



WATER FUTURE COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL

TASWATER

Process Report

December 2024



LIMITATIONS OF USE

This report has been prepared by MosaicLab on behalf of and for the exclusive use of TasWater. The sole purpose of this report is to provide a report on the methodology and process undertaken for the TasWater Community Advisory Panel.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services set out by TasWater for the Water Future Community Advisory Panel. TasWater can choose to share and distribute this report as they see fit. MosaicLab accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for or in respect of any use of or reliance upon this report by any third party.

MosaicLab is a team of engagement practitioners and facilitators based in Victoria. We work with government agencies, community groups, industry and commercial organisations and support them to have meaningful conversations that lead to action. Our processes bring diverse people together to solve complex problems and make a positive difference to decision-making.



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PURPOSE OF THE WATER FUTURE COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL

Every four years, TasWater submits a detailed plan to the Tasmanian Economic Regulator outlining the services to be delivered to customers and the price each customer will pay in return. The next plan is due for submission on 1 July 2025, and TasWater wants to ensure it reflects the values and expectations of its customers and the broader community.

The *Shaping Tasmania's Water Future* project is TasWater's most extensive community engagement effort to date, and the organisation heard from people across the state to collaboratively shape Tasmania's water future.

WATER FUTURE COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL

The role of the Water Future Community Advisory Panel was to respond to TasWater's challenge and remit, and to share opinions and viewpoints on specific topics as determined by TasWater. Feedback from the Community Advisory Panel has been compiled and provided to TasWater to take into consideration in its next Price and Service Plan (PSP5) and future decision making.

CHALLENGE AND REMIT

TasWater is at a critical juncture - we have unique assets, our climate is changing, and customer expectations are growing. We need to prepare for an uncertain future and find the balance of price and service that is fair for all Tasmanians, shaping the future of water services in our state.



***How do we prepare for tomorrow while
being fair to customers today?***



FAST FACTS

About the Water Future Community Advisory Panel

THE PROCESS



41

deliberative participants



1654

collective participant hours spent in deliberation



42

deliberative session hours



7

sessions

1 orientation session, 5 full days of deliberation both online and in-person, and 1 additional online session following day 1



3

site visits to TasWater water and sewerage treatment plants organised by TasWater



60

questions from the panel answered by TasWater (approx.)



126

collective facilitator hours spent in deliberation



13

expert speakers

2 external to TasWater and 11 TasWater representatives



7

TasWater staff involved in project coordination, engagement support or observers



5

members of the TasWater Board observed key stages of the process



1

observer from the Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator (OTTER)

1

international observer from the AI and Democracy Foundation



THE OUTPUTS



7

recommendations with supermajority (80% or more) support presented to TasWater



3

minority reports written by a minimum of 3 panel members presented to TasWater

RESULTS SUMMARY

Participant survey

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE AND CHANGE



INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIC AFFAIRS

255% GROWTH

in the number of participants who said they would be **'involved'** or **'highly involved'** in civic affairs.

51 PERCENTAGE POINTS INCREASE

PRE 20% to POST 71%

20% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they had been **'involved'** or **'very involved'** in government decisions that affected them in the past. At the end of the process, 71% of post-deliberation survey respondents said they thought they would be **'involved'** or **'highly involved'** in the future.



CONFIDENCE IN INFLUENCE OVER DECISION MAKING

207% GROWTH

in the number of participants who said they felt **'confident'** or **'very confident'** that they would have influence over the decision.

29 PERCENTAGE POINTS INCREASE

PRE 14% to POST 43%

14% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they had been **'confident'** or **'very confident'** that community input would influence TasWater's decisions in the past. At the end of the process, 43% of post-deliberation respondents said they were **'confident'** or **'very confident'** that the panel's recommendations on this issue would be implemented by TasWater.



CONFIDENCE IN IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

79% GROWTH

in the number of participants who were **'confident'** or **'very confident'** that TasWater would implement the panel's recommendations.

19 PERCENTAGE POINTS INCREASE

PRE 24% to POST 43%

24% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said they had they were **'confident'** or **'very confident'** that the panel's recommendations on the current issue would be implemented by TasWater. At the end of the process, 43% of post-deliberation respondents said they were **'confident'** or **'very confident'** that the panel's recommendations would be implemented.



TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY

102% GROWTH

in the number of participants who said they believe the sponsoring organisation is **'fairly'** or **'very trustworthy and accountable'**.

44 PERCENTAGE POINTS INCREASE

PRE 43% to POST 87%

43% of pre-deliberation survey respondents said that TasWater was **'very trustworthy and accountable'** or **'trustworthy and accountable'**. At the end of the process, 87% of post-deliberation survey respondents said that TasWater was **'trustworthy and accountable'** and **'very trustworthy and accountable'**.



PROCESS AUTHENTICITY AND COLLABORATION

718% GROWTH

in the number of participants who said they believed the process was **'collaborative, genuine and worthwhile'** or **'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile'** (compared to past community engagement activities).

79 PERCENTAGE POINTS INCREASE

PRE 11% to POST 90%

11% felt that TasWater's community engagement activities had been **'collaborative, genuine and worthwhile'** or **'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile'** in the past. At the end of the process, 90% of post-deliberation survey respondents felt that this process was **'collaborative, genuine and worthwhile'** or **'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile'**.



