



Customer & Stakeholder Engagement

1. Background

South Gippsland Water is committed to maintaining effective connections with the customers and key stakeholders as a primary consideration in delivering water and wastewater services.

Engagement provides an opportunity to understand our customers and stakeholder's key values and to assess their needs, expectations and priorities.

South Gippsland Water has recognised that properly designed and managed engagement leads to better outcomes and is vital in ensuring the business is open and transparent in its dealings with stakeholders, customers and communities.

The Corporation has a statutory mandate under the Water Act 1989, its related instruments such as the Statement of Obligations, and economic, environmental and water quality legislative frameworks, to actively and effectively engage.

A clear understanding of factors such as stakeholder preferences, the external environment and changing policy framework is required when developing strategies for future service provision.

This Customer and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy aims to develop and nurture collaborative relationships with key stakeholders and to actively engage with customers. The Strategy has been developed in line with IAP2 key principles and will provide South Gippsland Water with a framework for engagement in order to better understand their requirements.

2. Objectives

South Gippsland Water aims to provide high quality services and participate in partnerships to create a sustainable balance between the changing needs of customers, community and environment.

Broadly the objectives of engagement are to:

- Meet customer and stakeholder expectations and engage them in decision making processes
 - o Deepen understanding of customer and stakeholder needs and expectations.
 - o Provide information that clarifies service priorities and organisational positioning.
 - o Allow a broad range of views to be expressed and considered into decisions.
 - o Offer opportunities for customers to influence outcomes that directly affect their lives.
 - o Enable SGW, the community, customers and stakeholders to work together to achieve balanced decisions.
- Have transparency in the provision of high quality water/wastewater services
- Encourage efficient use/allocation of resources
- Contribute to the economic sustainability of the region and its communities
- Meet regulatory and government obligations;
 - o Enhance accountability by providing a direct link between agencies and community.

3. Stakeholder Matrix

South Gippsland is located around 2 hours' drive from Melbourne, tourism and agriculture are key industries within the region.

South Gippsland Water provides water and wastewater services to 22,000 customers in 21 townships, over a wide geographical area.

The Corporation also operates within a complex external environment with a number of key local partners. regulatory organisations at a state and federal level, government agencies, industry and professional associations and other water corporations all interact with South Gippsland Water.

Customer and Stakeholder Engagement



4. South Gippsland Water and Customer Outcomes

South Gippsland Water 2023 Purpose and Vision and Customer Outcomes underpin the Corporations engagement process.

Our Purpose:

We provide sustainable water services that are essential to the prosperity and wellbeing of our communities and natural environments.

2023 Vision:

Our customers value the services and outstanding customer experiences proudly delivered by our capable and committed teams

In particular, the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy aims to:

- raise South Gippsland Water's profile and enhance its reputation as a responsible, responsive, cost-effective organisation that provides quality and value-for-money water and wastewater services.
- across all Corporation stakeholder groups,
 - fosters a greater understanding of roles, responsibilities and commitments
 - educates on water management and the efficient use of water.
- ensure that the South Gippsland Water identity and profile remains strong
- reinforce the Corporation's position as a key community member that:
 - is a leader in the sustainable use of water as a finite resource
 - engages with the broader community.
- develop and nurture collaborative relationships with key stakeholders to facilitate:
 - efficient and effective business operations
 - the timely and cost effective provision of services.
- provide advice to Government and, where appropriate, influence policy for the benefit of our communities and the wider water industry policy frameworks.
- engage with the wider South Gippsland community to foster improved community outcomes that are indirectly beneficial to our customers.
- employ appropriate engagement channels, ensuring:
 - a wide reach to the community
 - that communications to stakeholders are consistent.
- proactively engage with customers in order to understand preferences and willingness to pay for the range of services. Deliver and report on Customer Outcomes detailed below.

CUSTOMER SCORECARD



We will partner with community, local government and business to plan for future years



We will be reliable, minimise unplanned interruptions to services and commit to communicating well with our customers



Provide a safe wastewater service that contributes to the health and liveability of our communities and environment



Provide safe, clean drinking water for the benefit of our customers and communities



Be environmentally responsible, sustainable and adapt to a future impacted by climate variability



Treat all customers /community with honesty, respect and strive to balance affordability, value for money and fairness

We will always have a long term water security strategy in place that is regularly updated, in consultation with key stakeholders



The Corporation will participate with local organisations to plan for future growth

On average our customers will not be without water or wastewater services for longer than 120 minutes



100% of sewer spills to be contained within 5 hours

100% of planned & unplanned water interruptions to be restored within 5 hours



We will communicate planned interruptions via a card drop and the South Gippsland Water website in advance of works



We will achieve 100% Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Licence compliance to ensure;

No adverse impact to receiving waters (rivers or oceans)

No adverse impact to land from recycled water use

No adverse odours beyond wastewater treatment plant boundaries (stretch target)



100% compliance with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (the standards for microbiological and discolouration)



Customers will choose to drink our tap water (target 73%)



Our carbon emissions will reduce by 15% to 6480 t GHG by 1/7/2025



Stretch Target: Reduce emissions by 3% year on year

We will have programs in place to assist our customers to save water



Customer satisfaction will be maintained or improved at 80% or more



73% or more of customers will rate our services as 'value for money'



We will commit to undertaking a thorough pricing review process with the Essential Services Commission every 5 years

5. Engagement Principles

It is imperative that South Gippsland Water maintains a consistent profile with stakeholders and within the community in an open and transparent way.

