

INDEPENDENT METROPOLITAN WATER ADVISORY PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

The Lower Hunter Water Security Plan and the Greater Sydney Water Strategy set out portfolios of water supply and demand measures for drought and long-term supply to the two largest metropolitan regions of NSW. The objective of the plans is to provide a safe, secure and sustainable water servicing system for the Lower Hunter and Greater Sydney regions now and for the future. The Greater Sydney Water Strategy is estimated for completion in 2020 and the Lower Hunter Water Security Plan is estimated for completion in 2021.

The Independent Metropolitan Water Advisory Panel (the Panel) has been formed to provide advice on best practice water planning and management for the urban areas of the lower Hunter and Greater Sydney.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Panel is to provide independent expert advice to the Water Sector Leadership Group on the development and implementation of the Lower Hunter Water Security Plan and the Greater Sydney Water Strategy as well as metropolitan water planning matters related to these plans.

The Panel will ensure best practice water management by advising on the science and decision-making processes associated with the development of the water plans. Panel members will use their expertise to strengthen the planning processes by ensuring that the most up to date knowledge and practices are applied. Panel members will provide a broad understanding of water sector issues and will provide insight as to their application to the water plans for Greater Sydney and the Lower Hunter.

TASKS

The Panel will:

1. advise the Water Sector Leadership Group on the development and implementation of the water plans for the Lower Hunter and Greater Sydney regions. Advice will aim to ensure that the most up to date knowledge and practices are being applied to planning work.
2. provide written advice to the Water Sector Leadership Group on strategic issues related to the plans as required through the planning process.
3. undertake reviews of a specific nature in relation to water planning for the Lower Hunter and Greater Sydney regions as requested.
4. provide other advice on technical and process matters to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department).

MEMBERSHIP

Panel members, including the Chair, are appointed by the Minister. There will be seven Panel members in total, including the Chair.

Panel members will be appointed for a two-year term as specified in their letter of appointment from the Minister. This appointment term is consistent with the estimated timeframe for the release of the Greater Sydney Water Strategy and the Lower Hunter Water Security Plan and their

associated Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement plans. The Minister may disband the Panel earlier if the relevant tasks are complete and its expertise is no longer required.

Panel members are expected to have expertise and experience in one or more of the following:

- urban water planning and integrated water cycle management
- water infrastructure
- water conservation and demand management
- environmental issues associated with urban water planning (environmental flows, waterway health etc.)
- climate science
- economics of urban water systems
- land use/city planning and liveability
- Aboriginal values of water
- recycled water and stormwater harvesting
- monitoring and evaluation in the water sector
- groundwater ecosystems and management
- any other fields determined relevant by the Department.

The chief executives of Sydney Water, WaterNSW, Hunter Water and Central Coast Council may be invited to attend meetings of the Panel to provide detailed information and advice about their water supply systems or services. Their presence does not imply endorsement by any of the interagency governance groups of any of the Panel's findings or recommendations.

The Panel may invite other people to attend meetings to provide advice and assistance where necessary. Non-members may be asked by the Chair to leave meetings at any time.

The Panel's decisions will be made by consensus.

MEETINGS AND OTHER COMMITMENTS

Meetings are led by the Chair of the Panel. The Panel meets approximately four times per year, at quarterly intervals. The time and frequency of meetings may be subject to slight change as they will be determined by the key bodies of work requiring Panel input. Additional meetings may be held at the request of the Panel or the Water Sector Leadership Group, if needed. The duration of each meeting will generally be one full day.

In the event that a Panel member is unable to attend a meeting, he or she must advise the Secretariat in advance.

Panel members must undertake adequate preparation for meetings. Approximately one day of preparation time will be required for each scheduled meeting.

While COVID-19 restrictions are in place, meetings will be conducted via video conference. Once restrictions are eased, face-to-face meeting will be preferred.

Meetings will generally be held in Sydney though this may depend on the issues to be covered.

