduct.

Vacancies during a term

A vacancy will arise if a member:

- resigns in writing to WaterNSW
- is absent for three consecutive meetings without notification to WaterNSW
- is no longer a member or employee of the nominating group/organisation or customer category they represent
- or becomes incapacitated.

To fill a vacancy, WaterNSW will seek nominations from the departing member's nominating group/organisation. If the group/organisation is unable or unwilling to nominate a replacement representative, WaterNSW may advertise publicly for new nominations.

New term of office

WaterNSW will call for nominations for members (including alternate representatives) prior to the end of each term by writing to organisations that have previously nominated, inviting them to nominate representatives for the ensuing term, and other forms of promotion.

Observers

At the discretion of WaterNSW, observers may be invited to attend meetings. Observers may participate in discussions, however, cannot vote, claim sitting fees or be reimbursed for travel expenses. The observer is bound by the same operating protocols, code of conduct and confidentiality as the members.

Government Agency Representation and Responsibilities

The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (NSW DCCEEW) is the primary policy agency for water management in NSW, and senior officers will be invited to attend meetings. Other agencies may be invited (as required) to attend specific meetings. Those agencies may include:

- Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR)
- Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)
- NSW Fisheries

Operating Procedures

Meetings

WaterNSW convenes both area-based Customer Advisory Group meetings and Customer Advisory Group chairpersons' meetings. Customer Advisory Groups will endeavour to meet in person twice a year, with additional online meetings scheduled as required or requested. Additional meetings must be requested through the chairperson and require a majority of Customer Advisory Group members to agree to attend (50% of members, plus one). WaterNSW determines meeting schedules and agendas based upon key issues relating to WaterNSW's planning and operations and in consultation with the chairpersons. Members will be provided with adequate information, within WaterNSW possession or under its control, to enable them to discharge the tasks assigned, other than information or documents that are confidential (including documents that are subject to client legal privilege). Issues monitoring and follow up is affected via standard meeting minuting and action procedures. Members may suggest topics for inclusion on agendas on issues relevant to our performance and delivery of services to customers by emailing at least three weeks prior to a meeting, to allow sufficient time for consideration.

Chairperson

- i. Election: a chairperson for each Customer Advisory Group will be elected annually by a vote of members. Chairpersons can be elected/appointed for a maximum of three consecutive years. Members may also elect a deputy on an annual or meeting basis.
- ii. Roles and responsibilities include: being Customer Advisory Group representative to WaterNSW as required, reflecting the views of the Customer Advisory Group; providing input on the interests of customers towards the determination of up to 50% of meeting agendas; impartially chairing meetings in accordance with the Charter.

Communication of outcomes of the Customer Advisory Groups

WaterNSW will provide meeting minutes after each round of Customer Advisory Groups, including applicable valley-specific issues, which will be made available on the WaterNSW website.

Funding and resourcing

Customer Advisory Groups are funded and resourced by WaterNSW.

Sitting fees/remuneration

Eligible members may claim sitting fees and mileage (optional). WaterNSW uses the Public Service Commission's *Classification and Remuneration Framework for NSW Government Boards and Committees* as a guide for remuneration.

Appendix 1

| CAG area | Catchments |
|------------------------|---|
| Barwon-Darling | Barwon/Darling, Mooni, Culgoa, Warrego, Paroo, North West NSW |
| Border Rivers | Border Rivers |
| Coastal-Hunter valleys | Hunter, Richmond, Tweed, Brunswick, Clarence River, Macleay, Bellinger, Hastings, Manning, Karuah, Clyde, Moruya, Tuross, Bega, Towamba, Lake Georges |
| Greater Sydney | Georges, Hawkesbury/Nepean, Wollongong, Shoalhaven, Lake Macquarie/Tuggerah (Central Coast), Warragamba, Hacking, Parramatta, Sydney, Fish River |
| Gwydir | Gwydir |
| Lachlan | Lachlan |
| Macquarie-Cudgegong | Castlereagh, Macquarie/Bogan |
| Murray-Lower Darling | Upper Murray, Murray/Riverina, Lower Darling, Benanee |
| Murrumbidgee | Murrumbidgee, Snowy |
| Namoi | Upper Namoi, Lower Namoi |
| Peel | Peel |