QUALITY OF INFORMATION

93% OF PARTICIPANTS

felt that information provided during the deliberative process was **'clear, useful and balanced'** or **'very clear, useful and balanced'** (this question was asked in the post-deliberation survey only).

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report summarises the design and implementation of the Water Future Community Advisory Panel and provides a transparent record of the process undertaken by MosaicLab as independent facilitators.

The report also includes results of pre- and post-deliberation surveys undertaken to measure and compare the views and feedback of panel members. These results have been presented in full.

MosaicLab has been grateful for the opportunity to work closely with TasWater on the Price and Service Plan 5 deliberative engagement.

We have been humbled by the panel's dedication and energy at each session and their commitment and passion for their community.



WHAT IS A COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL?

A Community Advisory Panel is a democratic tool used to bring together a randomly selected group of people who broadly represent the community. Community Panels or Citizens' Panels are powerful examples of deliberative democratic engagement. This means the community affected by a decision are put at the centre of the decision. It brings community members closer to decision makers and the activity of government.

The panel is built around ten core deliberation principles listed below.

INFLUENTIAL

Deliberation requires decision makers to give weight to and implement the outcomes to the greatest extent possible. This forms a foundation for building trust with your community.

Deliberation isn't about asking people their opinion and then disregarding their views, which significantly reduces trust and results in poorly supported outcomes.



DELIBERATIVE

Deliberation goes beyond conversation and dialogue. It requires those deliberating to weigh up options and come to judgement on a problem.

Deliberation isn't about people giving you a wish list or a list of ideas. It results in clear direction for organisation decision makers.



REPRESENTATIVE

Deliberation requires that the deliberating group is representative of the whole community. The group is usually selected using an independently conducted, random, stratified process.

Deliberation isn't about allowing anyone to turn up and people to 'self-select', like the participants at a public meeting. It allows you as decision makers to have a high level of comfort, because you know what everyday people who are broadly representative of your customers or community think is reasonable (once they are informed). This is more valuable than knowing only what interest groups and highly articulate and invested people are lobbying for.



INFORMATIVE

Deliberation requires that people have detailed, in-depth, and balanced information before they come to judgement. This includes hearing different perspectives, including the views of experts and interest groups.

Deliberation isn't about asking people for uninformed views. It allows you as organisation decision makers to know that the recommendations being provided to you are based on evidence and have considered all sides of the issue.



TIME

Deliberation requires that the deliberating group is given sufficient time to become informed about the issues, weigh up options and come to judgement. Long form processes are usually 4-6 full days. An online (equivalent) process or a short process can be held over 2-3 days, if you are scaling down.

Deliberation isn't about holding a short workshop or evening meeting.



BLANK PAGE REPORT

Deliberation requires that participants respond to the remit by writing their own report. Starting with a blank page, they refine and agree on their final recommendations, then present their report directly to decision makers for consideration.

Deliberation isn't about providing options or a draft report. The organisation doesn't gather feedback on their own ideas. Instead, the organisation hears directly from their customers or community without any interpretation from consultants or staff.



TRANSPARENT

Deliberation is a public process that seeks to build trust in democratic decision making and as such all aspects should be made public, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Members of the public should be able to observe the deliberating group in action and the report of the group should be made public immediately after it is handed to the key decision maker. All information considered by the group should be considered public and be on the project website. Communication activities such as sharing videos of the process and interviews with participants can also help to increase transparency.

Deliberation isn't about working behind closed doors. It allows the public to see that it has been a fair process.



CLEAR REMIT

Deliberation is about the deliberating group responding to a remit - or primary question - that goes to the core of the issue, shares the dilemma, and promotes open discussion. The remit question is clear and written in plain English.

Deliberation isn't about responding to easy issues. It allows the organisation to receive solutions to complex problems.



INDEPENDENT FACILITATION

Deliberation is designed and facilitated by independent, professional facilitators with experience in deliberation. Facilitation enables individuals to work through a designed set of activities (conversations) to collectively and productively produce an outcome (recommendations). Facilitators ensure that all group members are given equal opportunity to participate.

Deliberation isn't about the group being led to a pre-determined result.



INCLUSIVE

Deliberation requires that barriers to participation are removed so that anyone feels they could participate in a deliberation. Some barriers are easily managed, for example, paying people an honorarium to cover the costs of their participation (travel, childcare etc). Also, support can be provided to people living with disabilities and meetings can be held in accessible venues. Other barriers, such as people not having the time or considering that this is, (ie. 'not for them') are harder to remove.

Deliberation isn't about excluding people and it ensures that the organisation hears from a true cross-section of its community.



Expert facilitation is a vital element to foster vibrant deliberative dialogue and a supportive, open environment. The points below summarise some of the key roles of facilitators in a deliberative process:



Design a process that is participatory and engaging, enables the group to meet their remit, and builds in key elements. These elements include relationship building, critical thinking, information sharing and group agreement.



Encourage participants to express themselves freely.



Protect process integrity, transparency and independence.



Encourage active participation from all group members.



