

Goulburn-Murray Water Customer Committees

Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (GMID)

1. Scope

This Terms of Reference applies to the:

- GMW GMID Customer Committee East
- GMW GMID Customer Committee West
- GMW GMID Customer Committee Central

2. About GMW

Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) is Australia's largest rural water corporation overseeing 23 water storages with about 11,400 GL of water. We manage, store, and deliver water through approximately 10,000 km of delivery and drainage infrastructure to more than 25,000 active customers in northern Victoria.

3. Customer Committee objectives

The objectives of the Customer Committees are to assist GMW to:

- better understand the strategic issues facing customers and their communities
- articulate customers' current and future service expectations
- improve key aspects of GMW's relationships with customers, including communication and assistance with problem solving
- provide a solution-based perspective on key business issues identified by the Customer Committees or referred to it by GMW
- distribute information between GMW and its customers, particularly through local organisations and informal networks
- contribute a solutions-based perspective to the preparation of Service Plans including those associated with Price Submissions and other projects
- provide a customer perspective on issues raised by other agencies who have approached GMW (eg DEECA).

4. Composition

Committee members will be briefed on issues and projects relevant to GMW's service delivery and expected to provide advice, sector-specific expertise, regional awareness, and a customer perspective. Committee members should be well connected in communities, able to both represent customer views and disseminate information within their networks.

The Customer Committees have the following composition:

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- GMW GMID Customer Committee East: up to 9 members comprising 4 representatives from Shepparton district, 5 from Murray Valley district.
- GMW GMID Customer Committee West: up to 9 members comprising 4 representatives from Loddon Valley district and 5 from Torrumbarry district.
- GMW GMID Customer Committee Central: up to 9 members comprising 4 representatives from Rochester district and 5 from Central Goulburn district.

5. Eligibility

To be eligible for the Customer Committee, members must:

- Be a customer of GMW.
- Not be an undischarged bankrupt.
- Not be more than 90 days in arrears in the payment of water charges to GMW, unless they have an approved payment plan and are complying with it.
- Must disclose whether they have been convicted of an indictable offence within the previous five years. Failure to disclose a conviction may result in their appointment being declined or, if already appointed, the termination of their membership on the Committee.
- Not be a current director or employee of GMW, nor have been a director or employee of GMW within the 12 months prior to application.
- Must be nominated by 2 existing customers
- Must disclose whether another member of their household, immediate family, or business has applied for, or currently holds, a position on a GMW Customer Committee. This information may be considered when seeking to achieve balanced representation across the Committee.
- Sign a declaration of interest and a statement of compliance to the terms of reference.
- Meet the term and tenure requirements outlined in Section 8.

If, at any time during a member's term, they cease to meet the eligibility criteria, they will be deemed to have resigned from the Committee, effective immediately. The resignation will be formally noted at the next Committee meeting.

6. Selection process

GMW will call for Expressions of Interest to join the customer committees and screen all EOIs against the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 5.

If the number of eligible EOIs are less than or exceed the vacant positions by more than two EOIs, a recommendation will proceed to the Board for determination.

If the number of EOIs exceed the vacant positions by more than two EOIs, an election will be triggered in accordance with Section 7 and the election outcome will proceed to the Board for determination.

7. Election Process

Where the number of EOIs exceed the number of vacancies by more than two, an election process will commence.

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GMW WSC elections:

- Shall be conducted in a manner determined by GMW and published in advance of each election.
- Voting will be non-compulsory, and voting will be open for at least two weeks.
- Candidates recommended to the Board for membership will be those who achieve the highest number of customer votes.
- The number of votes that will be cast per customer is:
 - Less than 1ML/day Delivery share = 1 vote.
 - Equal to or greater than 1ML/day Delivery share = 1 vote per 1ML/day delivery share or part thereof.

The election process will be reviewed in no more than 2 years based on the number of people nominating, the number of people participating in the elections, diversity and GMW customer awareness of Customer Committees as reported in the GMW Customer Satisfaction Survey.

8. Term and tenure

Committee members will be appointed for 3-year terms. On expiration, committee members can apply via the Expression of Interest process to serve additional 3-year terms, up to a maximum tenure of 9 consecutive years.

The GMW Board reserves the right to remove a committee member at any time. Should a member be removed, they will receive a letter detailing the reasons for their removal. Grounds for removal include non-compliance with the Terms of Reference, failure to adhere to the letter of appointment, a poor attendance record or actions that bring, or are likely to bring, the committee or GMW into disrepute.

9. Meetings

The GMW GMID East, Central and West Customer Committees will meet at a minimum 3 times per year and annual summit.

The Customer Committees may be convened for additional meetings when specific issues or projects arise.

Meetings will be held either in person or virtually, at the discretion of the committee members.

A Customer Committees Annual Summit may be held annually to network across the services, meet with the Board and contribute to GMW's strategic planning process.

Considerations and reasonable adjustments will be made to support attendance for people with access requirements to participate in all meetings.

10. Chair and Deputy Chair

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The Chair and Deputy Chair will be selected by the committee. If the committee is unable to, after two meetings, select a Chair or Deputy Chair, the meetings will be chaired by a GMW General Manager.

The appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair will be for 3 years.

The role of the Chair/Deputy Chair will be to:

- Assist in developing agendas.
- Ensure meetings are conducted in line with the Objectives in Section 3.
- Chair the meetings
- Liaise with GMW as required.

11. Reporting and communication

Customer Committee meeting agendas and pre-reading materials will be circulated at least one week in advance.

Meeting minutes will be circulated to members and GMW attendees and other officers. The themes and outcomes of Customer Committees meetings will be shared with the GMW Board.

12. Confidentiality, Conflicts of Interest and Code of Conduct

Customer Committees members are expected to display professional, respectful, and ethical behaviour, and reflect GMW's values of excellence, honesty, accountability, courage and caring. Members will act impartially to represent the voice of GMW customer, not their own personal interests.

Committee members shall maintain strict confidentiality regarding all sensitive information discussed during meetings or related to GMW's operations. Members will be required to sign a confidentiality statement before being appointed to the committee.

Members must declare conflicts of interest before being appointed to the committee, and promptly disclose any potential conflicts of interest that may arise throughout their tenure. Members must refrain from participating in discussions or making recommendations where a conflict exists.

Committee members cannot use their position on the Customer Committee for political lobbying or engaging in activities that may compromise the impartiality and objectivity of the committee's recommendations. Committee members are not to engage with the media on matters related to GMW or claim to represent GMW in any forum.

Any breaches will be referred to GMW for investigation and may result in being deselected from the Committee.

13. Evaluation and Review

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GMW and Customer Committees members will conduct a review of the effectiveness of Customer Committees at least every three years.

14. Resources and support

GMW will be responsible for the administration of the meetings including preparation, coordination and distribution of agendas and minutes.

Customer Committees members will be remunerated in line with the Victorian Government's and the following financial allowances available to ensure equitable access and participation:

- Travel allowance if required in line with ATO rates
- Childcare allowance if required of \$250 flat rate per meeting

New members will take part in an induction tailored to their learning needs and format preference.

15. Amendment of Terms of Reference

The GMW Board may amend the Terms of Reference at any time. GMW may create, amalgamate or dissolve Customer Committees in the event of significant changes in organisational structure, strategic direction, or financial or other constraints that render the Committee's continued operation impractical.

16. Approval

Pursuant to Section 122C of the Water Act, GMW has the authority to establish an advisory committee. The Terms of Reference were approved by the GMW Board at its meeting on 23 October 2024, Board Meeting 376.