



Water Services Committee Charter

Raywood, Sebastian and surrounds

Endorsed 9 July 2009

1. Introduction

Coliban Region Water Corporation (Coliban Water), operates under the *Water Act 1989*. The primary function of Coliban Water is to capture, treat and distribute water reserves and provide wastewater services and reuse.

Water Services Committees, established by the board of directors pursuant to s122C(1) of the *Water Act 1989* play an integral role in Coliban Water maintaining links with the broader community and ensuring our services meet the needs of our customer base.

2. Water Services Committee Charter

The Water Services Committee Charter establishes the responsibilities of the committee within Coliban Water's governance system and has been developed to provide:

- direction to Water Services Committee members on their roles and responsibilities
- guidance to the committee on its operation
- information to Coliban Water staff and key stakeholders on the roles and responsibilities of the committee.

The Charter will be reviewed at least every 12 months.

3. Establishment and Role of Water Services Committee

Through appropriate participation and consultation with the wider community, the Water Services Committee is the vehicle by which Coliban Water can ensure community ownership of its strategies and projects. The membership and method of operation of the Water Services Committee is designed to facilitate these outcomes.

In addition to acting as a conduit to the broader customer base, the role of this Water Services Committee within the context of their specific geographic area is to advise Coliban Board and management on:

- Raywood/Sebastian pipeline connection to Bendigo and the implementation of the rural modernisation program for the Cockatoo Hill rural system
- Community preferences in relation to pipeline alignment options
- Possible future rural and urban supply conditions and priorities
- Rural and urban customer perspectives on community needs and project impacts
- The arrangements for new and future connections
- Requirements on prospective new customers for connection, including contributions towards capital costs.

4. Authority

Committee authority extends only to making recommendations to the Board. The Committee does not have:

- executive powers
- power to implement action in areas over which management has responsibility
- delegated financial responsibility, nor
- any management functions.

5. Key to Water Services Committee success

To ensure success of the Water Services Committee structure, certain principles must drive Board Members, Water Services Committee members and staff. These principles are:

That Coliban Water will:

- Recognise the significance of the Water Services Committee achieving the outcomes of Coliban Water's work programs and ensure their efforts are recognised and valued by Board members, staff and external clients
- Provide opportunities for the Water Services Committee to be involved in policy development as it relates to their area
- Recognise the need to maintain good communication with the Water Services Committee, and
- Appropriately resource the Water Services Committee to enable the achievement of its objectives.

That Water Services Committee will:

- Recognise the need to maintain good communication with the Board, community and partners
- Acknowledge the importance of operating within the scope of the Charter.

That Staff will:

- Recognise the importance of the role the Water Services Committee plays in delivery of programs
- Develop an appropriate reporting framework for projects and operations.

6. Water Services Committee Membership

Community representatives: A minimum of 7 and a maximum of 10 representatives make up each Water Services Committee

7. Time Commitment

Water Services Committee will meet monthly during the planning phase, then bi-monthly for its ordinary meetings and schedule additional meetings as necessary. Ordinary meetings are usually 1/2 day meetings. A one day meeting (including training and induction sessions for members) will be held at the commencement of the Committee.

It is expected that members will devote time outside meetings for reviewing agendas, strategies and other material to be discussed at meetings.

8. Appointment of Members

Community Representatives

Following an expression of interest process, appointment of community members to the Water Services Committee is made by the Board on the basis of skills and knowledge representing the range of issues relevant to the geographic area for which the Water Services Committee has been established. A good spread of membership, including representation from urban and rural customers, and potential customers throughout the geographic area of the Water Services Committee is also sought. Equal opportunity principles apply.

In its appointment of Water Services Committee members, the Board shall consider the following eligibility criteria:

- Should reside in the Water Services Committee (geographic) area
- Have a good understanding of key water issues affecting the area
- Have a basic understanding of governance principles
- Be prepared sign a declaration indicating that they agree to comply with this Charter.

Election of a Chair

The Chair shall be elected by the Committee, from within the Committee membership. The Committee may also choose to elect a Deputy Chair.

To Remain a Committee Member

A committee member must, while that person is a Committee member and exercising the role of a member :

- Attend at least 80% of meetings in any year, unless leave of absence has been granted, or extenuating circumstances apply
- Not be convicted of an offence under the Water Act 1989
- Not be convicted of any other indictable offence
- Declare any conflicts of interest
- Ensure the confidentiality of information dealt with by the Committee, including the internal affairs and operations of the Committee
- act honestly and in good faith
- perform the duties of a Committee member impartially and in the best interests of Coliban Water and its customers regardless of personal association, membership, allegiance or other representation
- exercise care and diligence in preparing for, and participating in, meetings of the Water Services Committee
- maintain cordial relations with customers of Coliban Water, its employees and contractors
- Comply with Coliban Water's policies concerning :
 - i. Occupational Health and Safety
 - ii. Equal Opportunity
 - iii. Environmental management
- comply with this Charter.

Communication with employees

A Committee member must obtain the prior consent of the Committee Chairperson and relevant Executive Officer before contacting or requesting information directly from a Coliban Water employee, except where the contact is in relation to normal operational issues directly associated with service delivery as customers of Coliban Water.

9. Termination of Appointment

The Board reserves the right to terminate membership of any member of a Water Services Committee for breach of the Charter.

