



CHARTER FOR IRRIGATOR ADVISORY COMMITTEES



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1. APPLICATION

This Charter shall apply to all Irrigator Advisory Committees.

2. DEFINITIONS

Chairperson	Any member of the Irrigator Advisory Committee elected to coordinate the activities of the Irrigator Advisory Committee, preside over Irrigator Advisory Committee meetings and represent the interests of the Irrigator Advisory Committee in interactions with SunWater.
Irrigator Advisory Committee	A group of irrigators within a scheme who have been elected by irrigation customers to represent the interests of the broader irrigation customer base in relation to scheme operations and water supply issues and improvements with SunWater.
Irrigation Customer	An irrigator who holds a contract with SunWater for the supply of water and/or water services within an irrigation supply scheme.
Quorum	The minimum number of representatives in attendance to conduct a meeting.
Representative	Any person elected as representing irrigators in accordance with membership eligibility criteria.
SunWater	The supplier of water and/or water services to the scheme.

3. PURPOSE OF IRRIGATOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- To provide advice and recommendations to SunWater regarding scheme operational issues.
- To represent the interests of the broader irrigator base in respect of SunWater's ongoing operation of the water supply scheme.
- To provide a mechanism by which SunWater and customers raise and discuss matters of mutual interest in relation to the management of the physical aspects of the scheme and customer relationship issues.

4. IRRIGATOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

While the number of representatives elected to an Irrigator Advisory Committee will depend on the size and diversity of the scheme, each Irrigator Advisory Committee should have between five and nine representatives. This is to ensure that the interests of all irrigation customers are adequately represented.

The Irrigator Advisory Committee in conjunction with SunWater's local manager may, at the expiry of each term, review membership numbers to ensure appropriate representation. A change in membership numbers can only occur with the support of SunWater and the Irrigation Advisory Committee.

A person eligible to become a representative of the Irrigator Advisory Committee must be a SunWater irrigation customer and be elected as per Section 6 – Election of Representatives.

Participation as an Irrigator Advisory Committee representative is voluntary and honorary.

Irrigator Advisory Committee representatives may be requested, on an "as needs" basis, to participate in an Issues Based Working Group to consider and provide advice on specific issues such as water sharing rules and water harvesting arrangements. The formation of these groups will be coordinated by SunWater's local manager. Issues Based Working Groups will be dissolved once the relevant issues have been resolved.

5. TERM OF REPRESENTATION

The term of representation for elected members (including the Chairperson) shall be three (3) years. Representatives may be re-elected.

6. ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES

Prior to the expiry of each term, SunWater's local manager will call for nominations from each section of the scheme. The election process will be coordinated by SunWater's local manager.

Each nomination shall be in writing and include the signature of the nominee and the signature of at least one other irrigator in the nominee's section of the scheme.

If more than the required number of eligible nominations are received for a section of the scheme, the irrigators within the relevant section of the scheme shall be required to vote to elect the representative.

If there is a tie, the Irrigator Advisory Committee representatives shall take a vote to determine the successful representative.

Where the required number of nominations are not received, the elected Irrigator Advisory Committee representatives in conjunction with SunWater's local manager can select and appoint an irrigation customer from that section of the scheme or another section of the scheme, as an Irrigator Advisory Committee representative.

7. CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Committees will preferably be chaired by a customer representative, otherwise by SunWater's local manager. At the first meeting of an Irrigator Advisory Committee (following an election), the representatives must elect a Chairperson (by consensus). SunWater's local manager will preside over meetings in the absence of the Chairperson.

7.1 Role of Chairperson

The Chairperson is responsible for the coordination and management of the activities of the Irrigator Advisory Committee. As such, the Chair has a number of specific responsibilities including:

- chairing meetings
- setting the agenda for meetings
- developing meeting reports in conjunction with SunWater's local manager
- representing the interests of customers in various forums (e.g. meetings with NRW)
- representing the Irrigator Advisory Committee in interactions with SunWater.

