



Customer Reference Group meeting	
Monday 12 September, 11.30am – 1.30pm, Traralgon office – Narracan Room	
Attendees	Customer Reference Group (CRG) members: David Langmore, Diane Wilkinson, Erlinda James, Mary Aldred (Chair), Robert Gaulton, Suzie Lewis. Gippsland Water: Melissa Thek, General Manager Business Transformation Michael Crane, General Manager People & Customer Danny McDonald, Manager Corporate Affairs Celeste Briggs, Communications & Engagement Advisor
Apologies	Customer Reference Group (CRG) members: Adam Tyson Gippsland Water: Sarah Cumming, Managing Director Katrina Coulson, Senior Communications & Engagement Lead

Items for discussion

1. Welcome and introductions – Mary Aldred
2. Feedback received from attestation survey – Danny McDonald
3. Finalise attestation – Mary Aldred
4. Urban Water Strategy and Central and Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy update – Danny McDonald
5. Future of the CRG – Danny McDonald
6. Optional focus group opportunity – Danny McDonald
7. Close – Mary Aldred

Mary opened the meeting by acknowledging the Traditional Owners, acknowledging apologies and informing the group that Jared Slater had tendered his resignation due to unforeseen changes to his circumstances and availability.

Mary then introduced Suzie Lewis to the group, before Danny facilitated a conversation about the Price Submission CRG engagement attestation process.

Mary advised the group that Adam Tyson was unable to be at the workshop due to other commitments, but had provided his comments and prior endorsement to the Chair in a pre-meeting discussion held on Friday 2 September.

The group was asked to consider the attestation criteria had been met:



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1. That Gippsland Water's Price Submission engagement with the community was authentic, comprehensive, broad and deep
 2. That the CRG, had had an opportunity to influence the direction of the engagement as early in the process as practical
 3. That material matters were engaged upon
 4. That customer priorities were considered and are evident in Gippsland Water's Price Submission

Following a general conversation and positive reflections on the process, the group unanimously agreed that the Price Submission engagement attestation criteria had been met in full.

Danny then provided an update on the release of the 2022 Urban Water Strategy and Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy.

A discussion took place about both strategies, and it was agreed that a follow-up conversation covering more detail and exploring particular areas of interest would take place at the next meeting.

The group then discussed the ongoing role of the CRG including its role, membership, and meeting format and frequency.

Members agreed that their participation on the CRG had been be a valuable experience and that the group could continue to provide benefit in providing assurance on the organisation's customer and community engagement program.

It was noted that as the CRG continues into the new year, it will be important to ensure the diversity of Gippsland Water's communities and customer base continues to be reflected.

The group discussed the scale and resourcing required to deliver the 2023-28 Price Submission engagement program, and an opportunity to have an early conversation about these matters prior to commencing the development of the next (2028-33) Price Submission engagement strategy.

Danny undertook to work with the Communications & Engagement team to develop a proposal outlining possible future CRG arrangements for discussion at the next meeting, taking the group's feedback on board.

Danny then explained that the organisation is also planning to set up a new Community Sounding Board during the coming months, to regularly gather sentiment on key issues and topics, involving a broader cross-section of its customer base. The CRG agreed this would be beneficial to both Gippsland Water and community members.

Danny then spoke about an opportunity for members to participate in another optional engagement activity outside the CRG's previously agreed annual schedule, before Mary closed the meeting.

Next meeting

TBC – Early 2023.



Copy of attestation:

Message from the Customer Reference Group

We commend Gippsland Water's 2023-28 Price Submission to the Essential Services Commission as a genuine reflection of best customer value.

The Customer Reference Group has played a key role in assisting Gippsland Water to prepare its 2023-28 Price Submission, making sure customer expectations are understood and reflected in its plans for the future.

We are customer representatives of the diverse region we live in. We have worked collaboratively with Gippsland Water to ensure that customer priorities, issues and expectations are understood and reflected in the decisions they've made.

Our role has involved:

- reviewing the customer engagement strategy at the beginning of the journey, for authenticity and completeness
- contributing thoughts and ideas to the design of Gippsland Water's engagement processes
- bringing the specialist perspectives from our own diverse experience and expertise to the table
- participating in deliberative sessions as part of the development of this submission
- witnessing the customer summit deliberative engagement event and attesting to the recommendations delivered by the customer summit panel

We confirm that Gippsland Water's engagement with the community was authentic, comprehensive, broad and deep. We believe that material matters were engaged upon, and that customer priorities were considered and are evident in the submission.

We feel we've had an opportunity to influence the direction of the engagement as early in the process as practical.

As a result of our involvement and observations throughout the Price Submission engagement program, we fully endorse Gippsland Water's 2023-28 Price Submission.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Aldred

Customer Reference Group Chair