Keep the group moving through the process at an adequate pace in order to deliver a report during the time allocated.



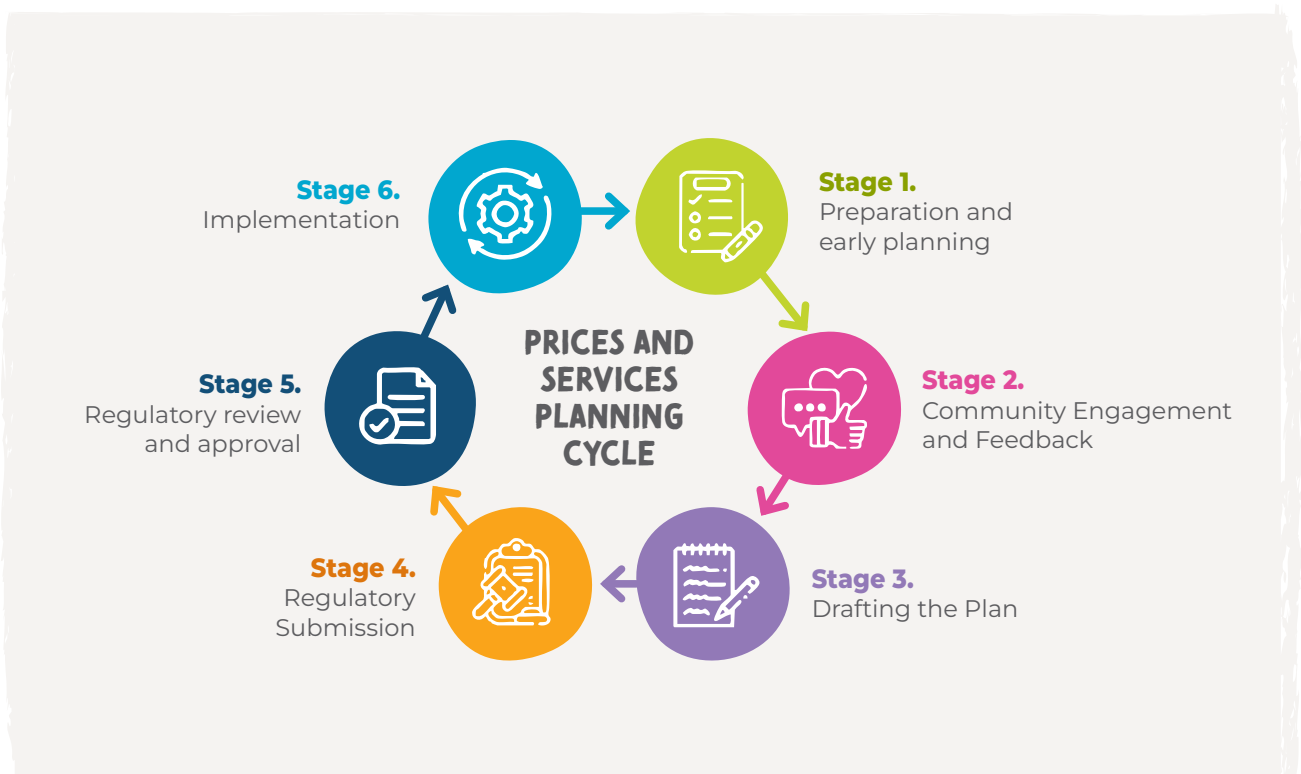
Ensure no one individual dominates.



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Every four years, TasWater's prices are reviewed to ensure they continue to reflect customer expectations and cover the costs of delivering quality water and sewerage services across Tasmania. A key part of this planning process focuses on prices and services and TasWater is currently developing its fifth plan, referred to as the *Price and Service Plan 5* or *PSP5*.

TasWater's price and service planning cycle includes the following six stages:



TasWater is presently at Stage 2 of the PSP5 process, which must progress to Stage 4 by July 2025, when the proposed Price and Service Plan 5 is due to be submitted to the Tasmanian Economic Regulator. This plan will outline how TasWater will operate to provide quality, regulated services for all Tasmanians while achieving a fair balance between price and service.

As part of Stage 2, TasWater conducted an extensive community engagement program, including the Community Advisory Panel process, to ensure that customers and the broader community are central to shaping the plan, which will take effect from July 2026.

THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The Community Advisory Panel was one of the key stages in TasWater's engagement process. From March to November 2024, TasWater, conducted a series of broader engagement activities to gather input from the wider community and industry stakeholders.

TasWater sought input from as many people as possible to understand their experiences, expectations, needs, and values regarding the supply of water and sewerage services, as well as the organisation's contribution to the Tasmanian community. Activities undertaken to engage with customers and industry included:

March – April 2024	Water. It's Tasmania's thing. Campaign.
May 2024	TasWater Employee Survey
May 2024	Broad Community Survey
June 2024	Less-Heard Voices depth interviews
July – August 2024	Bill Simulator Survey
August 2024	Pop-Up Community Survey
August 2024	Key Stakeholder Workshops
August 2024	School Engagement
September – November 2024	Tasmanian Aboriginal Community Engagement
October – November 2024	Water Future Community Advisory Panel

Eight key insights emerged from these engagement activities:

- ◆ Keeping bills affordable
- ◆ Fixing leaks and responding to faults
- ◆ Providing reliable services
- ◆ Being easy to deal with
- ◆ Protecting our waterways
- ◆ Charging based on usage
- ◆ Securing our water future
- ◆ Perspectives of TasWater

Data collated through the wider engagement phase was provided to the Community Advisory Panel as an information input into their deliberations, included further information about these insights and the full research data as documented in the Price and Service Plan 5 Water Future Community Engagement Report.

