



# **GREATER WESTERN WATER 2024–2028 PRICE SUBMISSION**

**COMMUNITY PANEL**  
Process Report

**March - June 2023**

## LIMITATIONS OF USE

This report has been prepared by MosaicLab on behalf of and for the exclusive use of Greater Western Water

The sole purpose of this report is to provide a report on the methodology and process undertaken for the Greater Western Water Price Submission Community Panel.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services set out by the Greater Western Water Price Submission project. Greater Western Water can choose to share and distribute this report as they see fit. MosaicLab accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for or in respect of any use of or reliance upon this report by any third party.

*MosaicLab is a team of engagement practitioners and facilitators based in Victoria. We work with government agencies, community groups, industry and commercial organisations and support them to have meaningful conversations that lead to action. Our processes bring diverse people together to solve complex problems and make a positive difference to decision-making.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Greater Western Water region covers the formally recognised Traditional Owner Countries of the Bunurong, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung people, known as the Kulin Nations.

We respectfully acknowledge the Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters upon which we work, operate and rely. We acknowledge the continued cultural, social and spiritual connections that First Nations people have with Country.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



REMIT .....	1	PANEL OVERVIEW .....	12
FAST FACTS .....	2	ROLES .....	15
ABOUT GREATER WESTERN WATER'S PRICE SUBMISSION COMMUNITY PANEL .....	2	RECRUITMENT .....	16
THE PROCESS.....	2	THE GREATER WESTERN WATER PRICING SUBMISSION COMMUNITY PANEL AS COMPARED TO DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SERVICE AREA.....	17
RESULTS SUMMARY – PARTICIPANT SURVEY (PARTICIPANT CHANGE) .....	3	PANEL ROADMAP.....	18
INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIC AFFAIRS .....	3	DETAILED PANEL PROCESS TIMELINE .....	19
CONFIDENCE IN INFLUENCE OVER DECISION MAKING .....	3	PANEL DAY 1.....	19
CONFIDENCE IN IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS .....	3	PANEL DAY 2.....	20
TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY .....	3	INFORMATION INPUTS .....	22
PROCESS AUTHENTICITY AND COLLABORATION	4	SPEAKERS .....	24
QUALITY OF INFORMATION.....	4	PANEL DAY 1 – EXPERT SPEAKERS.....	24
PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT .....	5	PANEL DAY 2 – PANEL NOMINATED SPEAKERS....	25
WHAT IS A COMMUNITY PANEL? .....	6	PANEL REPORT.....	27
WHAT IS A COMMUNITY PANEL? .....	9	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	27
PROCESS ROADMAP .....	10	1. UNPLANNED DISRUPTIONS.....	27
WIDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS .....	11	2. SERVICE LEVELS .....	27
GREATER WESTERN WATER PRICE SUBMISSION COMMUNITY PANEL .....	12	3. GETTING WATER FROM OTHER SOURCES.....	28
		4. WATERWAY HEALTH .....	28
		5. OTHER.....	28
		PANEL FEEDBACK.....	29
		INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIC AFFAIRS .....	29
		INFLUENCE AND IMPLEMENTATION .....	30
		TRUST .....	32
		COLLABORATION & OVERALL PROCESS AUTHENTICITY .....	33
		CLEAR, USEFUL AND BALANCED INFORMATION.....	34
		QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK .....	35
		NEXT STEPS .....	37



# REMIT



Greater Western Water are committed to providing reliable supplies of water, sewerage, recycled water services, supporting high periods of community growth, and understanding the impact of changing climatic conditions on the areas we service. We recognise these service areas include diverse communities that want a stronger voice in determining their future.

**“HOW DO WE KEEP PROVIDING AFFORDABLE SERVICES FOR ALL OUR CUSTOMERS, WHILE PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE?”**



# FAST FACTS



## About Greater Western Water's Price Submission Community Panel

### THE PROCESS

- 44 deliberative participants.
- 1,346 collective participant hours spent in deliberation.
- 44 deliberative session hours.
- 5 sessions (1.5 full days in-person, 3 full days online).
- 136 collective facilitator hours spent in deliberation.
- Number of 'expert' speaker interactions: 20 Greater Western Water representatives and 8 speakers external to Greater Western Water.

### THE OUTPUTS

- 15 recommendations with supermajority (80% or more) support.
- 4 recommendations on 'spend' under 4 key topic areas with supermajority (80% or more) support.

# RESULTS SUMMARY – PARTICIPANT SURVEY (PARTICIPANT CHANGE)

---

## INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIC AFFAIRS

### 495% growth

in the number of participants who said they would be 'involved' or 'highly' involved in civic affairs.

### 58 PERCENTAGE POINTS INCREASE (PRE 12% TO POST 70%)

12% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they had been 'involved' or 'very involved' in government decisions that affected them in the past. At the end of the process, 70% of post-deliberation survey respondents said they thought they would be 'involved' or 'highly involved' in the future.

## CONFIDENCE IN INFLUENCE OVER DECISION MAKING

### 361% growth

in the number of participants who said they felt 'confident' or 'very confident' that they would have influence over the decision.

### 74 PERCENTAGE POINTS INCREASE (PRE 21% TO POST 95%)

21% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they had been 'confident' or 'very confident' that community input would influence Greater Western Water or government agency decisions in the past. At the end of the process, 95% of post-deliberation respondents said they were 'confident' or 'very confident' that the panel's recommendations on this issue would be implemented by Greater Western Water.

## CONFIDENCE IN IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### 102% growth

in the number of participants who were confident or very confident that Greater Western Water would implement the panel's recommendations.

### 48 PERCENTAGE POINTS INCREASE (PRE 47% to POST 95%)

47% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they were 'confident' or 'very confident' that the panel's recommendations would be implemented by Greater Western Water. At the end of the process, 95% of post-deliberation respondents said they were 'confident' or 'very confident' that the panel's recommendations would be implemented.

## TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### 72% growth

in the number of participants who said they believe Greater Western Water is 'fairly' or 'very' trustworthy and accountable.

### 36 PERCENTAGE POINTS INCREASE (PRE 50% to POST 86%)

50% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said that Greater Western Water and other government agencies were 'very trustworthy and accountable' or 'trustworthy and accountable'. At the end of the process, 86% of post-deliberation survey respondents said that Greater Western Water was 'trustworthy and accountable' or 'very trustworthy and accountable'.

## PROCESS AUTHENTICITY AND COLLABORATION

### **188% growth**

in the number of participants who said they believed the process was 'collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' or 'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' (compared to past community engagement activities).

### **56 PERCENTAGE POINTS INCREASE (PRE 30% to POST 86%)**

29% felt that Greater Western Water and other government agencies community engagement activities had been 'collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' or 'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' in the past. At the end of the process, 86% of post-deliberation survey respondents felt that this process was 'collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' or 'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile'.

## QUALITY OF INFORMATION

### **86% of participants**

felt that information provided during the deliberative process was 'clear, useful and balanced' or 'very clear, useful and balanced'. (This question was asked in the post-deliberation survey only)



# PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

---

The report summarises the design and implementation of the Greater Western Water Price Submission Community Panel and has been prepared by MosaicLab, who were independent facilitators for the process.

Deliberation is built around integrity, principles and transparency. The purpose of this report is to provide a transparent record of the design and implementation of the **Greater Western Water Price Submission Community Panel** process.

This includes the results of pre and post deliberation surveys undertaken to collate feedback from panel members. These results have been presented in full.





# WHAT IS A COMMUNITY PANEL?

A community panel is a name for a deliberative forum. These processes work on the premise that people can deliver smart, long-term decisions which earn public trust if they are given enough information and time to weigh up the pros and cons and consider the trade-offs associated with an issue.

**Deliberation is built around ten core principles which are listed below.**

## INFLUENTIAL



Deliberation requires decision makers to give weight to and implement the outcomes to the greatest extent possible. This forms a foundation for building trust with your community.

Deliberation isn't about asking people their opinion and then disregarding their views, which significantly reduces trust and results in poorly supported outcomes.

## DELIBERATIVE



Deliberation goes beyond conversation and dialogue. It requires those deliberating to weigh up options and come to judgement on a problem.

Deliberation isn't about people giving you a wish list or a list of ideas. It results in clear direction for organisation decision makers.

## REPRESENTATIVE



Deliberation requires that the deliberating group is representative of the whole community. The group is usually selected using an independently conducted, random, stratified process.