10. Term of Appointment

Community Members

Members shall be appointed for a period covering the planning, construction and practical commissioning of the capital works program. This is expected to be a maximum of two years from April 2009.

If the position of a Water Services Committee member becomes vacant, the Water Services Committee may recommend to the Board the appointment of a person to act in place of that member for the remainder of that person's term of office. Such appointment must be approved by the Board.

11. Voting Rights

Community Members	Full voting rights
Chairperson	Casting vote

12. Administration Arrangements

Resourcing

An Executive Officer (EO) will be appointed to provide support for the Committee.

The EO will be responsible for providing services to the Committee at a level that enables it to fully carry out its role within Coliban Water. Among these duties are:

- Scheduling Committee meetings
- Preparing Committee meeting agendas
- Taking meeting minutes
- Facilitating interaction between the Committee and Coliban Water staff
- Preparing Committee reports to Board
- Preparing Committee Annual Reports to Board
- Undertaking other tasks as appropriately directed by the Water Services Committee Chair.

Relevant Coliban Water managers will be expected to attend Water Services Committee meetings.

Water Services Committee Operating Budget

Each year, an operating budget will be developed for the Water Services Committee to be included in the Coliban Water Budget. The budget will include the following expense items:

- Committee member sitting fees
- Committee member traveling expenses
- Committee meeting expenses
- Executive support expenses
- Other expenses.

Sitting Fees

Full Day \$214 Greater than 4 hours;

(Less than full day pro-rata)

Rates are to be reviewed at the beginning of each financial year.

Meeting types where sitting fees are payable:

Meeting	Sitting Fee Payable?	Authorisation Required
Ordinary Committee meetings	Yes	No authorisation required
Additional Committee meetings	Yes	No authorisation required
Invitation to a meeting, inspection etc	Yes	No authorisation required
Any other meetings that a member is asked to attend to represent the WSC	Yes	Authorisation by relevant WSC Chair or WSC Executive Officer
Any other meetings that a member is invited to attend for information purposes	No	No authorisation required

Invitations to members to attend meetings, inspections etc where authorisation is required will be accompanied by an authorisation slip detailing whether sitting fees are payable.

Water Services Committee Member Travelling Expenses

Expenses incurred in attending authorised meetings and carrying out Water Services Committee business can be claimed. This includes travel, accommodation, meals and other incidental expenses (excluding alcohol). Travel by public transport will be reimbursed upon production of a receipt. Reimbursement of private motor vehicle and other expenses will be paid at rates applicable to employees of Coliban Water. Car pooling is to be encouraged.

Water Services Committee Meeting Expenses

Meeting expenses include venue hire, meals, inspection tours, guest speaker costs and any other expense directly related to Water Services Committee meetings.

Executive Support Expenses

Expenses include employment costs of Executive Officer, administration support and Executive Officer's travel expenses.

Other Expenses

Any other incidental costs incurred in the operation of the Water Services Committee.

13. Meeting Procedure

It is intended that twelve ordinary meetings will be held in the first year. Additional meetings can be called as required.

Agendas

Agendas will be coordinated by the EO from information supplied by Coliban Water managers, Water Services Committee Portfolio Representatives and Water Services Committee Chairs, who will approve the final agenda. The general format of agendas will be:

Item	Comments	Responsibility to Prepare/Plan
Open Forum	To be advertised prior to the meeting	WSC Executive Officer
Apologies		WSC Executive Officer
Confirmation of Previous Minutes	Confirm previous minutes	WSC Members
Pecuniary Interest Declarations	Pecuniary interests to be declared at the beginning of the meeting or as an issue arises	WSC Members
Open Forum Outcomes	Discuss issues arising from the Open Forum and decide on any required actions.	WSC Members
Matters Arising	Action List to be attached to agenda Discuss Action List	WSC Executive Officer WSC Members
Other Matters for Decision	Other agenda items that require decision approved for inclusion	WSC Chair
Other Matters for Information	Other agenda items approved for inclusion	WSC Chair
Next Meeting	Next six months meeting dates and venues to be included in agenda	WSC Officer

Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the Committee is a majority of the members.

Minutes

Minutes will be taken by the EO. The draft minutes shall be circulated to the Chair for approval and will be circulated to Committee members as soon as possible after the meeting and will be confirmed at the next ordinary meeting.

Reporting to the Board

The Committee Chair will present a report to the Board via the monthly Board report after each meeting:

- all minutes of the Committee for information
- any recommendations requiring Board action and/or approval
- matters outstanding and other substantial issues the Committee believes need to be reported to the Board.

The Chair may be requested to present personally to the Board on specific issues.

14. Communications Protocol

It is expected that Water Service Committee members will respect Coliban Water's 'Media Statements' policy and communications protocols.

Media Policy

The Coliban Water 'Media Statements' policy is provided to all Water Services Committee members as part of their induction. The policy is also available on request from the Water Services Committee Executive Officer. All media enquiries with regards to Coliban Water should be directed to Coliban Water on 1300 363 200.

Board Members

Water Service Committee members must take all issues of concern to the Water Services Committee Chairperson to raise with the Managing Director. If the matter is in relation to the Water Services Committee Chairperson the committee member must take the matter directly to the Managing Director.

Within the community

Effective communication processes are an integral part of Coliban Water's commitment to public participation. Each member of the Water Services Committee has a responsibility to communicate effectively with their community of interest to ensure that the committee is effective in meeting the communities aspirations, expectations and in addressing key issues.