The following sections of this report detail the deliberative phase of the wider engagement.

TASWATER COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL

PANEL OVERVIEW

The TasWater Community Advisory Panel comprised 41 randomly selected participants from an extensive recruitment process undertaken by MosaicLab in partnership with newDemocracy Foundation.

The Panel was a representative sample of the Tasmanian population, matched to ABS census data, and included people residing across the region, a range of ages and genders.

Forty-five (45) randomly selected participants were initially selected. However, throughout the course of the process, this number was reduced to 41 participants. This is normal and expected, and generally due to changes in circumstance such as job or family arrangements.

Participants met over 7 sessions, commencing with an online introductory session on 1 October 2024 and concluding with the final deliberative panel session in Launceston on 23 November 2024.

Over this period, the panel's primary task was to respond to the following remit:

HOW DO WE PREPARE FOR TOMORROW WHILE BEING FAIR TO CUSTOMERS TODAY?

THE PROCESS INVOLVED:



a clear question (remit) to focus the deliberations access to a broad range of information from a variety of sources relevant to the remit



support from facilitators experienced in delivering deliberative processes



conversations and Q&A with TasWater staff and panel identified key speakers (see information inputs section)



an **online portal** provided a central place for participants to access relevant information inputs as well as a discussion forum



42 hours per person of discussion and deliberations across 7 panel sessions (2 evening sessions including orientation, and 5 full panel days)



group agreement, where a supermajority (80% or more of the panel said they could live with it or better) was needed for a recommendation to be included in the final report

The panel agreed on 7 final recommendations that will be used to inform TasWater's Price and Service Plan 5. The group wrote their own report, which contained:

- ◆ a brief introduction
- ◆ 7 recommendations, including a description, and rationale for each recommendation
- ◆ 3 minority reports

All panel members had the opportunity to write and/or review and refine each recommendation. The panel members agreed by supermajority (80% of the panellists or more) that they would accept 7 of the recommendations.

At the conclusion of their final session on 23 November 2024, the panel handed over their report to the TasWater CEO George Theo and Board Director Yvonne Rundle.

TasWater has committed to using the recommendations to the maximum extent possible and will clearly articulate where the panel's decisions have influenced the development of their final proposal. Where a decision or recommendation of the panel is not incorporated, TasWater will clearly explain why.



ROLES

Multiple groups were involved in the project. Their roles are outlined in the table below.

GROUP		ROLE
Panel members	<i>Randomly selected community members</i>	To work together to respond to a remit and provide recommendations to TasWater to inform planning for their regulatory price submission.
TasWater	<i>Host</i>	To support the process, provide expertise and knowledge as requested by the panel, observe the process, answer specific questions directed to them, and respond to the panel's final report.
MosaicLab	<i>Independent facilitators and recruitment</i>	<p>To provide a supportive, inclusive, and productive space that enabled panel members to deliberate, respond to their remit and make recommendations within the time available.</p> <p>To provide support as needed, to ensure panel members could participate in sessions.</p> <p>To manage the recruitment process in partnership with newDemocracy Foundation and support the panel throughout the deliberation period.</p>
new Democracy Foundation (nDF)	<i>Independent recruitment partner</i>	To support the recruitment process, including random selection and stratification of the panel, to ensure it was fair and unbiased.
Expert speakers	<i>Content experts</i>	To provide expert knowledge into the process and answer questions from the panel members.
Observers	<i>Stakeholders and representatives of the host organisation</i>	To observe the panel deliberations, increase transparency of the process and follow the observer 'code of conduct'.

RECRUITMENT

MosaicLab, in partnership with newDemocracy Foundation, managed panel recruitment via a random, stratified selection process. This ensured the selection of panellists was conducted independently of TasWater and the facilitation team.

An expression of interest (EOI) process was conducted from April to May 2024. TasWater gathered over 3500 EOIs from customers interested to take part in the engagement.

In August 2024, TasWater sent email invitations to this group of TasWater customers. Everyone aged 18 years that received an invitation was invited to register interest. The cohorts excluded from the selection process were:

- ◆ TasWater board members or staff (last 5 years to current)
- ◆ Current elected officials (elected member of any level of government)

The people who registered their interest were placed in a 'pool' which was randomly stratified by newDemocracy Foundation to select the final panel. Stratified selection against stratification targets ensured that the final panel selected was descriptively representative of the demographics of the overall service area population (i.e. forming a 'mini-public' of citizens). Stratification targets were based on demographic statistics for people aged 18 years and over in the municipality, using the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data.