Deliberation isn't about allowing anyone to turn up and people to 'self-select', like the participants at a public meeting. It allows you as decision makers to have a high level of comfort, because you know what everyday people who are broadly representative of your customers or community think is reasonable (once they are informed). This is more valuable than knowing only what interest groups and highly articulate and invested people are lobbying for.

## INFORMATIVE



Deliberation requires that people have detailed, in-depth, and balanced information before they come to judgement. This includes hearing different perspectives, including the views of experts and interest groups.

Deliberation isn't about asking people for uninformed views. It allows you as organisation decision makers to know that the recommendations being provided to you are based on evidence and have considered all sides of the issue.

### TIME



Deliberation requires that the deliberating group is given sufficient time to become informed about the issues, weigh up options and come to judgement. Long form processes are usually four-six full days. An online (equivalent) process or a short process can be held over two-three days if you are scaling down.

Deliberation isn't about holding a short workshop or evening meeting.

### BLANK PAGE REPORT



Deliberation requires that participants respond to the remit by writing their own report. Starting with a blank page, they refine and agree on their final recommendations, then present their report directly to decision makers for consideration.

Deliberation isn't about providing options or a draft report. The organisation doesn't gather feedback on their own ideas. Instead, the organisation hears directly from their customers or community without any interpretation from consultants or staff.

### TRANSPARENT



Deliberation is a public process that seeks to build trust in democratic decision making and as such all aspects should be made public unless there are extenuating circumstances. Members of the public should be able to observe the deliberating group in action and the report of the group should be made public immediately after it is handed to the key decision maker. All information considered by the group should be considered public and be on the project website. Communication activities such as sharing videos of the process and interviews with participants can also help to increase transparency.

Deliberation isn't about working behind closed doors. It allows the public to see that it has been a fair process.

### CLEAR REMIT



Deliberation is about the deliberating group responding to a remit - or primary question - that goes to the core of the issue, shares the dilemma, and promotes open discussion. The remit question is clear and written in plain English.

Deliberation isn't about responding to easy issues. It allows the organisation to receive solutions to complex problems.

### INDEPENDENT FACILITATION



Deliberation is designed and facilitated by independent, professional facilitators with experience in deliberation. Facilitation enables individuals to work through a designed set of activities (conversations) to collectively and productively produce an outcome (recommendations). Facilitators ensure that all group members are given equal opportunity to participate.

Deliberation isn't about the group being led to a pre-determined result.

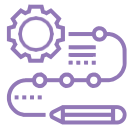
### INCLUSIVE



Deliberation requires that barriers to participation are removed so that anyone feels they could participate in a deliberation. Some barriers are easily managed, for example, paying people an honorarium to cover the costs of their participation (travel, childcare etc.). Also, support can be provided to people living with disabilities and meetings can be held in accessible venues. Other barriers, such as people not having the time or considering that this is, (i.e. 'not for them') are harder to remove.

Deliberation isn't about excluding people and it ensures that the organisation hears from a true cross-section of its community.

**Expert facilitation is a vital element to foster vibrant deliberative dialogue and a supportive, open environment. The table below summarises some of the key roles of facilitators in a deliberative process.**



Design a process that is participatory and engaging, enables the group to meet their remit, and builds in key elements. These elements include relationship building, critical thinking, information sharing and group agreement.



Encourage participants to express themselves freely.



Protect process integrity, transparency and independence.



Encourage active participation from all group members.



Keep the group moving through the process at an adequate pace in order to deliver a report during the time allocated.



Ensure no one individual dominates.



# WHAT IS A COMMUNITY PANEL?

Greater Western Water (GWW) was formed on 1 July 2021, bringing together Western Water (WW) and City West Water (CWW) to meet the demands of the region and deliver reliable, affordable and secure water services, now and for decades to come. Greater Western Water provides drinking water, recycled water, sewerage and trade waste services to approximately 550,000 residential customers and more than 50,000 non-residential customers.

The Victorian Essential Services Commission (ESC) is an independent government regulator with oversight of a number of industries including water, electricity and gas, councils and the taxi industry.

The ESC regulates the Victorian water sector through frameworks and several key pieces of legislation. One of these frameworks is the PREMO water pricing framework. It was introduced from 1 July 2018 and is designed to put customers at the centre of a water business' decision making. Greater Western Water is one of 15 Victorian water authorities that are required to submit their five-year pricing plan to the ESC for approval.

Greater Western Water need to demonstrate that prices and investments are prudent and meet business requirements and are fair in terms of the impact on our customers and the community.

You can find out more information about the ESC's role in the Victorian water sector on their website <https://www.esc.vic.gov.au/water>.

In 2022, Greater Western Water undertook an engagement process in relation to its water pricing submission which aimed to seek customer input into the 2024-2028 pricing plan. The results of the engagement will be submitted to the ESC for approval.





## PROCESS ROADMAP

The roadmap below provides an overview of the 2024-2028 Price Submission customer engagement program.

ACTIVATION	EXPLORATION	VALUATION	DELIBERATION	CONFIRMATION
August - October 2022	October - November 2022	December - February 2023	March - April 2023	May - June 2023
<b>PURPOSE</b> Defining the purpose of engagement and its goals	<b>PURPOSE</b> Test interests, concerns and priorities	<b>PURPOSE</b> Determine customer willingness to pay/priorities	<b>PURPOSE</b> Allow a representative sample of community members to make recommendations	<b>PURPOSE</b> Close the loop with participants, the customer committee, stakeholders and the community
<b>KEY TASKS</b> Codesign Engagement interviews with subject matter experts	<b>KEY TASKS</b> Focus Groups Community survey stakeholder survey Interviews	<b>KEY TASKS</b> Bill simulator/choice model Focus Groups Priorities and trade-offs survey	<b>KEY TASKS</b> Deliberative community panel	<b>KEY TASKS</b> Participant feedback form Stakeholder feedback form Customer Forum Community Panel recall day engagement with the wider community
<b>INPUTS</b> Background documents	<b>INPUTS</b> Outcomes of Customer, Communities and Country	<b>INPUTS</b> Topics and trade-offs developed from the exploration stage	<b>INPUTS</b> Wider engagement report Background report	<b>INPUTS</b> Peer review Draft Price Submission
<b>OUTPUTS</b> Strategic engagement plan Analysis of existing insights and industry data	<b>OUTPUTS</b> Topics for valuation and deliberation phases	<b>OUTPUTS</b> Wider engagement report	<b>OUTPUTS</b> Panel report process report Recommendations for the pricing submission	<b>OUTPUTS</b> Feedback from the community including participants and stakeholders

# WIDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

---

The wider engagement program, (the exploration and valuation phases – refer to the roadmap above) ran from July 2021 to February 2023 and included;

- ♦ engagement preferences focus groups
- ♦ tariff focus groups
- ♦ desktop review
- ♦ engagement with First Nations health and community groups
- ♦ explorative focus groups
- ♦ community survey
- ♦ stakeholder survey and interviews
- ♦ prioritisation workshop
- ♦ best worst scaling (It's your choice) survey
- ♦ bill simulator, and
- ♦ bill simulator focus groups.

In total, more than 9,500 customer responses have been analysed in the wider engagement process.

The insights from this phase were fed into the Community Panel, which began on 5 of March 2023 and included 44 people. Panellists were independently recruited by Sortition Foundation to match the demographic profile of the Greater Western Water Region.