South Gippsland Water's engagement processes and outcomes underpin decision-making processes so that they reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities.

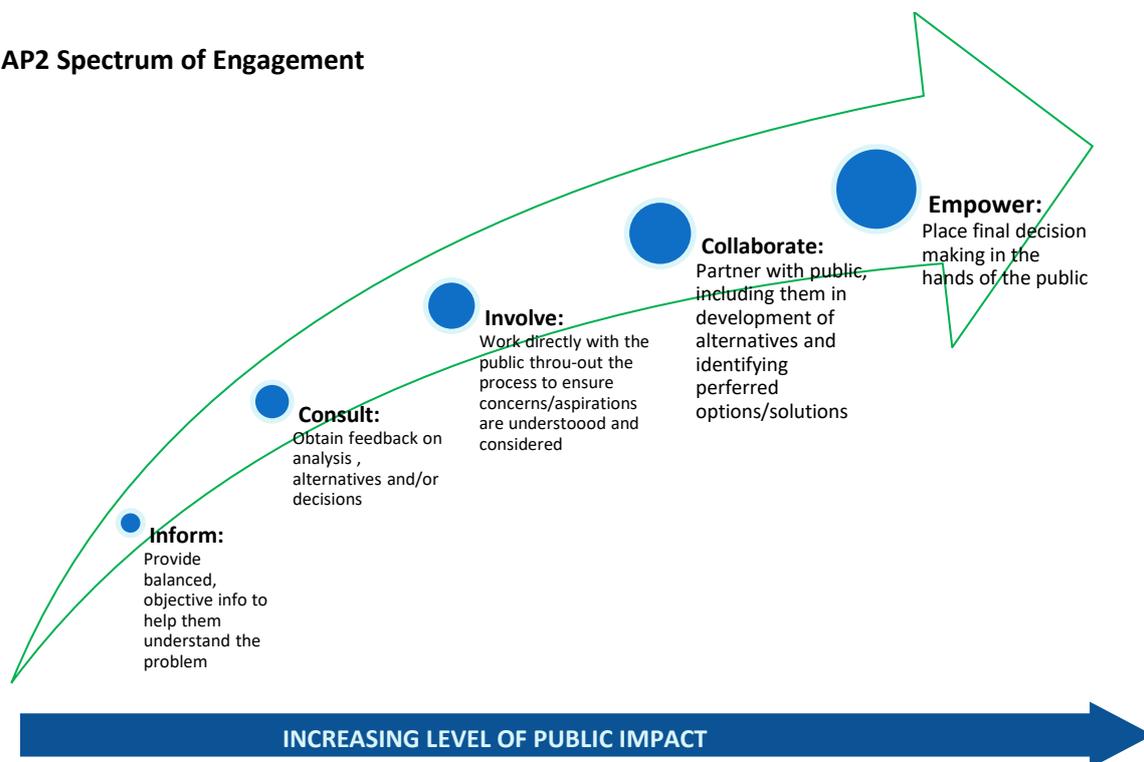
The Corporation engagement programs include key stakeholders, however detailed insights are often gained on an individual basis. As such, a key outcome of engagement with these stakeholders is forming, monitoring and maintaining constructive relationships,

The Strategy has been developed within the IAP2 framework, utilising the core values and levels of engagement outlined below.

Public Participation:

1. Is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement



When interacting with customers and stakeholders, a range of tools are utilised in accordance with the level of public impact required.

6. Resources

Communication and Engagement processes within the community are undertaken via the Communication team. Current communication staff amount to 1 FTE comprising:

- Communication & Executive Liaison 0.5 FTE
- Marketing and Community Relations Coordinator - 0.5 FTE

Additional Stakeholder Management is completed via South Gippsland Water Management.

7. Measures of Performance

The main indicators of how well the strategy performs include:

- successful implementation of key projects
- structured ongoing communication with key stakeholders
- stakeholder/customer input that helps to shape key planning documents
- the results of the annual customer satisfaction survey
- identified trends in relation to customer contact with the corporation, including billing and service enquiries and complaints
- the quality and quantity of media coverage including social media