

Wannon Water PS28

Community Panel Engagement Plan



Engage & Explore.

Context

Wannon Water is a government-owned, not-for-profit organisation that delivers water and sewerage services across South West Victoria. It covers 23,500 square kilometres from the Otway Ranges to the South Australian border and serves around 100,000 people across six local government areas: Corangamite, Colac Otway, Glenelg, Moyne, Southern Grampians and Warrnambool.

Every dollar raised goes back into delivering safe water and reliable services for our customers and communities, for today and tomorrow. We’ve consistently had some of the lowest annual bills in Australia compared to similar sized water corporations. And while we always aim to keep bills as low as possible, we can see we’re at a turning point. To keep delivering reliable, safe and sustainable water services, we’re likely to need gradual bill increases in coming years.

We’re now planning for the coming five years, from 2028 to 2033, and we’ll need to weigh up the cost of services against what’s fair for our customers to pay. To help us do this, we want to genuinely understand what’s important to our customers.

There are many factors which will influence the discussion about water and sewerage pricing and the services we deliver such as:



Rising costs of delivering services and an ageing infrastructure.



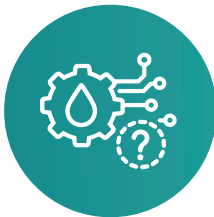
A large and diverse region where needs and water sources vary widely.



A changing climate placing pressure on water security and adaptability.



Cost-of-living pressures with more customers experiencing payment difficulty.



Rapid technological change that creates new opportunities, expectations and risks.



Navigating increasing mandatory regulatory and legislative requirements and compliance.

We need to get the balance right. We know it’s not getting easier for customers to pay bills. We’re working to minimise the impact, but don’t want to cut costs in the short term if it leads to higher costs or poorer services for customers in the future. Every pricing decision involves balancing affordability today with the investment needed to keep services reliable and resilient tomorrow, while also ensuring bills remain affordable for future customers and communities over the long term.



Remit

We need to keep investing in projects now that provide benefits in the future.

How do we do that while keeping prices fair for current and future generations?





Objectives

Panel process outputs and outcomes

	Develop a clear set of recommendations for the whole Wannon Water region, based on information and community engagement data, reflecting the diverse opinions and needs of the community.
	Gain an understanding of the community’s priorities for investment.
	Provide information that supports participants make recommendations for the future of water and sewerage services in the region.

Participants’ experience

	You can see that our approach is genuine, open and transparent.
	You are supported to contribute with confidence in a safe and inclusive environment.
	You feel heard and trust that your advice will inform decisions.
	You build your understanding of Wannon Water’s services, challenges and decision-making.

Scope

<div>Negotiable</div> <div>what the panel CAN influence</div> <div></div>	<div>Non-negotiable</div> <div>what the panel CAN’T influence</div> <div></div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">How Wannon Water prioritises investment with consideration of affordability and willingness to pay.Levels of service and customer outcome priorities, and pacing over time.How performance is measured and reported against outcomes.How Wannon Water balances funding today against funding in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Money Wannon Water is already committed to spending.Legislative and regulatory compliance, including minimum asset renewal requirements and safe water supply.The Board’s final decision on price and service levels at the end of the process.A fair and equitable outcome for all customers across our region.

Level of influence and promise

<div>The level of public participation set for this engagement is</div> <div>COLLABORATE</div> <div>We will look to you (the panel) for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations to the maximum extent possible.</div> <div>(International Association for Public Participation Engagement Spectrum).</div>	<div>Wannon Water promises to:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Listen to what you say.Document and record all inputs.Provide access to clear and reliable information that supports you with the task in responding to the remit.Work to understand your concerns and priorities and reflect them in our decisions.Report back on what we’ve heard.Identify where recommendations have influenced our decisions.Identify where we can’t incorporate a recommendation and clearly explain why.Provide transparent, regular progress updates during the decision-making process, and when finalising our decisions.Provide ongoing updates throughout the five year pricing period.
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Panel roadmap