# GREATER WESTERN WATER PRICE SUBMISSION COMMUNITY PANEL

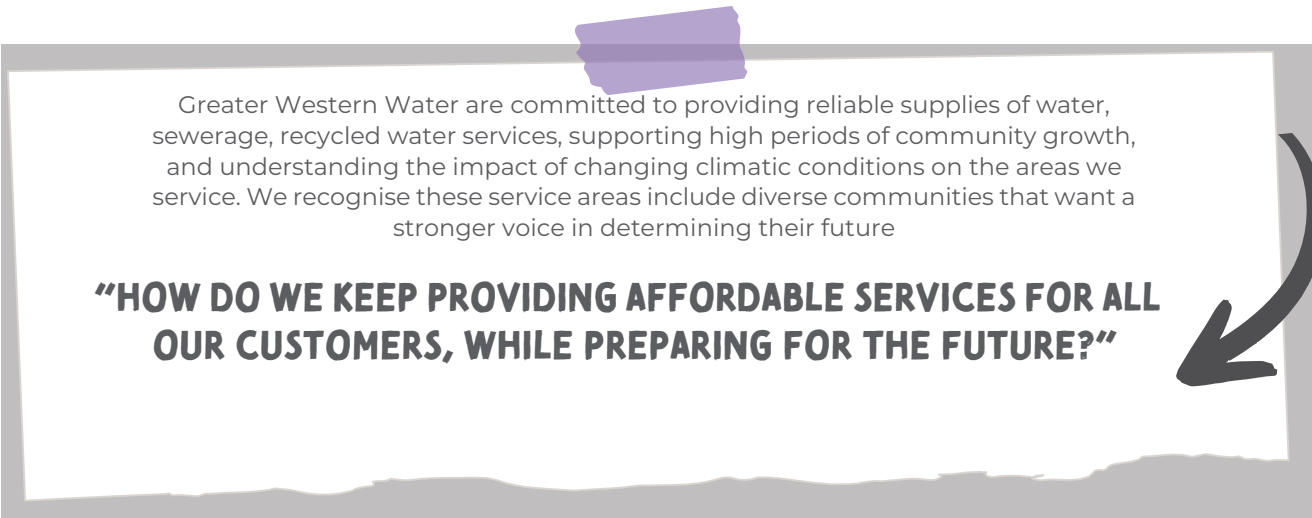
## PANEL OVERVIEW

The Greater Western Water Price Submission Community Panel was held in a combination of face to face and online sessions, the panel met for an afternoon meet and greet session, followed by four full days.

Some members of the panel required support to participate fully in the process. In these instances, Greater Western Water provided babysitters, access to laptops and the internet, translators, and technical support for online sessions.

The panel was tasked with producing recommendations to be used by Greater Western Water to guide their development of a submission to the ESC on water pricing for the next five years. The panel were invited to focus upon four specific areas identified by Greater Western Water as areas where they were facing difficult dilemmas.

The Greater Western Water Price Submission Community Panel involved randomly selected participants from Greater Western Waters service area to consider the following remit.



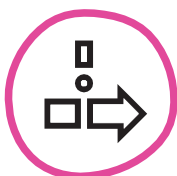
Greater Western Water are committed to providing reliable supplies of water, sewerage, recycled water services, supporting high periods of community growth, and understanding the impact of changing climatic conditions on the areas we service. We recognise these service areas include diverse communities that want a stronger voice in determining their future

**“HOW DO WE KEEP PROVIDING AFFORDABLE SERVICES FOR ALL  
OUR CUSTOMERS, WHILE PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE?”**

The panel included people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and a range of ages. In total, the panel had 44 active participants. 45 people were originally randomly selected for the panel; however, three panel members withdrew by the first session, these participants were replaced to the extent possible and the panel ended up at 44. This is normal and expected due to changes in circumstances such as job or family arrangements.



The panel met online and in person and were provided opportunities to listen to different perspectives and ideas and hear from internal and external experts. The group considered information on four main topic areas:



## 1. UNEXPECTED DISRUPTIONS

**Topic:** Unexpected disruptions are usually when you can't use your water or sewerage (e.g., turn on tap and nothing comes out, or water doesn't drain away).

**Question:** *What are your key concerns, priorities and interests in this topic? What values and principles should GWW use when decisions need to be made on this topic?*



## 2. SERVICE LEVELS

**Topic:** Where we source, store and distribute our water from can mean differences in water taste and water security, so not everyone experiences the same service.

**Question:** *What is your advice on how GWW should balance its investment priorities between drought resilience, taste and water pressure. What principles and priorities should GWW keep in mind when making decisions about where to invest in improvements?*



## 3. WATER FROM OTHER SOURCES

**Topic:** We can help to improve the liveability of our service region by supporting the harvesting, treatment and usage of stormwater and recycled water to improve liveability.

**Question:** *What level of investment represents the right balance between affordability and service for harvesting, treating and using stormwater. What things should GWW consider when deciding on which projects to invest in?*



## 4. RESTORING AND PROTECTING WATERWAYS

**Topic:** GWW can influence the restoration and protection of waterways, including using treated alternative water to improve waterway health.

**Question:** *To improve waterway health, GWW works on projects that use alternative water (recycled and stormwater) to increase flows in waterways or projects that improve the quality of water released to waterways. What level of investment represents the right balance between affordability and service?*

Participants met over five sessions, commencing with the Meet and Greet on 5 March 2023, and participated in four full panel days over the following two months.

The process involved:



- a clear question (remit) to focus the deliberations access to a broad range of information from a variety of sources relevant to the remit



- support from facilitators experienced in delivering deliberative processes



- conversations and Q&A with Greater Western Water and panel identified key speakers (see information inputs section)



- an online portal that provided a central place for participants to access relevant information inputs as well as a discussion forum



- 35 hours per person of discussion and deliberations across five panel sessions (one afternoon plus four full days)



- group agreement, where a supermajority (80% or more of the panel said they could live with it or better) was needed for a recommendation to be included in the final report.

The panel agreed on final recommendations that will be used to inform Greater Western Water's 2024-2028 Price Submission. The group wrote their own report, which contained:

- ♦ a brief introduction
- ♦ one recommendation on level of spend for each of the four topic areas:
  - Unplanned disruptions
  - Service levels
  - Getting water from other sources
  - Waterway health
- ♦ 15 recommendations that captured the title, description and reasoning.

All panel members had the opportunity to write and/or review and refine each recommendation. 36 panel members agreed by supermajority (80% of the panellists or more) that they would accept all 15 of the recommendations and all four spend recommendations.

At the conclusion of their final session on Sunday 7 May 2023, the panel handed over their report to the Greater Western Water CEO, Maree Lang, and Chair, David Middleton.

The Greater Western Water team has committed to using the recommendations to the maximum extent possible and will clearly articulate where the panel's decisions have influenced the development of their final pricing submission. Where a decision or recommendation of the panel is not incorporated, Greater Western Water will clearly explain why.

## ROLES

Multiple groups were involved in the project. Their roles are outlined in the table below.

NAME	GROUP	ROLE
Panel members	<i>Randomly selected community members</i>	To work together to respond to a remit and provide recommendations to Greater Western Water.
Greater Western Water	<i>Host</i>	To support the process, provide expertise and knowledge as requested by the panel, observe the process, answer specific questions directed to them, and respond to the panel's final report.
MosaicLab facilitators	<i>Independent facilitators</i>	<p>To provide a supportive, inclusive, culturally safe and productive space that enabled panel members to deliberate, respond to their remit and make recommendations within the time available.</p> <p>To provide support as needed, to ensure panel members could participate in sessions.</p>
Insync	<i>Independent consultant</i>	<p>To oversee the entire engagement process and undertake the wider engagement process.</p> <p>To provide expert knowledge and advice, and answer questions from the panel on the wider engagement process.</p> <p>To answer questions from the panel relating to the wider engagement process and findings</p>
Sortition Foundation	<i>Independent recruiters</i>	To manage the recruitment process (including random selection and stratification) and to ensure it was fair and unbiased.
Expert speakers	<i>Content experts</i>	To provide expert knowledge into the process and answer questions from the panel members.
Observers	<i>Representatives of the host organisation</i>	To observe the panel deliberations, increase transparency of the process and follow the observer 'code of conduct'.
Liberty Sun	<i>Translators</i>	To ensure that people who spoke a language other than English could participate fully.

## RECRUITMENT

Sortition Foundation managed panel recruitment via a random, stratified selection process. This ensured the selection of panellists was conducted independently of Greater Western Water and the facilitation team.

An expressions of interest period was conducted in January to February 2023 and respondents were asked to nominate their interest in the panel.

The Sortition Foundation sent 9,000 invitations to randomly selected addresses across the Greater Western Water service area. Everyone aged 16 years or over and living or working at an address that received an invitation was invited to register interest. The cohorts excluded from the selection process were:

- ♦ current Greater Western Water staff
- ♦ current Greater Western Water board members
- ♦ current elected officials.

The people who registered their interest were placed in a 'pool' which was randomly stratified by the Sortition Foundation to select the final panel.

Stratified selection against stratification goals ensured that the final panel selected was descriptively representative of the demographics of the overall service area population (i.e., forming a 'mini-public' of citizens). Stratification goals were based on demographic statistics for people aged 18 years and over in the municipality, using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data.