Irrigator Advisory Committee Chairs may, periodically, meet with members of SunWater's Board of Directors to enable the Board to gain an appreciation of customer issues and receive direct feedback on scheme management initiatives and for the Board to provide feedback on SunWater's direction.

8. REPRESENTATIVES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Representatives will be required to work not only for the benefit of their individual section of the scheme, but also for the mutual good of all irrigation customers represented by the Irrigator Advisory Committee.

Irrigator Advisory Committee representatives must undertake their duties and responsibilities in accordance with this Charter.

8.1 Role of Representatives

Collectively, representatives play an important role in the operational aspects of SunWater schemes. Representatives are responsible for:

- working with SunWater to improve the effectiveness of water supply and scheme operations
- remaining abreast of and increasing their awareness and knowledge of water resource issues that may impact on customers and scheme effectiveness
- participating at meetings as a representative of scheme customers
- raising and discussing customer issues, ideas and concerns with the Irrigator Advisory Committee
- representing the Irrigator Advisory Committee at various forums
- providing feedback to customers regarding Irrigator Advisory Committee work and outcomes
- providing information and feedback to customers regarding SunWater activities.

While representatives carry out the above responsibilities, these activities do not replace SunWater's commitment to communicate effectively with all customers.

8.2 Dispute Resolution

If a representative considers that a fellow representative is not acting in accordance with the Charter, the issue must be outlined (in writing) and presented to the Chairperson.

The Chairperson shall notify the representative concerned and provide the representative with the opportunity to respond (in writing) within a reasonable timeframe.

The Chairperson shall discuss the issue with SunWater's local manager. Following this discussion, the Chairperson and SunWater's local manager shall hold a meeting between the relevant parties to attempt to resolve the issues.

If the issues are not able to be resolved, an Irrigator Advisory Committee meeting shall be called for representatives to vote on whether to remove the representative from the Irrigator Advisory Committee. At this meeting, the Chairperson shall present the issues raised and response provided. The outcome of the vote must reflect the majority of the Irrigator Advisory Committee.

In the instance when the Chairperson is the complainant or the complaint is regarding the Chairperson, SunWater's local manager shall chair this meeting.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Administrative support will be provided by SunWater. This support will include:

- preparation of the agenda for meetings
- minute taking
- correspondence – preparation, receipt and distribution
- payment of allowances to representatives e.g. travel
- payment of expenses e.g. meeting room hire
- records management.

10. VACANCIES

A vacancy on the Irrigator Advisory Committee shall exist when:

- i) A representative resigns their position as an Irrigator Advisory Committee representative
- ii) A representative ceases to be an irrigation customer
- iii) A representative is absent for three consecutive meetings without notice of leave.

11. RESIGNATION

A representative may resign from the Irrigator Advisory Committee by giving written notice to the Chairperson. The resigning representative shall return all Irrigator Advisory Committee property.

12. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

The Irrigator Advisory Committee shall hold a minimum of two meetings per annum. The Chairperson may convene additional meetings as required, or, if requested to do so by SunWater's local manager or at least two representatives of the Committee.

The last action of an Irrigator Advisory Committee meeting will be to nominate the date for the next meeting.

At least seven days prior to the meeting, a notice of a meeting, agenda and minutes of the previous meeting must be provided to all representatives. The Chairperson may convene a meeting on short notice in exceptional circumstances.

13. QUORUM FOR MEETINGS

A meeting of the Irrigator Advisory Committee shall not proceed unless a majority of representatives are in attendance.

In the instance when a quorum does not occur, the Irrigator Advisory Committee meeting will be rescheduled for a later date and all representatives will be advised.

14. OBSERVERS

The Irrigator Advisory Committee may invite SunWater irrigation customers to attend meetings as observers. While the role of the observer is generally restricted to observing only, an observer may, with prior approval of the Chairperson, submit an agenda item and participate in discussion in relation to that issue.

Observers are not representatives of the Irrigator Advisory Committee and do not have voting powers.

15. MEETING PROCESS AND RESOLUTIONS

The Irrigator Advisory Committee shall operate cooperatively and reach decisions by consensus. Resolutions made shall reflect the majority of the representatives. Any motions of dissent shall be written into the minutes if requested by the dissenting representative(s).

