

# Minutes

**Venue:** Sydney Water Parramatta Office  
Level 5, 1 Smith St Parramatta, NSW

**Date and time:** 5 August 2024  
9:00am – 2:00pm

**Meeting title:** Customer and Community Reference Group

**Independent Chair:** Abigail Goldberg

**Attendees:**

**CCRG Members**

Anna Bacik – Community Representative  
Narelle Brown – Community Representative  
Mary Karras – Ethnic Communities Council NSW  
Leigh Martin – Total Environment Centre  
Bruce McClelland – Business Western Sydney  
Stephen McMahon – Urban Development Institute of Australia  
Ross Williams – Local Government NSW

**Sydney Water**

Roch Cheroux – Managing Director (*part, online*)  
Grant King – Chairman (*part*)  
Stuart Wallace – General Manager, Customer & Stakeholder Engagement  
Dean Page – Executive General Manager, Finance Commercial & Digital  
Josh Isben – Head of Customer & Strategic Insights  
Izzy Kerr – Customer Research Manager  
Sharon Bowyer – Senior Customer Governance Specialist  
Rachelle Legrand – Head of Strategy & Enterprise Plan  
Will Dolan – Acting Head of Economics & Regulatory  
Clare Porter – Head of Strategic Comms & Corporate Social Responsibility (*part*)  
Ashlea Tighe – Engagement Lead (*part*)  
Charles Agnew – Head of Sustainability & Climate Change Adaption (*part*)  
Kathryn Sylvester – Resilience & Climate Change Adaptation Lead (*part*)  
Natalie Quinn – Sust & Climate Change Senior Advisor (*part*)  
Lisa Nguyen – Senior Performance Analyst (*part*)

**Apologies/absent:**

Donna Rogers – Community Industry Group (Illawarra)  
Graham Turner – Council on the Ageing  
Douglas McCloskey – Justice and Equity Centre (formerly Public Interest Advocacy Centre)  
Michael English – Competition & Licencing Manager

**Meeting purpose:**

Bi-monthly meeting according to CCRG Charter  
The CCRG works with Sydney Water at a strategic level to achieve the highest possible levels of customer focus within our practices. It supports Sydney Water to ensure that our business decisions, as set out in our strategy, enterprise plan and regulatory submissions, are in the best interests of all Sydney Water customers and the community and are shaped by them.

**Desired outcome:**

Discussion and feedback from CCRG Members

## Agenda items

| Item | Topic   | Actions |
|------|---|---------|
| 1    | <b>Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country</b><br>The meeting opened at 9:00am and the Chair welcomed participants.<br>Leigh Martin acknowledged Country and paid respects to elders past and present. |         |
| 2    | <b>Introductions, apologies and housekeeping</b>  |         |

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|   | <p>The Chair welcomed Grant King – Sydney Water Chairman, and Roch Cheroux – Managing Director joining the meeting on-line. Attendees introduced themselves around the table.</p> <p>Apologies were noted.</p>  |  |
| 3   | <p><b>Minutes of previous meeting and review of actions / issues log</b></p> <p><b>Declaration of interests</b></p> <p>The Minutes and action/issues log of the 3 June 2024 CCRG meeting, which had been transmitted inter-session, were accepted without change.</p> <p>No interests were declared.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Sydney Water and CCRG updates</b></p> |   |  |
| 4   | <p><b>Managing Director and Chairman update</b></p> <p>The Managing Director provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End of financial year performance is being measured against key metrics for customer satisfaction, water quality, wastewater and environment and people (culture, diversity, reconciliation and safety).</li> <li>• Current asset/investment activities are supporting new growth areas in Western Sydney and planning for Government transport corridors.</li> <li>• The Price Proposal is in the final stage of preparation for submission in September 2024.</li> </ul> <p>The Managing Director thanked the CCRG members for their insights and input to Our Water Our Voice and the Price Proposal.</p> <p>The Sydney Water Chairman also thanked the CCRG members for their contribution to the Price Proposal development. He acknowledged that the Board is paying attention to feedback from the CCRG and that their insights and advice have made a difference to business outcomes.</p> <p>The Sydney Water Chairman then provided some background to support the Sustainability topic being discussed later in the meeting. The Chairman summarised his background in energy, water and the climate change sector. He reflected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that energy and water utilities embody sustainability principles through the need to balance competing priorities of environmental, social and customer affordability outcomes in the short and longer term.</li> </ul> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the Long Term Capital and Operating Plan (LTCOP) is Sydney Water's optimal investment pathway and sustainability framework, capturing the key infrastructure and operational decisions to 2050, with an initial focus on the next 10 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typical regulatory price path periods are 5 years which makes funding of long term investments difficult to manage. However, regulators are now considering the regulatory requirements over the next 5 years within the context of the longer term (20, 30 and 50 years).</li> </ul> <p>The CCRG Chair asked the Chairman and the Managing Director for their thoughts on a CCRG message to support the price proposal which was discussed during the meeting.</p> |  |