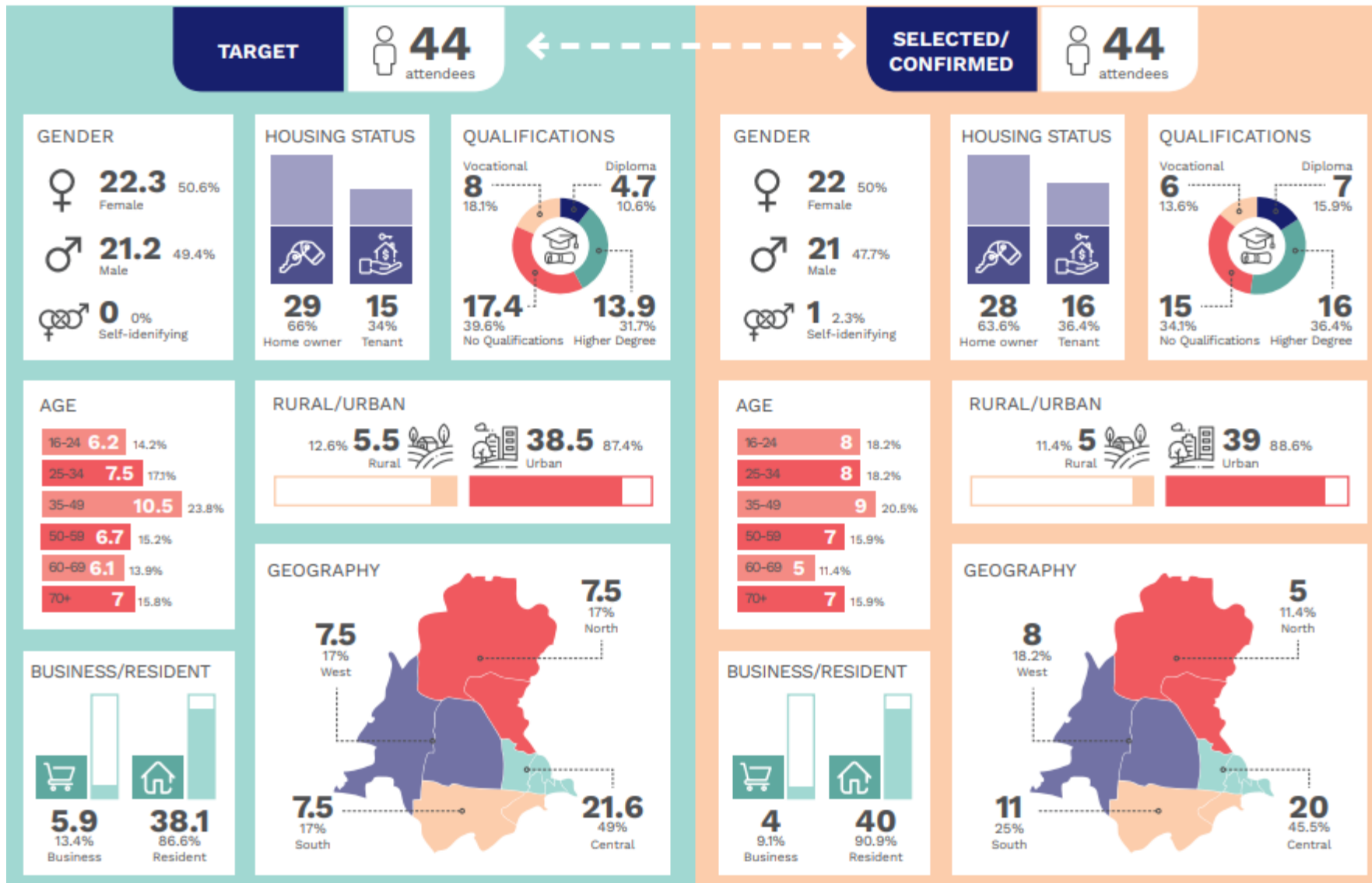
The stratification goals for this process were based on:

- ♦ location (address)
- ♦ homeowner/renters
- ♦ age range
- ♦ gender
- ♦ level of education
- ♦ residential/business customer

Sortition Foundation used a digital stratification tool for the random stratification step, which limited human intervention in the selection process, adding further independence to the process. Further to the broad recruitment, two spaces were specifically reserved for people who identify as First Nations to ensure all voices of our community were included in the discussion.

45 people were initially recruited by Sortition Foundation to the Greater Western Water price submission community panel. Some of the 45 people selected were unable to commit to the process or dates as planned as their circumstances had changed since registering their interest, these were replaced from the pool who had originally expressed interest. The final panel membership was 44, see diagram below for panel composition.

## THE GREATER WESTERN WATER PRICING SUBMISSION COMMUNITY PANEL AS COMPARED TO DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SERVICE AREA



# PANEL ROADMAP

The roadmap below provides an overview of the Greater Western Water Price Submission Community Panel.

MEET AND GREET	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3	SESSION 4	RECALL DAY
1PM – 4PM Sunday 5 March	9AM-5PM Sunday 19 March	9AM-5PM Sunday 2 April	9AM-5PM Sunday 30 April	9AM-5PM Sunday 7 May	9AM – 5PM SUNDAY 18 JUNE
Getting to know each other  Working agreements  Understand our journey and task	Critical thinking  Hear about the Price Submission  Discuss project background information  Hear from GWW guest speakers  Identify information gaps and your speakers for Day 2	Hear from your nominated speakers  Explore the tradeoffs and dilemmas  Develop insights from all the information  Start building Panel ideas for recommendations	Review ideas from last session  Learn more about cost & suggest a range for each focus area  Start writing first cut recommendations  Review and refine  Provide further group feedback to improve the draft	Hear briefly from GWW about recommendations  Review and refine recommendations  Agree on our recommendations  Prepare and handover your final panel report	Hear from GWW on how the panel recommendations have shaped the price submission and provide feedback on how they have understood and incorporated the panel's advice.

## DETAILED PANEL PROCESS TIMELINE

### MEET AND GREET

Sunday, 5 March 2023 | 1pm – 4pm | 38 participants | Face to Face

#### ***Greater Western Water & MosaicLab***

- ◊ Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country.
- ◊ Formal welcome and introduction from Maree Lang CEO Greater Western Water.
- ◊ Learning about how the panel will operate (make decisions).
- ◊ Opportunity to become acquainted with fellow panel members.
- ◊ Introduction to the context of this project and challenges for the panel to consider - Kessia Thompson General Manager, Strategy and Partnerships.
- ◊ Opportunity to ask questions of Greater Western Water.
- ◊ Overview of information inputs (inc. background report, panel handbook) - Jakin Ravalico, Manager, Price Submission and Regulation.
- ◊ Understanding how to access the panel's online portal – Alex Syrjanen, Engagement Lead Price Submission.
- ◊ Setting agreements about how the panel works together.
- ◊ Understanding each panel members level of comfort with the task and any needs for participation.

Online task between sessions:

Panel members were asked to register on the online portal, say hello and introduce themselves. The group read background information provided and completed a photo consent form and pre-deliberation survey.

### PANEL DAY 1

Sunday, 19 March 2023 | 9am – 5pm | 40 participants | Online

#### ***Greater Western Water & MosaicLab***

- ◊ Welcome and acknowledgment of Country.
- ◊ Learning about critical thinking.
- ◊ Overview of the pricing submission process – Jakin Ravalico, Manager, Price Submission and Regulation.
- ◊ Overview of wider engagement – James Garriock, Executive Director, Insync.
- ◊ Questions to Greater Western Water, and Insync.
- ◊ Delving into the background information.
- ◊ Speed dialogue with seven guest speakers (curated by Greater Western Water to bring a diverse set of views).
- ◊ Panel identifies their information gaps and speakers they want to hear from.

Online task between sessions:

Panel members were invited to review answers to questions from the Meet & Greet session and Panel Day



## PANEL DAY 2

Sunday, 19 March 2023 | 9am – 5pm | 40 participants | Online

Greater Western Water & MosaicLab

- ♦ Welcome and acknowledgment of Country.
- ♦ Understanding the role of Greater Western Water in managing water - Jakin Ravalico, Manager, Price Submission and Regulation.
- ♦ Speed dialogue with seven panel selected speakers.
- ♦ Greater Western Water presentation on costs and bill impacts across key topic areas.
- ♦ Opportunity to ask questions of Greater Western Water regarding the four key topic areas.
- ♦ Brainstorm of initial ideas to address remit.

Online task between sessions:

Review the early ideas and consider how they relate to the remit.

