

PRICING REVIEW



ADVISORY PANEL – TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

South Gippsland Water is embarking on a community consultation program that will help influence and shape the future of the organisation.

Every five years the Corporation develops a plan that sets out proposed service standards, capital and operating expenditure, and the required prices charged to customers for the delivery of water and wastewater services.

The current plan finishes in June 2018. A new plan needs to be submitted to the Essential Services Commission, the economic regulator for the Victorian Water Industry.

Customer and community input will be integral to the planning process, and South Gippsland Water is seeking feedback from individuals, groups, local businesses and industry regarding matters of significance.

A Pricing Review Advisory Panel is being established to enable the Corporation to be well informed of community preferences and concerns regarding service provision and future pricing.

Every element of the business is open for discussion and examination including how the business operates, customer service standards, business strategies and major projects.

There will be a number of opportunities for customers to learn more, have a say and feed into the review process, with a key component being the establishment of a Pricing Review Advisory Panel.

PURPOSE

The establishment of an advisory panel to input to the Pricing Review is an essential component in South Gippsland Water's community engagement strategy. It is a key mechanism through which the Corporation can actively engage with and consult customers, stakeholders and the broader community.

The panel will be a significant voice in driving the Pricing Review. Panel members will help inform the Corporation, and its decision-making bodies, of community preferences and concerns regarding service provision and a future pricing regime.

ROLE AND FUNCTION

The Advisory Panel will:

- Act as a direct link between South Gippsland Water customers and the Corporation's Board of Directors.
- Play a vital role in providing advice and making recommendations to South Gippsland Water and its Board of Directors, however, the panel is not a decision-making body.
- Provide advice to benefit the Pricing Review process, the Corporation and the local community.
- Share non-confidential information gained through their association and engagement with their local community networks, and encourage individuals and networks to input into the broader review process.

MEMBERSHIP

An expression of interest process will be conducted by South Gippsland Water to source membership for the Advisory Panel.

The membership will consist of 15 – 20 customer representatives.

Members will be appointed by South Gippsland Water on the basis of their ability to pro-actively represent customer views and act as a conduit for information exchange between the Corporation and a diverse range of individuals and community groups.

The appointment will be for the duration of the review process, July 2016 to April 2017; any casual vacancies will be filled by South Gippsland Water as required.

A Chairperson will be appointed, in agreement between South Gippsland Water and the panel, at the first Advisory Panel meeting.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Members

Membership responsibilities include:

- Attending six panel meetings throughout the term of appointment.
- Reviewing briefing papers as required prior to meetings.
- Provide objective and informed input as required.
- Respect the opinions of all panel members and South Gippsland Water staff associated with the Pricing Review Advisory Panel.

South Gippsland Water

South Gippsland Water will be responsible for providing:

- Administrative support and guidance for the Advisory Panel.
- Clear and timely information to the panel on matters of relevance to the review process and the Corporation.
- Effective avenues of communication and information exchange between members and the Corporation and amongst the membership.
- Respect the opinions of all panel members and South Gippsland Water staff associated with the Pricing Review Advisory Panel.

Chairperson

The Chairperson will be appointed at the first Advisory Panel meeting. The Chairperson will:

- Guide meetings and facilitate discussion and participation by all members.
- Ensure the proper and professional conduct of the group.
- Liaise with associated staff in the review of agendas and draft minutes prior to distribution.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Disclosure of interests

Any members of the Pricing Review Advisory Panel with a pecuniary interest in a matter being considered or about to be considered by the panel must, as soon as is practical, declare the nature of the interest.

A record of the declaration must be made in meeting minutes.

Remuneration and reimbursement

Members on the Advisory Panel will receive:

- A sitting fee of \$50.00 per meeting attended.
- Reimbursement of travel costs from member's home or place of work to the meeting venue.
- An electronic tablet for communication and administrative purposes during their term of service.