Panel members will be reimbursed for travel. Travel costs and the costs of administering meetings will be met by the Department. Panel members may also attend meetings by video-conference if determined to be appropriate by the Chair and the Secretariat.

REMUNERATION

Remuneration will be consistent with the Public Service Commission guidelines for a Class C2-iv committee. Panel members meeting the above requirements for meetings and other commitments within the Terms of Reference will be remunerated at a rate of \$5,000 per annum for members and \$10,000 per annum for the Chair.

REMOVAL FROM THE PANEL

The Minister may review the membership of a Panel member if that member:

- misses more than two consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation,
- is known or suspected to have breached the Conflict of Interest, Media, and/or Confidentiality agreements signed by the member, or is known or suspected to have breached the Department's Code of Ethics and Conduct
- is no longer able to commit adequate time to his or her role
- has been in a disagreement with other members that cannot be resolved
- has a conflict of interest that cannot be mitigated
- is convicted of a criminal offence
- is unable to perform the duties of office due to illness or other commitments

The decision to remove a member from the Panel for any reason is made by the Minister.

SECRETARIAT SERVICES

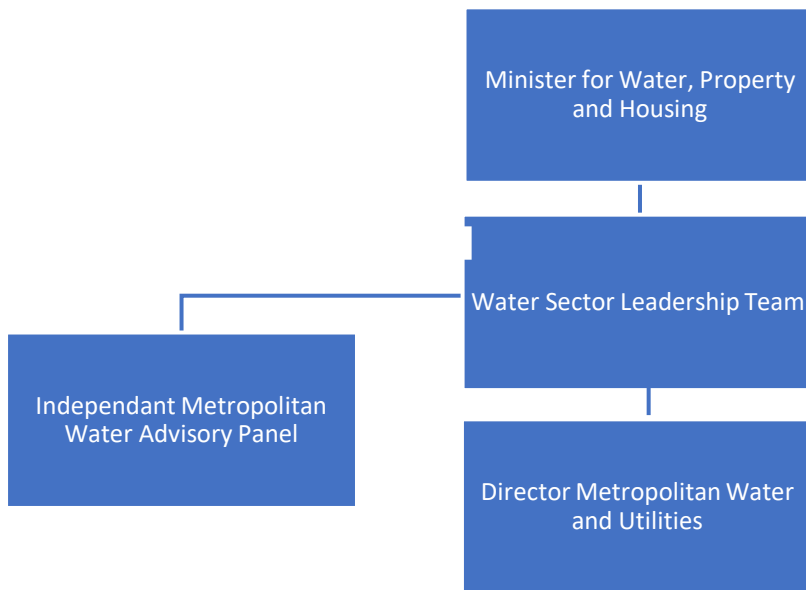
DPIE Water will provide Secretariat services to the Panel. The Secretariat will:

- prepare meeting agendas in consultation with the Chair of the Panel
- distribute the agenda and papers to Panel members in advance of each meeting
- take notes at meetings, prepare and distribute Minutes to Panel members
- assist the Panel in preparing papers, letters and other communications
- assist the Panel in obtaining information required to inform its deliberations.

REPORTING

The Panel will report to the Water Sector Leadership Group. The Water Sector Leadership group is chaired by the CEO Water Sector (Deputy Secretary Water), Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, and comprises the Chief Strategy Officer for the Water Sector; the Deputy Secretary, Commercial Group, Treasury; the Managing Director, Hunter Water; the CEO, Sydney Water; and the CEO, Water NSW. The organisational structure is shown in Figure 1 below.

The Panel is an advisory body and does not serve a governance or approval role in the Greater Sydney Water Strategy or Lower Hunter Water Security Plan processes.



CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, CONFIDENTIALITY AND MEDIA

Responsibilities relating to conflicts of interest, confidentiality and media are covered in individual confidentiality agreements with each Panel member. Members are also required to abide by the Department's Code of Ethics and Conduct:

https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/297108/DPIE-Code-of-Ethics-and-Conduct-External.pdf