## PANEL DAY 3

Sunday, 19 March 2023 | 9am – 5pm | 40 participants | Online

Greater Western Water & MosaicLab

- ♦ Welcome and acknowledgment of Country.
- ♦ Reviewing scope - Jakin Ravalico, Manager, Price Submission and Regulation.
- ♦ Revisit grouped ideas.
- ♦ Greater Western Water presentation on costs and tradeoffs.
- ♦ Check in on the panel's initial thoughts on spend.
- ♦ Drafting of initial recommendations addressed in the remit.
- ♦ Panel review and provide feedback on draft recommendations.
- ♦ Refine recommendations based on feedback.
- ♦ Small groups write recommendations on levels of 'spend' for each key topic area.
- ♦ Panel complete individual 'levels of comfort' survey on initial draft recommendation.

The initial draft recommendations were shared with Greater Western Water. Greater Western Water prepared a response to the recommendations summarising what they understood the Panel to mean, what they thought they could do in response and things Greater Western Water was seeking clarity about. These were shared with the panel prior to Day 4.

Online task between sessions:

on initial draft recommendations, and Greater Western Water's response document.

## PANEL DAY 4

Sunday, 7 May 2023 | 9am – 5pm | 36 participants | Face-to-face

### **Greater Western Water & MosaicLab**

- ♦ Welcome to Country – Wurundjeri Man, Daniel Ross
- ♦ Presentation by Greater Western Water in response to draft recommendations - Jakin Ravalico, Manager, Price Submission and Regulation.
- ♦ Panel redrafts recommendations and recommended level of spend, based on 'levels of comfort' survey response, and Greater Western Water response document.
- ♦ A small group was responsible for ensuring that the spend across all key topic areas and within each key topic area matched the panels expectations.
- ♦ Greater Western Water staff were available to support the panel to understand the impact of their recommendation on the customer bill as they reviewed and refined their recommendations.
- ♦ The panel made their final decision on their recommendations, levels of 'spend' and Introduction.
- ♦ The panel finished their report and presented it to Greater Western Water.
- ♦ Final reflections and closing circle.



## INFORMATION INPUTS

The panel considered a wide variety of information inputs from a variety of different sources. The table below lists the key information inputs provided.

INPUT	DESCRIPTION
<b>Background report</b>	<p>Prepared by Greater Western Water and Insync to outline core information to the challenges being discussed and the panels remit particularly relating to the four key topic areas. The document also outlined key findings of the wider engagement conducted for the pricing submission on each of these topics.</p> <p>Key parts of this document were also translated to Mandarin for the Mandarin speakers in the group.</p>
<b>Background supporting documents on Wider Engagement.</b>	<p>Additional documents were also supplied to the panel outlining the engagement methodology and 'who we heard from' in the wider engagement piece. These documents were prepared by Insync and gave a detailed account of the wider engagement conducted.</p>
<b>Bill ready reckoner</b>	<p>The bill ready reckoner was designed to help panel members understand a range of revenue requirements and impact on an average bill of different customer types for Greater Western Water.</p>
<b>Q&amp;As with Greater Western Water representatives</b>	<p>Greater Western Water project representatives spoke to the panel about their remit, the process and the key topic areas being considered. At specific points in the process the panel could also request that and Greater Western Water staff member answer questions during panel sessions if needed.</p>
<b>Panel Handbook</b>	<p>A handbook was prepared by Greater Western Water with information about the panel task and logistics.</p>
<b>Greater Western Water Online Portal</b>	<p>Panel members were able to access an online portal hosted by Greater Western Water 'Yoursay' engagement platform in between sessions to stay in touch with one another, access information, and ask questions.</p>
<b>Participant Packs</b>	<p>Ahead of the jury, participants received an online pack containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Zoom cheat sheet.</li> <li>♦ Guide to working online.</li> </ul> <p>They were also provided an opportunity to participate in a technical support session before the Meet and Greet.</p>

Continued overleaf...

---

**Presentations**      Presentations were made to the panel by the following Greater Western Water staff:

**Meet and Greet**

Understanding the Task and Challenge  
Kessia Thompson  
General Manager, Strategy and Partnerships  
Understanding available information

Jakin Ravalico  
Manager, Price Submission  
Panel day 1  
Overview of Pricing Submission Process

Jakin Ravalico  
Manager, Price Submission  
Panel day 2  
Understanding the Role of Greater Western Water (and other government organisations)  
in managing water

Jakin Ravalico  
Manager, Price Submission  
Overview of the Dilemmas and Tradeoffs

Chris Plunkett  
Team Leader, Economic Regulation  
Sean Hanrahan  
Senior Manager, Infrastructure and Planning

Andrew Hickey  
Manager, Growth Planning  
Amy Higginbotham  
Manager, Operational Customer and Delivery Improvement

Rod Curtis  
Manager, Wastewater and Reuse Operations

**Panel day 3**

The Scope of the Panel  
Jakin Ravalico  
Manager, Price Submission

Costs and Tradeoffs  
Chris Plunkett  
Team Leader, Economic Regulation

**Panel day 4**

Greater Western Waters Response to the Draft Recommendations  
Jakin Ravalico  
Manager, Price Submission

---

## SPEAKERS

Across the four sessions there were two opportunities for speakers to discuss ideas with the panel members, in a process called speed dialogue.

### PANEL DAY 1 – EXPERT SPEAKERS

PERSPECTIVE	SPEAKER NAME	ORGANISATION AND ROLE
Service levels	Sean Hanrahan	Senior Manager, Infrastructure and Resource Planning, Greater Western Water
Waterway health and our role	Andrew Hickey	Manager, Growth Planning, Greater Western Water
Unexpected disruptions	Peter Nastasi	Team Leader, Asset Strategy, Greater Western Water
Economic terms and concepts	Chris Plunkett	Team Leader, Economic Regulation, Greater Western Water
Alternative water	Sam Innes	Integrated Water Management Specialist, Greater Western Water
Sustainable Water Strategies (SWS)	Heather Griffith	Director, Policy and Partnerships, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
Healthy waterways strategy	Daniel Besley	Senior Climate Change Specialist, Melbourne Water

## PANEL DAY 2 – PANEL NOMINATED SPEAKERS

SPEAKER	PERSPECTIVE	ORGANISATION AND ROLE
<b>Desalination speaker – Minister</b>	More understanding of the costs and impacts associated with desalination plants.	<b>Rowan Keeble</b> Senior Manager, Victorian Desalination Project Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
<b>Specialist on Recycled Water/Alternative Water</b>	To understand more about using stormwater, recycled water or other alternative water sources, what are the costs, impacts and blockers?	<b>Matthew Cunnington</b> Team Leader, Northern Wastewater Treatment, Greater Western Water
<b>Customer service/Hardship Team</b>	More information about hardships in the community and how people experiencing hardships are supported to pay their bill.	<b>Fiona Wilkes</b> Senior Consultant, Community and Care, Greater Western Water
<b>Information on service levels</b>	Understand plans for harmonization of service levels across the new Greater Western Water service areas. How will this increase reliability? More information about monitoring water quality and control of taste. Particularly as water levels change in reservoirs.	<b>Joe Vassallo</b> Manager, Maintenance & Network Services, Greater Western Water
<b>Climate scientist, who is involved in pricing modeling.</b>	More information about how climate and variability is factored into pricing. How is Greater Western Water building in climate change? How much is climate variability driving supply?	<b>Geoff Steendam</b> Senior Manager, Hydrology and Climate Science, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)

SPEAKER	PERSPECTIVE	ORGANISATION AND ROLE
Information on service levels	Understand plans for harmonization of service levels across the new Greater Western Water service areas. How will this increase reliability? More information about monitoring water quality and control of taste. Particularly as water levels change in reservoirs.	<b>Joe Vassallo</b> Manager, Maintenance & Network Services, Greater Western Water
Climate scientist, who is involved in pricing modeling.	More information about how climate and variability is factored into pricing. How is Greater Western Water building in climate change? How much is climate variability driving supply?	<b>Geoff Steendam</b> Senior Manager, Hydrology and Climate Science, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
Academic – ecologist/ environmental scientist	How do water management systems impact waterway health? How can water management systems be more efficient?	<b>A/Prof Avril Horne</b> Associate Professor – University of Melbourne, environmental scientist (climate change)
How flood and flood mitigation are managed	More information on the role of Greater Western Water and other government organisations such as Melbourne Water and Catchment Management Authorities.	<b>Jakin Ravalico</b> Manager, Price Submission, GWW



# PANEL REPORT

Responding to the remit, the panel delivered or achieved the following:

- ♦ Four recommendations on spend, one under each key topic area.
- ♦ 15 recommendations.
- ♦ Each recommendation received 80% or above approval from the panel.