The Chairperson, or SunWater's local manager in his/her absence, shall preside over meetings in accordance with the agenda.

SunWater will distribute the minutes of the meeting to all representatives within ten working days of the meeting.

The Chairperson, in consultation with SunWater's local manager, shall develop the agenda. SunWater will prepare and circulate the agenda to all representatives.

The Chairperson has the casting vote.

16. INSURANCE COVERAGE

Sunwater's travel insurance policy covers Irrigator Advisory Committee representatives. Claims are dealt with by SunWater's insurer. Coverage does not include loss of income, property damage, or Irrigator Advisory Committee representatives' participation in other committees or other purposes. It does not cover any other persons.

The policy applies to:

- travel to and from Irrigator Advisory Committee meetings from place of business or home via the most direct route
- travel to and from Irrigator Advisory Committee activities undertaken at the express request of SunWater from place of business or home via the most direct route.

SunWater's public liability insurance cover is extended to cover Irrigator Advisory Committee representatives whilst engaged in SunWater business.

17. REPRESENTATIVE LIABILITY

The main function of Irrigator Advisory Committees is to liaise with irrigation customers and provide advice to SunWater. This advice has no statutory force and it cannot "bind" SunWater or any other person to undertake or restrain from any conduct.

Representatives cannot be compelled to provide advice.

SunWater carries full responsibility for all decisions it makes and will endeavour to protect representatives acting in the ordinary course of their functions under the Charter.

All individuals are responsible for their own actions outside the Irrigator Advisory Committee such as providing expert opinion to others.

18. COMMUNICATION WITH CUSTOMERS

SunWater's local manager and Chairperson (or a delegated committee representative) will share post meeting communication obligations. As the nature of communications is often dependent on the issues for discussion and customer requirements, specific communication activities will be developed consultatively with the Irrigator Advisory Committee.

Communication requirements should include:

- Summary of meeting outcomes posted on the SunWater website within 10 working days of a committee meeting
- Irrigator Advisory Group representation at industry/customer group forums
- Articles in SunWater scheme newsletters.

Other communication mechanisms may include:

- Convening of annual meetings of all customers
- Information sheets to customers (distributed by SunWater on behalf of Irrigator Advisory Committees)
- Direct communications/conversations with customers
- Participation at local networks and community forums.

19. COMMUNICATION WITH SUNWATER

Communication with SunWater can occur across a number of levels:

i) Local Manager

SunWater's local managers are the primary contact for Irrigator Advisory Committees regarding scheme based issues (e.g. announced allocations and shutdowns). Local managers will also seek information and advice from Irrigator Advisory Committees formally through meetings and informally on an "as needs" basis.

ii) Senior Management

From time to time, SunWater's senior management may attend Irrigator Advisory Committee meetings to discuss strategic or policy issues that may impact on scheme operations. Senior management also provide a secondary mechanism to discuss complaints or difficult issues that cannot be resolved locally.

iii) Board of Directors

Periodically, Irrigator Advisory Committee Chairs may meet with representatives of SunWater's Board of Directors to enable the Board to gain an appreciation of customer issues and receive direct feedback on scheme management initiatives and for the Board to provide feedback on SunWater's direction.

iv) Irrigator Advisory Committee – Consultation Advisor

The Advisor provides Irrigator Advisory Committees with an independent mechanism, external to line management, to communicate with SunWater. The role works with Irrigator Advisory Committees to:

- assist with their functioning and effectiveness
- identify and raise issues with the SunWater Board and management team in relation to scheme issues and concerns (strategic and operational)
- resolve points of difference and disputes within the Committee and with SunWater
- provide feedback to SunWater regarding current and emerging issues identified by Irrigator Advisory Committees as impacting on the water industry
- receive any complaints about the functioning of the Irrigation Advisory Committees.

20. COMMUNICATION WITH MEDIA

Any information or comment provided to the media on behalf of the Irrigator Advisory Committee shall only be undertaken by the Chairperson and occur following consultation with SunWater's local manager.