

Darwin Region Water Supply Program Community Reference Group

Terms of Reference

1. Background

In February 2022, the Northern Territory (NT) Government released the Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS) Detailed Business Case (DBC) key findings. The DBC provides conclusive evidence of investment viability in new water supply infrastructure, specifically the Darwin Region Water Supply Program (the Program).

The Program includes the following projects:

1. Returning Manton Dam to Service by mid-2026 to address our immediate water security needs; and
2. Delivering the Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS) project within the next ten years to provide water security for the long term.

Through its National Water Grid Fund, the Australian Government announced \$300.6 million to fund stage 1 of the Program, which includes returning Manton Dam to service and pre-construction activities for AROWS. With the DBC now complete, the focus is on progressing project development activities. Next steps include concept design, environmental assessment and community and stakeholder engagement.

The NT Government have been working closely with the Power and Water Corporation (PWC) on a range of de-risking activities for the Program.

1. Purpose

A Community Reference Group (CRG) is being established to:

- provide a forum for representatives of the community to discuss issues of community interest related to the Infrastructure Program;
- provide a mechanism to communicate community feedback to the NT Government; and
- build community understanding of the project and communicate project development progress to the wider community.

2. Scope

The CRG is not a decision making or regulatory body.

In the conduct of the duties of the CRG, members will:

- receive and may provide comment on reports related to the project;
- provide a forum for consultation as the need arises; and
- discuss matters raised and disseminate information about the project to the wider community and stakeholder groups.

3. Membership

The CRG will be chaired by an independent person appointed by government, who is held in high regard in civic life, has expertise in taking the community interests into account and has experience in the position of Chair.

The CRG will comprise members who represent the local community directly impacted by the project, as well as key stakeholders. Members will bring a diversity of skills and stakeholder views from the community, environmental groups, local business, land councils and local government.

The name and credentials of members will be published on an appropriate NT Government website.

Membership of the CRG is voluntary.

Representatives from the NT Government and project team will be present at CRG meetings to provide an immediately accessible source of expert advice.

The NT Government will provide the secretariat function for the CRG.

4. Conflict of interest

On acceptance of membership, if a member believes they may have a conflict of interest in relation to the Infrastructure Program, a particular issue or item of discussion, they must declare it with the Chairperson to ensure the conflict can be and is managed.

5. Terms of appointment

Members of the CRG will be appointed by Ministerial appointment for a two-year term.

Members who do not attend two consecutive meetings may have their membership reviewed by the Chairperson.

Proxies are not permitted unless notification is provided and accepted by the Chair.

Additional CRG members can be appointed at any time by the Minister.

Members of the CRG who are undertaking their duties in their professional capacity are not be remunerated. Where members are undertaking CRG duties separate to their nominal professions, they may be eligible for remuneration at a Class C3 rate as per the Statutory Bodies Classification Structure Determination.¹

6. Role of Chairperson

The Chairperson is to:

- prepare for meetings, including meeting with the NT Government to establish the agenda and items for discussion prior to CRG meetings;
- advise members of their roles and responsibilities as members of the CRG;
- formulate and settle the meeting dates and agenda in consultation with all members;

¹ https://dcm.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/252187/determination-2012.pdf

- convene and run meetings in a fair and independent manner;
- conduct meetings to foster effective consideration of issues referred to or raised by the CRG;
- facilitate discussion to ensure all members have an opportunity to speak and share their views;
- identify any items of a confidential nature and assist members to understand how this information may or may not be used;
- support constructive dialogue;
- recognise and acknowledge differences of opinion in a fair, transparent and supportive manner;
- provide an accurate summary of matters and clearly identify the actions to be taken before the next meeting, who is responsible and by when; and
- represent the CRG in appropriate times outside of meeting hours.

Given the additional responsibility of the Chairperson's role for CRG, the Chairperson is entitled to be remunerated at a Class C3 rate as per the Statutory Bodies Classification Structure Determination.²

7. Operating arrangements

At the inaugural meeting, the CRG is to:

1. confirm the Terms of Reference;
2. propose a schedule of meetings for the first 12 months to maximise attendance by members, maximum of four meetings per calendar year. Additional meetings may be scheduled dependent on project development and community interest; and
3. identify the point at which meetings will be set for the subsequent 12 months.

The Chairperson may invite a non-member to attend meetings such as:

- representatives of regulatory bodies, including but not limited to the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI), the Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (DTBAR), the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE), and the Power and Water Corporation;
- technical experts or consultants; and/or
- members of the general public.

The Chairperson is to consult with the other members before issuing an invitation.

Requests from the public for items to be included on the meeting agenda may be directed to individual members or to the Chairperson.

The Chairperson will facilitate crafting of a public communique during each meeting of the CRG.

All statements to media must be cleared by the NT Government.

8. Reporting arrangements

With the support of the Secretariat, the CRG may wish to issue a public communique. This communique will be published on an appropriate NT Government website, along with meeting agendas and minutes.

² https://dcm.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/252187/determination-2012.pdf

9. Period of review

The structure of the CRG and its Terms of Reference are to be reviewed every 12 months. Notwithstanding this, these may be reviewed more often if and when needs arise. Reviews are to be conducted in consultation with the appropriate Minister/s.

If the Chairperson has concerns about the effectiveness of the CRG, they may refer the matter to the Minister. The Minister will examine these concerns and determine what action should be taken.