

Independent Chair Community Panel 2027

Position title	Independent Chair, Community Panel
Location	Horsham. Panel meetings may be held across Grampians, Wimmera and Mallee regions as well as online
Reports to	Chairperson of the Board
Remuneration	The Independent Chairperson will be remunerated at a rate of \$500 per day.
Term	November 2026 to June 2027

Organisational Context

GWMWater is a Victorian Government-owned water corporation established under the Water Act 1989. We provide water, wastewater, recycled water and groundwater management services across 62,000 square kilometres, serving about 72,000 people in 71 towns and rural communities across western Victoria.

As one of the state's largest regional water businesses, we operate a vast network of dams, reservoirs, pipelines, pump stations, water and wastewater treatment plants, and recycled water schemes. Our services support homes, farms, businesses, communities, recreation and the environment.

GWMWater also manages the Wimmera-Glenelg Headworks system on behalf of all entitlement holders, independently allocating and delivering water under established governance arrangements. Major investments, including the \$688-million Wimmera Mallee Pipeline, have improved the reliability and quality of water services across the region.

On a five yearly cycle all Water Corporations in Victoria are required by the Essential Services Commission (ESC) to review and develop a plan that outlines its proposed customer service standards, future capital works program, maintenance expenditure and pricing solutions to fund those services assets for the coming five years.

This pricing plan for the 2028-2033 Regulatory Period is due to be completed by mid-2027.

Customer and community engagement and consultation is critical to the planning process, and as a cornerstone of this engagement and consultation effort, GWMWater is preparing to recruit a Community Panel made up of people reflecting its customer base to provide opinion, advice and recommendations on its pricing proposals and matters of significance for its 2028-2033 Price Submission.

Key responsibilities and duties

- Guide and direct the work of the Community Panel.
- Be the key conduit between the Community Panel and GWMWater.
- Ensure that the Community Panel has adequate opportunity to learn and understand the proposals and concepts being put to it by GWMWater.
- Ensure that the Community Panel feels appropriately empowered and has adequate opportunity to question, seek additional information and to challenge proposals and concepts presented to it by GWMWater.
- Oversee the development of a report on the workings and findings of the Community Panel in respect to GWMWater's Pricing Submission.
- The Independent Chairperson will be required present to the Board, either in person or in writing, progress in respect to the development of the report; noting that the report may or may not support GWMWater proposals.
- The Independent Chairperson will present the final report to a Stakeholder and Customer Workshop.
- The Independent Chairperson may be required to speak with the media in respect to the process and the content of the report, this will be done in consultation with the Chairperson and/or Managing Director of GWMWater.

Key selection criteria

- The Independent Chairperson must have no current association with GWMWater or another Victorian Water Corporation other than they may be a customer and they will not have been an employee or Director of GWMWater or another Water Corporation for at least the past three years.
- The Independent Chairperson must:
 - reside within the operational area of GWMWater.
 - have experience in, and an understanding of, the processes involved in developing public policies and programmes.
 - have demonstrated experience in chairing forums involved in discussing and analysing complex issues and concepts and be able to explain these to members of the Community Panel in language appropriate to their specific levels of understanding.
 - be available for a period of between six to 12 months during which time they will need to chair up to five meetings of the Community Panel and attend an induction session.

Capabilities and attributes

- **Independence and impartiality:** able to chair the process fairly, without advocating any particular view or agenda.
- **Facilitation of complex community conversations:** able to guide diverse participants through complex service, pricing and policy issues in a structured, respectful way.
- **Judgement and procedural fairness:** able to ensure the panel has genuine opportunity to question, challenge and form its own recommendations.
- **Community credibility:** trusted, respectful and able to build confidence in the process across regional communities.
- **Constructive challenge:** comfortable supporting robust discussion, including disagreement with GWMWater proposals, while keeping the process productive.
- **Report synthesis and presentation:** able to draw together panel views into a clear report and present findings to the Board, stakeholders and potentially media.
- **Sensitivity to regional context:** understands the diversity of GWMWater's customer base, including towns, rural customers, businesses, farmers and Traditional Owner/community interests.

Time commitment

- Approximately five panel meetings and one induction meeting
- Additional time for preparation, strategic planning, and stakeholder engagement.

Authorisation and approval

Prepared on	August 2026
Prepared by	Robbie Somers
Reviewed by	Adele Rohde
Approved by	2 September 2026

