

Stakeholder Engagement Policy

1.0 PURPOSE

This policy defines the scope and nature of Wannon Water's engagement with stakeholders (including customers, community members and groups, organisations within our region, our authorising environment, and water industry organisations).

2.0 SCOPE

This policy is relevant to all Wannon Water employees and applies to stakeholders affected by a project or decision or who have come together because of a shared concern or interest.

3.0 POLICY

Wannon Water is committed to engaging with customers and other stakeholders who are, or may be, affected by its decisions or activities. Through listening to stakeholders, Wannon Water aims to make better, more informed decisions by:

- **Learning** about its various stakeholders and understanding their needs, expectations and perceptions;
- **Innovating** by drawing on stakeholder knowledge and insights to inform strategic directions; and
- **Responding** coherently to stakeholders' and Wannon Water's material concerns.

Mature organisations recognise the value of robust stakeholder engagement, as well as the risks that stem from poor stakeholder relations, including affecting Wannon Water's ability to achieve its overarching strategic objectives, mission and vision.

Effective stakeholder engagement is also necessary to realise broader social, environmental and economic commitments to strengthen communities. This belief is consistent with the underlying principles of Wannon Water's Community Strategy, *Partnering for Stronger Communities*.

Customers form a key stakeholder group and customer engagement enables the delivery of outcomes that balance both customers' and Wannon Water's needs and expectations, ensuring that:

- Customer views are considered in the development of policies relevant to customers, planning and delivery of key projects and levels of service levels;
- Wannon Water is responsive, accountable and transparent in its decision-making; and
- Wannon Water has a sound understanding of customer needs and expectations.

Recognised Standards

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is the peak professional body for engagement practitioners and its approach is recognised across the Victorian water industry.

Wannon Water adopts the IAP2's Core Values, Code of Ethics and Public Participation Spectrum for public participation as its recognised principles for practical community and stakeholder engagement. Wannon Water's Community Strategy recognises the IAP2 Core Values as critical to establishing the environment in which to deliver shared value for Wannon Water and its communities.

The IAP2's Quality Assurance Standard, which seeks to provide a quality process by which engagement projects can be assessed, also provides a longer term aspirational goal for Wannon Water as its expertise in community engagement matures.

Wannon Water is committed to:

1. Engaging with key stakeholders as part of its decision-making processes and prioritising relationships to mitigate risks to the organisation.
2. Engaging in an effective, timely, open, honest, inclusive and transparent manner that:

- Encourages participation,
 - Recognises the diversity of population within our region,
 - Minimises barriers,
 - States a clear focus and purpose,
 - Uses a range of approaches,
 - Makes accurate information readily available,
 - Allows enough time to engage effectively,
 - Listens and responds to stakeholders, and
 - Is efficient, responsible and accountable.
3. Adopting and practising the IAP2 Core Values, Code of Ethics and Public Participation Spectrum to guide Wannon Water when engaging with stakeholders.
 4. Implementing a best-practice engagement framework, suite of tools and professional development for Wannon Water employees to build a robust engagement program consistent with the IAP2 Quality Assurance Standard over time.
 5. Preparing Stakeholder Engagement Plans at the initiation stage of projects.
 6. Retaining its decision-making powers and being sensitive to local community issues for the benefit of the community and in the broader public interest.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

This Stakeholder Engagement Policy will ensure best practice stakeholder engagement throughout Wannon Water. It is endorsed by the Board and disseminated to all employees.

Strategic initiatives identified in the Community Strategy will also support the implementation of this policy. These strategic initiatives include, but are not limited to:

Strategic initiative 1.1: Develop and implement a comprehensive five year community and stakeholder engagement plan that includes a range of engagement techniques appropriate to each stakeholder group

Strategic initiative 3.1: Employees will be supported to utilise best practice approach to community engagement and partnership suitable to each of their roles

Strategic initiative 3.2: A community engagement policy framework and employee 'tool kit' will be developed

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY

The Managing Director is responsible for oversight of this policy. In addition, the Managing Director will coordinate stakeholder engagement with Wannon Water's authorising environment (e.g. Minister, Government Departments, and Regulators etc.).

The General Manager Community & Corporate Services will oversee the development and implementation of systems to support the implementation of this policy.

All employees are responsible for understanding and executing their responsibilities for stakeholder engagement as part of their role and participating in stakeholder engagement activities relevant to their role.

6.0 MEASURES OF SUCCESS

This Policy will include outcomes demonstrating its successful implementation. Measures of success will include:

Measure of Success	Indicators
That stakeholder satisfaction improves over time	Bi-annual stakeholder perceptions research
	Annual customer research

7.0 DEFINITIONS

A **stakeholder** is an individual, group of individuals, organisation or political entity with an interest or 'stake' in the outcome of a decision.

Wannon Water's stakeholders include:

- Customers;
- Community members and groups within its service region;
- Organisations within its service region;
- Its authorising environment (such as Minister, Departments, Regulators etc.);
- The water industry; and
- Other agencies and groups that have an impact on Wannon Water or vice versa.

Stakeholder engagement is the process by which Wannon Water participates in dialogue with its key stakeholders.

8.0 DOCUMENTATION

- International Association for Public Participation – Spectrum of public participation – IAP2
- International Association for Public Participation – Core Values – IAP2
- International Association for Public Participation – Code of ethics– IAP2
- International Association for Public Participation – Quality Assurance Standard
- *Partnering for Stronger Communities*, Wannon Water's Community Strategy.

9.0 REFERENCES

N/A

10.0 DOCUMENT CONTROL



Stakeholder Engagement Policy

Only the Board may authorise development and approval of Board policies. The policy development and approval process is coordinated and documented in the agenda and minutes of the Board. For document control purposes, the approver detailed below is the relevant employee responsible for managing the Policy on behalf of the Board.

Custodian	Manager Corporate Communications
Approver	General Manager Community & Corporate Services
Status	Approved
Version	2
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