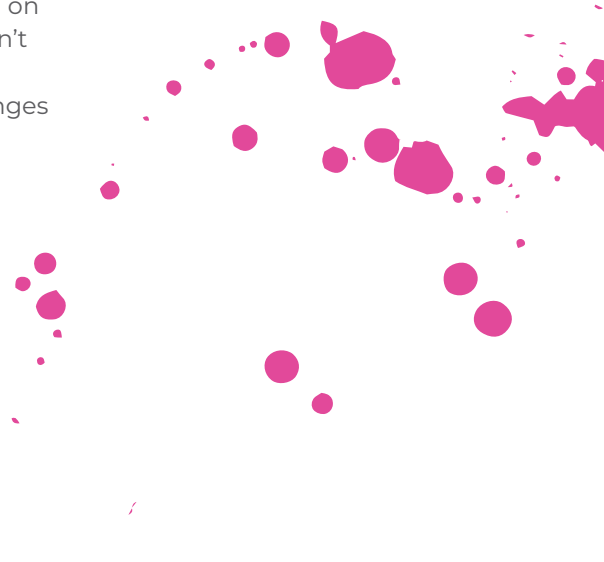
The stratification targets for this process were based on:

- ◆ location (Southern, Northwestern, Northeastern)
- ◆ age range
- ◆ gender

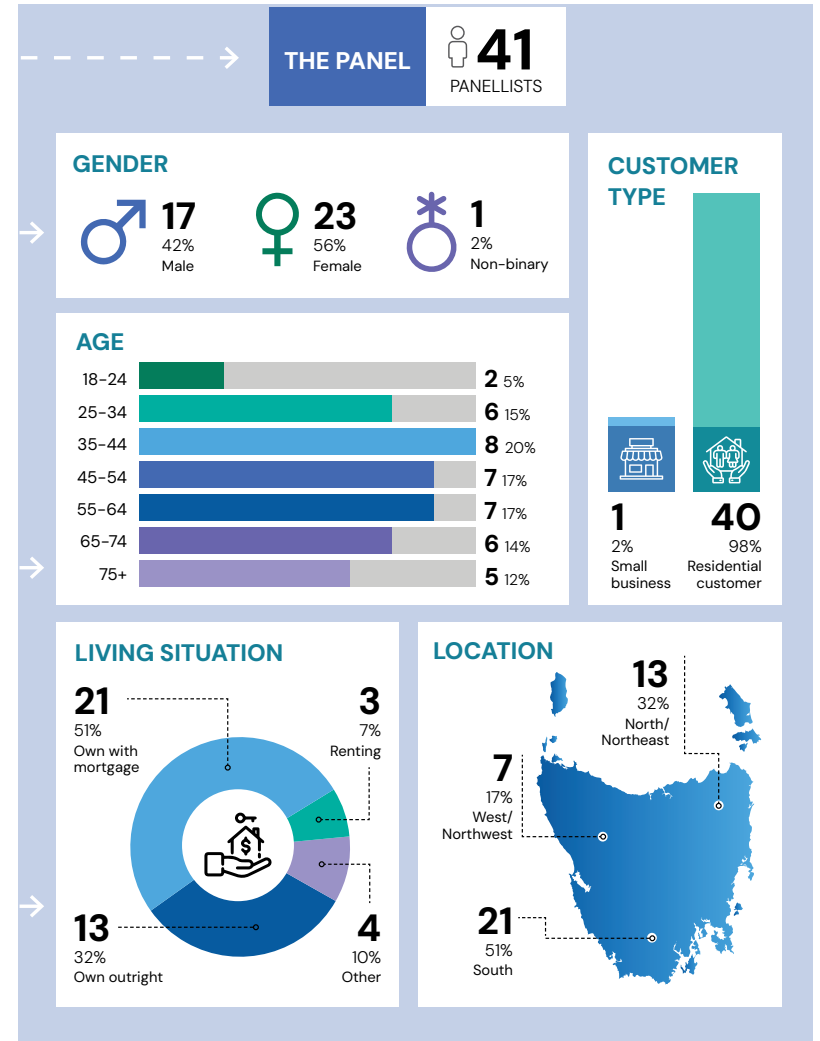
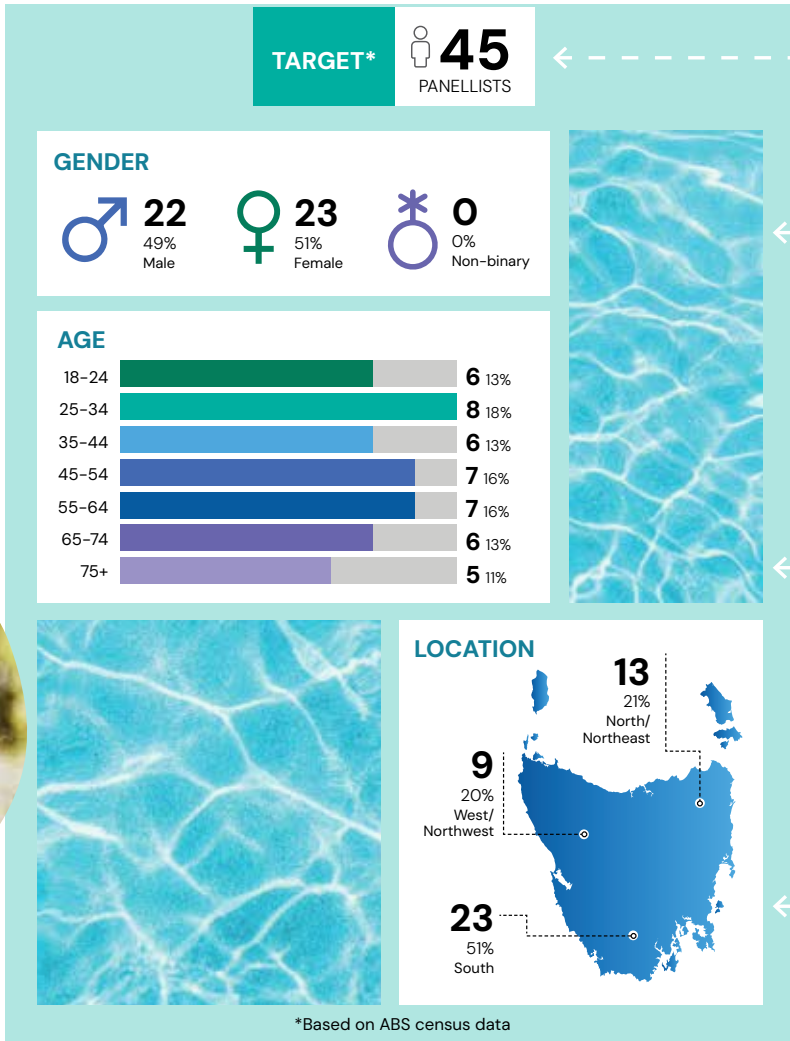
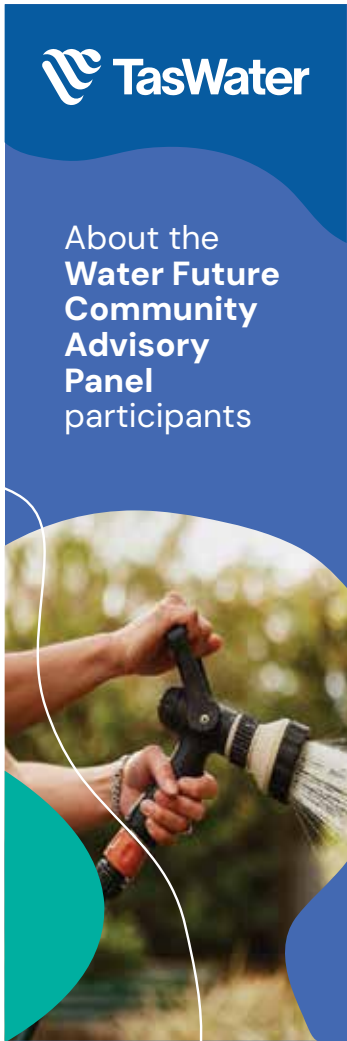
newDemocracy Foundation, in partnership with MosaicLab, used a digital stratification tool for the random stratification step, which limited human intervention in the selection process, adding further independence to the process.