Greater Western Water has promised to use the Community Panel's recommendations to the greatest extent possible when preparing their 2024 – 2028 Price Submission.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following 15 recommendations were written and decided by the Greater Western Water Price Submission Community Panel:



### 1. UNPLANNED DISRUPTIONS

- 1.1. Unplanned disruptions have been addressed in a proactive and timely manner.
- 1.2. GWW to change average based KPI to percentile based KPI. For example, 95% of disruptions are addressed within x amount of time.



### 2. SERVICE LEVELS

- 2.1. Improve infrastructure to support drought resilience across the GWW network.
- 2.2. Highest standard of water quality, taste and smell for everyone.
- 2.3. A short term and long-term plan for upgrading infrastructure for the future.
- 2.4. Support staff to upskill and hire more apprentices as opposed to hiring external contractors.
- 2.5. Prioritising the delivery & maintenance of harmonised pricing & service levels between regional-urban and urban areas.

...continued overleaf.



### 3. GETTING WATER FROM OTHER SOURCES

- 3.1. Collaborate with councils for high value projects that can maximise the use of alternative water sources (large parks/gardens/ recreation).
- 3.2. Increasing the amount of alternative water (stormwater and recycled) facilities for more access to homes that don't have them.
- 3.3. Investment and advocacy in alternative water sources e.g., recycled water and stormwater for things such as watering parks and gardens, or for livestock to drink (not for human consumption).



### 4. WATERWAY HEALTH

- 4.1. Education, community engagement and awareness are vital for the future of waterway health.
- 4.2. GWW investing in water treatment plants is necessary to protect our overall waterway health and environment.
- 4.3. Improve the quality of recycled water returning to waterways.
- 4.4. Invest in technology that makes the creation and supply of manufactured water/ alternate water for irrigation and industry affordable.



### 5. OTHER

- 5.1. Notify and communicate with customers in a more proactive and customised way to ensure greater accessibility for everyone.

To read the panel's final report, including a full description of each recommendation, go to the [Greater Western Water](#) website.

# PANEL FEEDBACK

Panel members were invited to complete a survey at two points in the process:

- ♦ after the meet and greet session (34 of the participants responded to the pre-deliberation survey)
- ♦ after panel completion (21 of the participants responded to the post-deliberation survey)

Feedback received has been summarised in the sections below.

## INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIC AFFAIRS

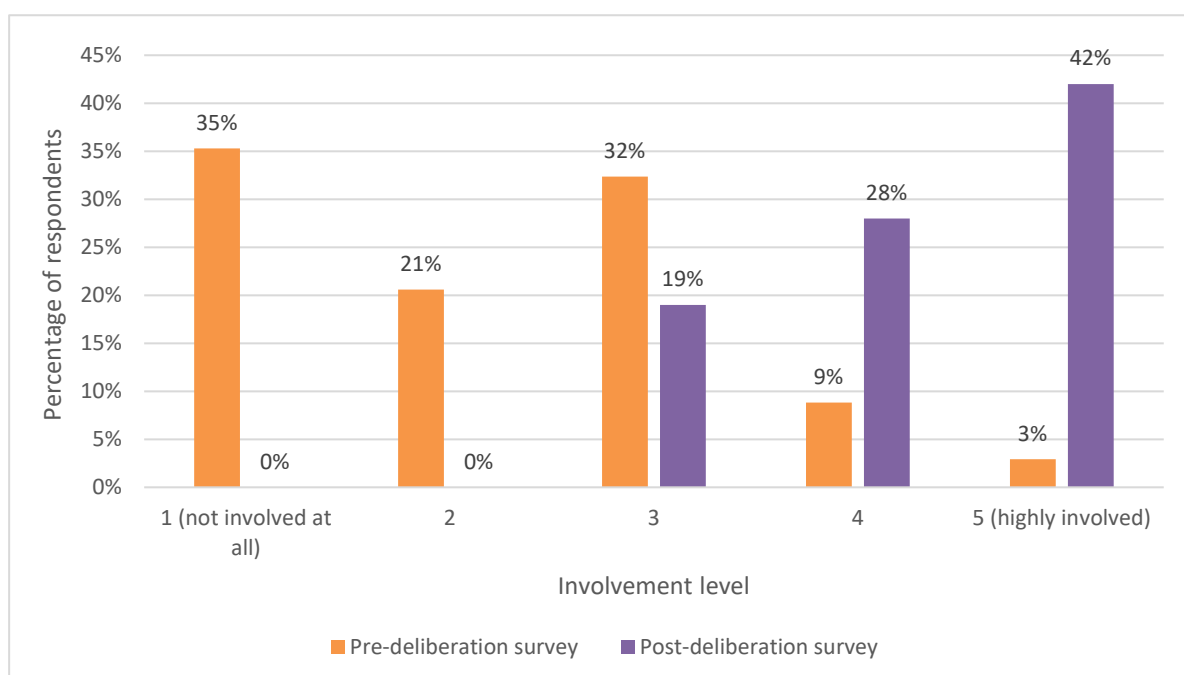
**495%**  
GROWTH

(a 58-percentage point increase) in the number of participants who said they would be involved or highly involved in civic affairs in future when compared with past levels of involvement.

Survey respondents said they thought they would be much more likely to participate in civic activities in future (i.e., get involved in government decisions that affect them) after being involved in the deliberative process.

At the beginning of the process, 56% of the group either were not involved in civic activities in the past or had had very little involvement and only 12% said they had been 'involved' or 'highly involved' in the past. By the end of the process, 70% said they thought they would be involved or highly involved in government decisions that affected them in future.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION	How involved are you currently when it comes to government decisions that affect you?
POST – DELIBERATION QUESTION	Now you have had this experience, how involved might you be in the future when it comes to government decisions that affect you?
SCALE / MEASURE	1=not involved at all and 5=highly involved



## INFLUENCE AND IMPLEMENTATION

361%

GROWTH

(a 74-percentage point increase) in the number of participants who were confident or very confident that they would have influence over the decision when compared to past confidence in community influence over government decisions.

102%

GROWTH

a 48-percentage point increase) in the number of participants who were confident or very confident that Greater Western Water would implement the panel's recommendations.

Participants were asked two questions in the pre-deliberation survey. First, they shared how confident they had felt in the past about the community's ability to influence governments decisions in general. They were also asked to indicate how confident they felt that Greater Western Water would implement their recommendations on the issue they were about to deliberate on. Results of both questions were then compared to the results of one post-deliberation question.

**Pre-deliberation question A:** Panel members were asked how confident they had been in the past that community input would influence government decisions. At the start of the process, 53% said they were very doubtful or doubtful that community input had influenced government decisions in the past. 21% said they were confident or very confident.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION	In the past, how confident have you been that community input will influence governments decisions.?
SCALE / MEASURE	1=very doubtful at all and 5=very confident

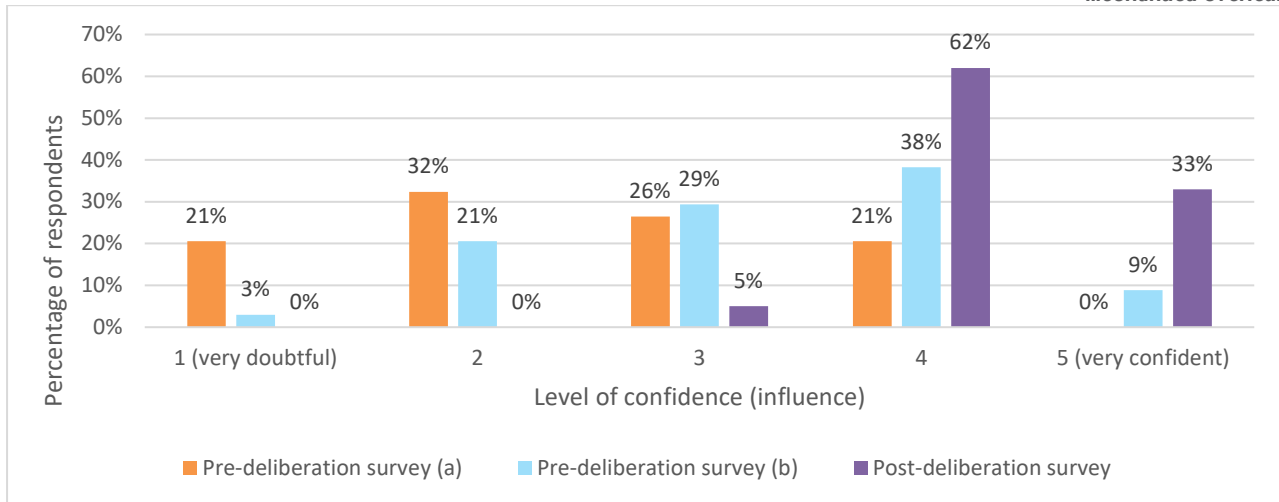
**Pre-deliberation question B:** The panel members were then asked to rate their level of confidence in Greater Western Water implementing the work of the panel. 47% responded that they were confident or very confident, and 24% were doubtful or very doubtful.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION	How confident are you that your recommendations on this current issue will be implemented by Greater Western Water?
SCALE / MEASURE	1=very doubtful at all and 5=very confident

**Post-deliberation question:** Following the panel process, 95% of panellists were very confident or confident that the work of the panel would be implemented and none were very doubtful or very doubtful.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION	Now that you have been through this process, how confident are you that your recommendations will be implemented by Greater Western Water?
SCALE / MEASURE	1=very doubtful at all and 5=very confident

...continued overleaf.