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| <p>5</p>                     | <p><b>General Manager update</b></p> <p>The General Manager, Customer and Stakeholder Engagement provided an update on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Our Water Our Voice</b> internal information sessions have been held to share insights from customer engagement. There is strong interest across the business on what customers have told us.</li> <li>• <b>“Toilet Blockers Anonymous” Wastewater Campaign</b> – Sydney Water’s best performing campaign to date. 87% of people clearly understood the campaign’s call to action to only flush the 3Ps – Pee, Poo and (toilet) Paper.</li> <li>• <b>Sydney Water Community Grants</b> – based on the theme of ‘Driving a Sustainable Water Future’, with a focus on water education, healthy waterways and water conservation. Six recipients have been awarded grants.</li> <li>• <b>Youth Eco Summit</b> will be hosted by Sydney Water at Sydney Olympic Park in Sept 2024 with 2000 students who will participate in 15 workshops and 15 interactive displays. Topics will include sustainability, culture (social) and environment.</li> <li>• Recent community events include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bankstown Bites</b>, an international food festival in July 2024 where Sydney Water team members ran a water literacy quiz, challenging visitors to test their knowledge and win a prize (water bottle, shower timer).</li> <li>• <b>Upper South Creek Advanced Water Recycling Centre community engagement</b> on new brine pipeline and tunnelling in Fairfield. An information stall with a Vietnamese interpreter has helped keep the community informed about the works.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>CCRG member encourage Sydney Water to continue face to face engagement with CALD communities using translators, community leaders and the like.</p> |  |
| <p>6</p>                     | <p><b>CCRG Member update</b></p> <p>Mary Karras advised that she had assisted Sydney Water to help bring a CALD perspective to brand strategy and direction discussions.</p> <p>She had also participated in a short video to support Sydney Water’s Australian Service Excellence Awards for Customer Service ‘Organisation of the Year’ application.</p> <p>Mary also advised that she has started participating on the Australian Energy Regulator customer committee.</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Sustainability</b></p> |   |  |
| <p>7</p>                     | <p><b>Paper for discussion: Sustainability Materiality Assessment</b></p> <p>Charles Agnew, Kathryn Sylvester and Natalie Quinn led a discussion on Sustainability Materiality and invited CCRG members to respond to questions posed in the paper through a survey form.</p> <p>A summary of the CCRG member survey results were shared and discussed. The CCRG raised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the materiality topics were important and it was difficult to rank them as priorities.</li> <li>• Members recommended caution in interpreting survey responses.</li> <li>• Further refinement and clarification is needed before running this workshop activity with the Board.</li> </ul>   |  |