45 people were initially recruited by MosaicLab to the Community Advisory Panel. It is normal to over-recruit for a deliberation panel, as it is usual for numbers to reduce during the process for a range of reasons such as change in work or family commitments. As circumstances changed for a number of panellists since registering their interest, the number of active panel members was reduced to 41 people during the process.

Neither TasWater staff, nor the facilitators at MosaicLab were involved in the selection of panel representatives. The final Community Advisory Panel is descriptively representative of the broader community (based on census data). The Panel ordinarily includes people that TasWater doesn't often hear from but who are impacted by TasWater's decisions. The diversity of the panel members is important in considering the challenges and opportunities facing the Tasmanian community and developing guidance for TasWater.



DEMOGRAPHICS



PANEL JOURNEY

The table below provides an overview of the deliberative sessions held from October to November 2024 and the optional tours of TasWater’s water and sewerage treatment plants.

MEET AND GREET	DAY 1	SESSION 1.5	SITE VISITS	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
1 October 6 – 9pm	5 October 9:30am – 4:30pm	8 October 6 – 7pm	12 October various	19 October 9am – 5pm	26 October 9am – 5pm	9 November 9am – 5pm	23 November 9:30am – 4:30pm
Host welcome Connecting and getting ready, learning about social styles and establish their working agreements Context information and Q&A	Critical thinking & working together Presentation and Q&A on the challenges and opportunities Conversations with TasWater expert speakers	An additional session for panel members to consider and nominate speakers for Day 2	Optional site visits to: Forth Water Treatment Plant (North West), Ti Tree Bend Sewerage Treatment Plant (North), or Bryn Estyn Water Treatment Plant (South).	Deep dive into the background information and wider engagement Conversations with Panel-nominated guest speakers Hearing the Panel’s experiences from the site visits	TasWater presentation Panel discussion about challenges, opportunities and trade-offs Forming initial ideas	Discussion and deliberation Refining ideas Writing draft recommendations Offering level of comfort on draft recommendations	Hearing TasWater’s response to the draft recommendations Reviewing and finalising recommendations Walkthrough and decision-making Panel Report Handover to TasWater and closing circle
Full panel	Full panel	Available Panel members	Available Panel members	Full panel	Full panel	Full panel	Full panel
Online	Tramsheds Function Centre, Invermay	Online		Online	Online	Online	Launceston Conference Centre

DETAILED PANEL PROCESS TIMELINE

The following pages provide a summary of each session.