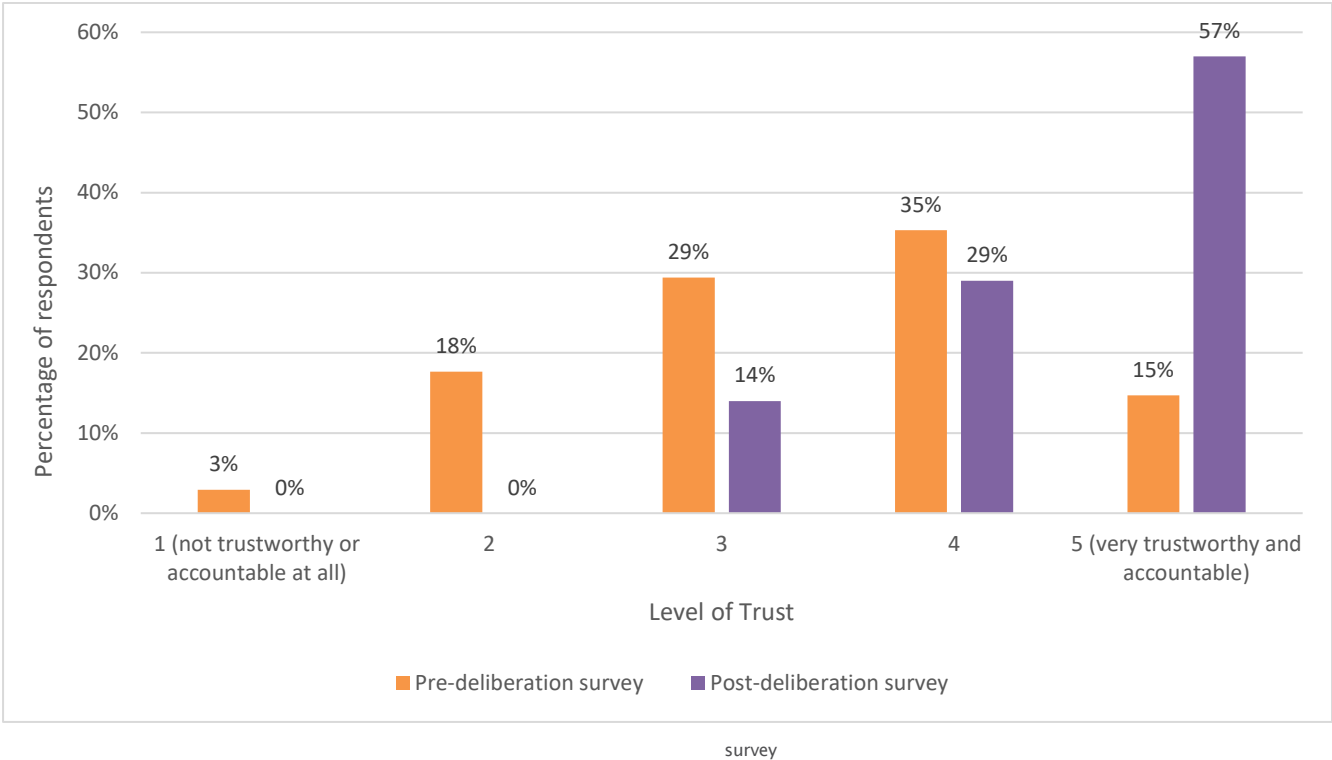
TRUST

72%  
GROWTH

(a 36-percentage point increase) in the number of participants who said they thought Greater Western Water was trustworthy and accountable or very trustworthy and accountable.

Panel members reported an increase in trust in Greater Western Water following the deliberative process. 86% of panel members felt that Greater Western Water was ‘trustworthy and accountable’ or ‘very trustworthy and accountable’ by the completion of the process, compared with 50% at the commencement of deliberations.

PRE- DELIBERATION QUESTION	In your view, how accountable or trustworthy do you think Greater Western Water and other government agencies are?
POST – DELIBERATION QUESTION	How accountable or trustworthy do you think Greater Western Water is now that you have been through this experience?
SCALE / MEASURE	1=not trustworthy or accountable at all and 5=very trustworthy and accountable



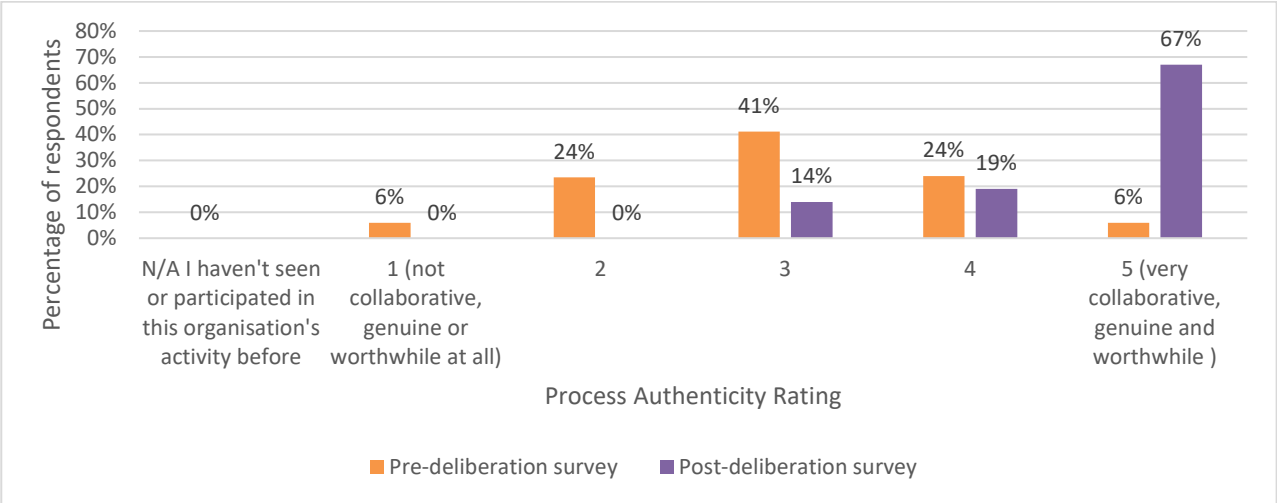
# COLLABORATION & OVERALL PROCESS AUTHENTICITY

188%  
GROWTH

(a 57-percentage point increase) in the number of participants who said they felt the process was collaborative, genuine and worthwhile or very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile (when compared to views of Greater Western Water and other government agency past engagement activities)

Before deliberations commenced, panel members were asked to indicate how collaborative, genuine and worthwhile they thought Greater Western Water and other government agencies' past community engagement activities had been. 30% of participants felt that Greater Western Water, and other government agencies had been 'collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' or 'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' in the past. By the final session, 86% of panellists felt that this deliberative process had been 'collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' or 'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile'.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION	How collaborative, genuine and worthwhile do you think Greater Western Water and other government agencies community engagement activities have been in the past?
POST – DELIBERATION QUESTION	How collaborative, genuine and worthwhile do you think Greater Western Water's engagement activities have been through this experience?
SCALE / MEASURE	1=not collaborative, genuine or worthwhile at all and 5=very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile





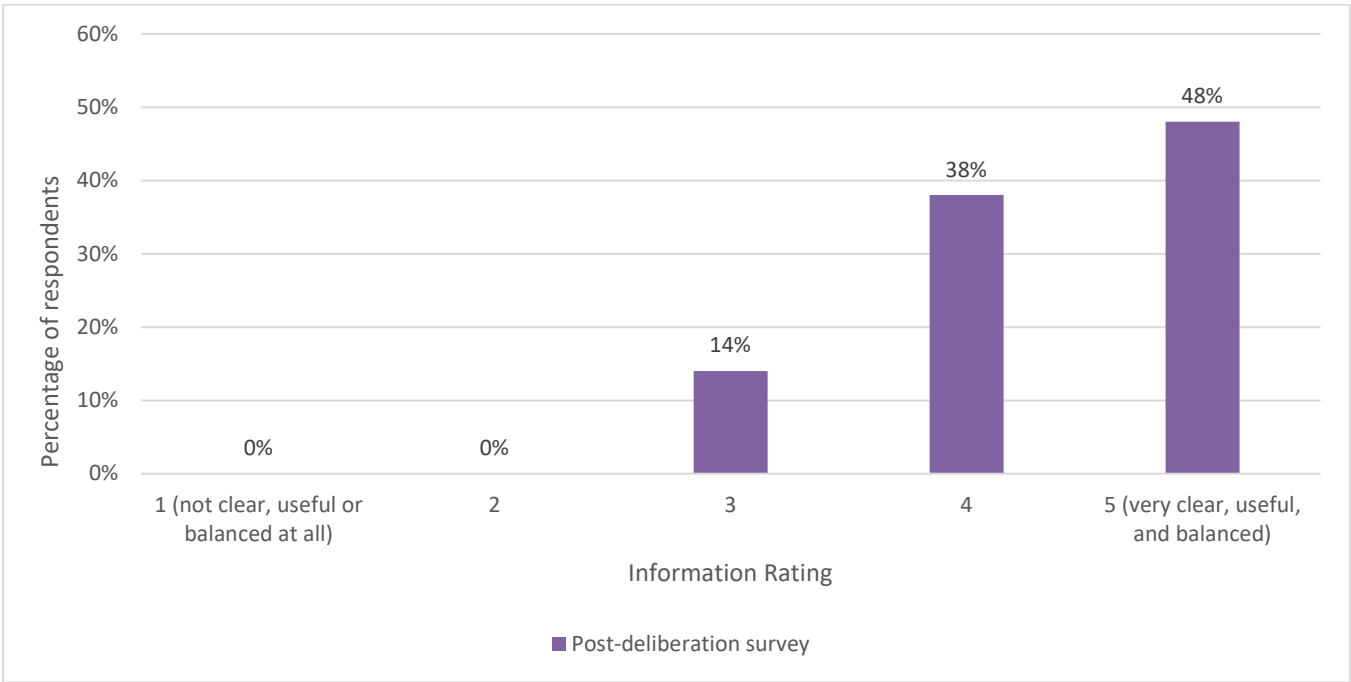
CLEAR, USEFUL AND BALANCED INFORMATION

86%

OF PANELLISTS felt that the information was ‘very clear, useful and balanced’ or ‘clear, useful and balanced’.

Panellists were asked to consider how clear, useful and balanced the information they had been provided throughout the process was. They were asked to consider this in the context of how the information provided had helped them to respond to the remit. This question was only asked at the end of the process and hence there is no comparison of pre and post survey results.

POST – DELIBERATION QUESTION	How clear, useful and balanced was the information provided to you during this process? (i.e., to what extent was it helpful in supporting you to respond to your remit).
SCALE / MEASURE	1=not clear, useful or balanced and 5=very clear, useful and balanced



## QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

Two questions were asked at the completion of the Greater Western Water Price Submission Community Panel to better understand participants' overall experience of the process. All questions were asked in the post-deliberation survey. The participants' comments have been provided in full, unedited, below.

### RESPONSES TO QUESTION 1: WHAT HELPED YOU IN YOUR TIME ON THE COMMUNITY PANEL THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO DO?

- All the tools provided to us, and our access to the GWW team of SMEs helped to focus our discussion and provide us with the information we required for decision-making. The subtle guidance of the deliberation process was also very helpful to keep us on task.
- I loved how open and patient all the staff were through MosaicLab, they should all get bonuses this EOFY.
- Communicate in a most caring and respectful manner.
- Learning more of what they do
- Clear agenda with as much detail as possible.
- Listen, and understand the public and those affected by financial distress.
- Offer time to gather our thoughts individually during sessions.
- Continue responding to clarification by way of presentations on different topics to help the panel Gain insight and hopefully make informed decision.
- Variety of speakers to learn about the different aspects of water.
- Valuable information presented by various GWW Team members.
- Presence of GWW team so questions could be directed to them during the process.
- MosaicLab provided smooth running in a timely manner at each session.
- My thanks again to the GWW team and MosaicLab for the privilege and honour of being selected to be a member of the panel.
- Documents, e.g., strategy & corporate plans, various reports
- Subject matter experts from GWW & beyond (e.g., academia)
- The divide and conquer approach was great, small groups to start with
- Guidance by Mosaic Lab staff who did a great job as well as collaborating with other members of the community panel, listening to differing perspectives as we worked throughout the sessions.
- Give clear information.
- Engage experts from GWW to provide insights into their areas of expertise.
- The Tech support, the clear communication, the mixed sessions of in person and online
- Discussing ideas and problems collaboratively
- The facilitators were worth their weight in gold. You girls did an exceptional job keeping people on track and focused. I admired your calmness and composure even with challenging participants.
- Really good facilitators.
- Schedules and documents were helpful. Zoom worked very well.

## RESPONSES TO QUESTION 2: IF SOMETHING DIDN'T WORK DURING YOUR TIME ON THE COMMUNITY PANEL, WHAT SHOULD WE DO DIFFERENTLY?

- Items were frequently addressed using the STOP, START, KEEP method, and actions taken such as increasing break time to stretch and move and break up long focus sessions.
- Not much to change, maybe increase time talking with the experts via zoom, but that was very minor they ran an amazing panel.
- Nothing
- N/A
- Have at least one of the later informational sessions in person (rather than online). Stronger voices take over virtually in a way that is better moderated in person.
- I felt listened to and heard, I had no negative thoughts or feelings during this panel. Found it interesting and Informative. And to be able to continue and contribute to a greater cause for my future, and future generations is an amazing feeling.
- Nothing
- Maybe meet in person rather than online and or giving each group a topic as a task. This may make the process shorter and maybe less repetition.
- People should have a better grasp of the scope of the panel and more time given to speakers to better understand certain issues.
- N/A
- As we saw at the end - a handful of people were monopolising the discussion for no apparent purpose other than to hear their own voice. It was akin to extracting healthy teeth...needlessly painful. Discussion by member on employing local apprentices was good though.
- All good here
- Allow more time.
- Some of the meeting times were difficult to negotiate with Public Transport, (i.e.: Train services on Sundays are very limited)
- N/A
- Nothing really, everything was good.
- I think the middle online session should be in person. I think people were distracted at home and didn't focus or pay attention to what was being discussed. I think the quality of responses would be increased if people were onsite. I use an example of one member who was out and about shopping while on the call with their phone camera off. When asked in the small group for input turned the camera on with being inside a supermarket clearly in the background.
- Too many speakers and information but not enough clarity on what we could actually impact (e.g., you have this much money and you can vote on these topics). I think we needed to think through the recommendations a bit better before they became unchangeable.

# NEXT STEPS

The panel's recommendations were presented by the panel to Greater Western Water's CEO, Maree Lang, and Chair, David Middleton.

A recall session has been planned for Sunday 18 June 2023. This session will provide an opportunity for the panel to hear how the Greater Western Water team has incorporated panel recommendations into the draft pricing submission and to test and provide feedback on the submission.



**PLEASE NOTE:** While every effort has been made to transcribe participants comments accurately a small number may not have been included in this summary due to the legibility of the content.

This report has been prepared by MosaicLab on behalf of and for the exclusive use of the Greater Western Water Price Submission project working group. The sole purpose of this report is to provide a report of the process undertaken by the Greater Western Water Price Submission Community Panel.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services set out by Greater Western Water. Greater Western Water can choose to share and distribute this report as they see fit. MosaicLab accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for or in respect of any use of or reliance upon this report by any third party.

*MosaicLab is a Victorian-based consultancy that specialises in community & stakeholder engagement, facilitation, negotiation, strategic planning and coaching.*



**REPORT PREPARED BY:**  
**mosaicLAB**  
[www.mosaiclab.com.au](http://www.mosaiclab.com.au)