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| <p>8</p>                          | <p><b>Sustainability spotlight</b></p> <p>Charles Agnew, Kathryn Sylvester, Natalie Quinn continued with a Sustainability Spotlight, including showing a short video on Sydney Water approach to net zero carbon emissions and a discussion on the concept of Intergenerational Guardians.</p> <p>Themes that were discussed based on member questions were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to mature understanding of supply chain carbon emissions and full lifecycle analysis.</li> <li>• Educating subcontractors and small businesses (as part of Sydney Water’s supply chain) to achieve net zero carbon emissions.</li> <li>• Supporting customers to be more water and energy efficient.</li> <li>• Additional tree planting for carbon offset and biodiversity.</li> <li>• Building in sustainability decisions as part of development of new land areas (e.g. pumping stations vs gravity distribution).</li> <li>• Modern Slavery as part of Sydney Water’s sustainability goals.</li> </ul> <p>The concept of an Intergenerational Guardian (IG) was discussed with the CCRG. Key points raised by the CCRG included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The concept is a worthwhile discussion</b> - there is always more that can be done to improve intergenerational equity.</li> <li>• <b>The role of an intergenerational guardian</b> - does not need to be an individual or a young person. A diverse group of people (all ages) could play this ‘role’ for specific decisions. An intergenerational champion at the Board level would be sensible (not just a sustainability specialist). The CCRG does not need to play the role an intergenerational guardian.</li> <li>• <b>The term ‘Guardian’ may not be appropriate.</b> What are the implications of using this term for First Nations? Does the term bring historical context of children guardianship? The term be viewed as maternalistic and colonial. Champion or ambassador may be better terminology.</li> <li>• <b>Embed intergenerational equity</b> considerations into normal business planning and decision making.</li> <li>• <b>Need to balance the ‘now’ and ‘future’ in decision making</b> - communities are made of diverse perspectives today and its challenging to determine what communities will value in the future. It is difficult to think too far in advance as society is always evolving and customer expectations change.</li> </ul> | <p>Action: Sydney Water to consider future Sustainability topics for the CCRG Forward Plan of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land development and long term planning sustainability considerations (e.g. Pumping stations vs gravity distribution).</li> <li>• Modern Slavery</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Customer Engagement</b></p> |   |   |
| <p>9</p>                          | <p><b>Paper for discussion: Securing our water supply, Quakers Hill to Prospect project: PRW community engagement</b></p> <p>Clare Porter and Ashlea Tighe outlined the community consultation approach for Purified Recycled Water (PRW) initiatives. Recent engagements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local government representatives attending tours at the Sydney Water PRW Discovery Centre.</li> <li>• Sydney Water’s ‘Wonders of Water’ van present at Naidoc events to help educate the community on the need for alternative water supplies.</li> </ul> <p>CCRG members provided the following feedback on the proposed PRW Quakers Hill to Prospect project and the engagement approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Positive support</b> - delighted that Sydney Water are progressing PRW.</li> </ul>  |   |

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|                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Key messages</b> - it is important for Sydney Water to highlight to the community:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that PRW is not a new idea and is used in Australia and around the world, including the space station.</li> <li>• indirect PRW is already in place at Richmond and many rural towns and that Warragamba dam is downstream of Lithgow and Goulburn.</li> <li>• PRW is not 'toilet to tap' rather a part of the continuous water cycle.</li> <li>• all water is treated to achieve drinking water standards.</li> <li>• the alternative options to PRW and the cost impacts to customer bills.</li> <li>• Sydney doesn't really have a choice on PRW – rainfall independent supply and wastewater infrastructure is needed to support the growing city.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Lay the foundations</b> that PRW will just become a normal part of our water supply across Sydney. It is not necessary to say that 80% of Sydney will receive PRW in the first instance.</li> <li>• <b>Use PRW champions</b> - trusted people/community leaders as PRW ambassadors. Community engagement needs to be personable but there is a need to educate them and take them on a journey.</li> <li>• <b>Constantly educate and engage political leaders and future leaders</b> - to build water literacy and reduce risk of political opposition.</li> <li>• <b>Don't delay</b> - the 2031 timeframe for the PRW Quakers Hill to Prospect pipeline may be too long into the future and should be considered earlier (and especially if drought conditions return).</li> <li>• <b>Don't underestimate the community but continue education and engagement</b> - the community are getting better at accepting change as they understand the impacts of climate change. Balance community education and engagement and take care not to make an issue out of it.</li> </ul> <p>Sydney Water outlined that Olympian Jess Fox has been an ambassador for PRW to date and that other ambassadors are being considered.</p> <p>CCRG members that would like to be consulted further and/or be involved with aspects of the PRW community engagement program were Bruce McClelland, Mary Karras, Stephen McMahon and Leigh Martin.</p> <p>The CCRG supports the insert of the PRW article in Waterwrap with the following improvements - reduced content, key messages that stand out and inclusion of a PRW champion.</p> |  |
| <b>Price proposal</b> |   |  |
| 10                    | <p><b>Paper for discussion: proposed approach to the Customer Facing Price Proposal</b></p> <p>Clare Porter and William Dolan shared the updated version of Customer Facing Price Proposal and one page infographic.</p> <p>Overall members feedback on the infographic and Customer Facing Price Proposal included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Highlight what it means for the customer</b> – clearly outline what the impact is on customer bills</li> <li>• <b>Explain the need up front</b> – why is new infrastructure needed and why do bills have to go up.</li> </ul>  |  |