MEET AND GREET

Tuesday 1 October 2024 | 6 – 9pm | 41 participants | online

TasWater and MosaicLab

- ◊ Formal welcome from George Theo, Chief Executive Officer, TasWater
- ◊ Learning about how the panel will operate (make decisions).
- ◊ Introduction to the context of this project and challenges for the panel to consider – Hayden Moore, Head of Commercial and Pricing, TasWater.
- ◊ Understanding the task and the challenge - Matt Balfe, General Manager Customer and Community, TasWater.
- ◊ Overview of information inputs (inc. background report and panel).
- ◊ Understanding how to access the panel's online library.
- ◊ Opportunity to ask questions of TasWater.
- ◊ Learning about social styles.
- ◊ Opportunity to meet and get to know fellow panel members.
- ◊ Setting agreements about how the panel work together.

Online task between sessions:

Panel members were invited to read the background information provided and completed a photo consent form and pre-deliberation survey.

The panel's working agreements appear in Appendix 1.





PANEL DAY 1

Saturday 5 October 2024 | 9:30am – 4:30pm | 42 participants | Launceston

TasWater and MosaicLab

- ◆ Welcome and purpose of the session.
- ◆ Learning about brain biases and critical thinking.
- ◆ Overview of TasWater's business and the regulatory process – Hayden Moore, Head of Pricing and Commercial, TasWater
- ◆ Speed dialogue with 7 expert speakers (curated by TasWater to bring a wide set of perspectives across the business).

Online task between sessions:

Panel members were invited to review the outputs from Panel Day 1 and provide input into panel nominated speakers for Day 2.



SESSION 1.5

Tuesday 8 October 2024 | 6 – 7pm | 28 participants | online

- ◆ An additional session held for the panel to identify information gaps and potential speakers for Day 2.



SITE VISITS

Saturday 12 October 2024 | 10am – 12pm | 12 participants | Forth Water Treatment Plant (North West), Ti Tree Bend Sewerage Treatment Plant (North) and Bryn Estyn Water Treatment Plant (South).

- ♦ Panel members were invited to attend an optional tour of 3 key sites to gain first-hand experience about water and sewerage treatment around the state.



PANEL DAY 2

Saturday 19 October 2024 | 9am – 5pm | 39 participants | online

TasWater and MosaicLab

- ♦ Welcome and purpose of the session.
- ♦ Delving into the background information.
- ♦ Consideration of dilemmas and trade-offs.
- ♦ Speed dialogue with 9 guest speakers (identified by the panel).



PANEL DAY 3

Saturday 26 October 2024 | 9am – 5pm | 41 participants | online

TasWater and MosaicLab

- ♦ Welcome and purpose of the session
- ♦ Overview of the dilemmas and opportunities – Hayden Moore, Head of Pricing and Commercial
- ♦ Review and consideration of the information inputs to date.
- ♦ Brainstorming initial ideas and grouping these into themes.



PANEL DAY 4

Saturday 9 November 2024 | 9am – 5pm | 36 participants | online

TasWater and MosaicLab

- ◊ Welcome and purpose of the session
- ◊ Building the first draft of panel recommendations.
- ◊ Presentation on engagement with Tasmanian Aboriginal communities – Samuel Paske, Head of Brand and Insights.
- ◊ Presentation about pricing context – Hayden Moore, Head of Commercial and Pricing.
- ◊ Reviewing the current recommendations and identifying gaps.
- ◊ Testing for levels of comfort.
- ◊ Rewriting draft recommendations, taking panel feedback into account.

Online task between sessions:

Panel members were asked to complete a 'levels of comfort' survey on the Panel's 11 draft recommendations. Results were shared with the panel prior to Day 5.



PANEL DAY 5

Saturday 23 November 2024 | 9am – 5pm | 39 participants | Launceston

TasWater and MosaicLab

- ◊ Welcome and purpose of the session
- ◊ Response from TasWater to the Panel's Draft Recommendations – Matt Balfe and Hayden Moore
- ◊ Summary of panel's feedback on the end of day 4 recommendations.
- ◊ Reviewing and finalising the recommendations.
- ◊ Final walkthrough and decision-making on the panel's recommendations.
- ◊ Finalisation for the Panel Report and writing of minority reports.
- ◊ Presentation of the report to TasWater.
- ◊ Final reflections and closing circle.



INFORMATION INPUTS

The panel considered a wide variety of information inputs from a variety of different sources.