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|                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Outline what Sydney Water is going to deliver</b> – highlight the list of investment / infrastructure projects that customers will be funding.</li> <li>• <b>Relevant title and language</b> – provide a meaningful title for the infographic, refer to ‘customer’ instead of ‘you’, update wording (eg replace ‘if you’re nervous’ with ‘we are always here to help’)</li> <li>• <b>Ensure graphics support the story</b> – clearly show the link of increasing population to impacts on Sydney Water. Update graphics to look more Sydney focused not just a generic picture (add Centrepoint Tower, include Warragamba dam).</li> <li>• <b>Customer representation</b> – include graphic of the average household (2 adults + 1 child in a house). Consider use of more representative names of diverse customers and consider non gender naming.</li> </ul> <p>Sydney Water thanked the CCRG for their input and highlighted that this work is a positive example of how CCRG feedback has helped Sydney Water to shape customer facing documents.</p> |  |
| 11                | <p><b>Paper for Noting: Sydney Water’s Operating Licence Review – Our new Operating Licence 2024-28</b></p> <p>There were no questions or comments from the CCRG.</p>  |  |
| <b>Governance</b> |  |  |
| 12                | <p><b>Looking ahead</b></p> <p>Josh Isben advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The September CCRG agenda may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a strategy planning session and performance update (CCRG feedback as input to the October Board strategy day).</li> <li>• early input to future customer engagement programs.</li> <li>• a discussion on tenants.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The CCRG asked if a guest speaker from the Tenants Tribunal could be invited to attend a future meeting to provide background and context for tenants. Context considerations could include new Government regulations, typical complaints from tenants, how much of the water bill is passed onto tenants and what information is available to tenants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The November CCRG meeting to include a site visit to Malabar Water Resource Recovery facility (including tour of biosolids and biogas facilities and fence renewal project) and a Year in Review discussion.</li> </ul>   | <p>Action: Sydney Water to consider inviting guest speaker from Tenants Tribunal to future CCRG meeting.</p> |
| 13                | <p><b>Other business</b></p> <p>There was no other business raised.</p>  |  |
| 14                | <p><b>Finalise optional message from CCRG</b> (In camera session)</p> <p>Sydney Water members and guests left the meeting, and the Chair facilitated an in-camera discussion with members only regarding the finalisation for the optional message from the CCRG outlining their role in developing the Sydney Water Price Proposal.</p>   |  |
| <b>Close</b>      |  |  |

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| 15 | The Chair thanked CCRG members for their participation.<br>Meeting closed at 1:30pm. |  |
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**2024 CCRG meeting dates/times** (Draft - subject to change)

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| Monday 30 September 2024 9am-2pm*  |
| Monday 11 November 2024 9am – 2pm* |

\*Length of CCRG meetings to be confirmed.