KEY INPUT	DESCRIPTION
Background Report	Prepared by TasWater to outline core information in relation to the challenges being discussed and the panel's remit. The document aimed to provide an overview of key contextual information and challenges, dilemmas, and opportunities for the future of TasWater.
Water Future Community Engagement Report	A summary of the findings from over six months of engagement with TasWater customers and community, presented as a key input into the deliberations.
Q&A with TasWater representatives	TasWater project representatives spoke to the panel about their remit, the process and the core issues being considered. The panel could also request that a TasWater staff member answer questions during panel sessions if needed.
Presentations	Several presentations were made to the panel by TasWater staff: Orientation – Shaping Tasmania's Water Future Together – Matt Balfe Day 1 – Context setting and overview of the regulatory process – Hayden Moore Day 3 – Our Dilemmas – Hayden Moore Day 4 – Aboriginal Engagement – Samuel Paske Pricing Context – Hayden Moore Day 5 – Response from TasWater to the Panel's Draft Recommendations – Matt Balfe and Hayden Moore
Site visits and asset demonstrations	The panel visited water and sewerage treatment plants to view key assets and equipment and talk with operations staff at each site.
Panel Handbook	A handbook was prepared by TasWater with information about the panel task and logistics.
Online Library	Panel members were able to access information via an online portal hosted by MosaicLab.
TasWater Pump Station (AI)	A custom GPT provided panel members with a tool to ask questions about the key information inputs.

SPEAKERS

Across the 5 panel days there were 2 opportunities for panel members to discuss ideas with expert speakers. Day 1 included a speed dialogue process where small groups of panel members spoke with senior TasWater representatives about an area of the business. On Day 2, panel members spoke with experts that had been invited to address topics nominated by the panel. Speakers on Day 2 included experts from TasWater and external organisations.

DAY 1 – SPEED DIALOGUE

PERSPECTIVE	SPEAKER NAME	TASWATER ROLE
Water and sewerage rates and customer impact	Dale Radford	Senior Commercial and Pricing Analyst
Drinking water and environmental monitoring	Fran Smith	Head of Water and Environment Services
Commercial and pricing, PSP5 submission process	Hayden Moore	Head of Commercial and Pricing
Asset performance	Ian Gibb	Head of Asset Performance
Customer service and TasWater Assist	Jayne Shepherd	Head of Customer Services
Infrastructure planning and asset performance	Matt Derbyshire	General Manager Sustainable Infrastructure Services
Customer engagement	Samuel Paske	Head of Brand and Insights

DAY 2 – SPEED DIALOGUE

PERSPECTIVE	SPEAKER NAME	ORGANISATION, ROLE
Pricing and impact on bills, bill simulator	Dale Radford	Senior Commercial and Pricing Analyst, TasWater
Vulnerable customers	Giles Whitehouse	Aurora Energy, Corporate Affairs Manager
Pricing on the key priority areas	Hayden Moore	Head of Commercial and Pricing, TasWater
Smart meters and roll out in other jurisdictions	Ian Gibb	Head Asset and Performance, TasWater
Handling waste and water treatment	Kate Westgate	Manager Environmental Performance, TasWater

...continued overleaf

PERSPECTIVE	SPEAKER NAME	ORGANISATION, ROLE
Operations and engagement on the pricing submission process	Kevin Young	Director, TasWater Board
Regulation and sources of revenue	Matt Balfe	General Manager Customer and Community, TasWater
Benchmarking, strategies and challenges for the 9 regions	Matt Jordan	Head of Infrastructure Investment Planning, TasWater
Independent economist, fixed vs variable costs and impact on customers and revenue	Matthew Edgerton	Frontier Economics, Economist

PROJECT TEAM

TasWater's core project team worked in partnership with MosaicLab to deliver the Community Advisory Panel engagement:

NAME	ROLE
Matt Balfe	General Manager Customer and Community
Hayden Moore	Head of Commercial and Pricing
Samuel Paske	Head of Brand and Insights
Callan Paske	Head of Communications and Engagement
Dale Radford	Senior Commercial and Pricing Analyst

PRESENTERS

Senior staff played key roles in engaging with the panel and presenting information about the business and the regulatory process. This included:

NAME	ROLE
George Theo	Chief Executive Officer
Matt Balfe	General Manager Customer and Community
Hayden Moore	Head of Commercial and Pricing
Samuel Paske	Head of Brand and Insights
Dale Radford	Senior Commercial and Pricing Analyst

EXTERNAL OBSERVERS

Key external stakeholders were invited to observe the process. This included:

NAME	ORGANISATION
Kirstan Long	Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator
Aviv Avadya	AI and Democracy Foundation

OBSERVERS AND ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT

A number of TasWater staff and members of the Board attended the Community Advisory Panel as observers, with many attending multiple days. Other key staff supported the engagement process, managing communications and media, leading the tours of water and sewerage treatment plants, and coordinating logistics for the in-person Panel days.

OBSERVERS

NAME	ROLE, ORGANISATION
Brendan Windmeyer	General Manager of Operations
Helen Locher	Director, TasWater Board
Joanne Pearson	Director, TasWater Board
Kane Ingham	Chief Financial Officer
Kathryn Westwood	Director, TasWater Board
Tony Willmott	Director, TasWater Board
Yvonne Rundle	Director, TasWater Board

SITE VISITS

NAME	ROLE
Lynn Corley	Water Services Operator
Jonathan Mallinson	Senior Communications Lead
Mark Woods	Senior Operator
Andrew Truscott	Group Leader Planning and Investigation
Michael Evans	Project Engineer
Mel Woolley	Community Engagement Specialist

ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT

NAME	ROLE
Jess Sargent	Strategic Communications Manager
Catherine Liddelow	Graduate
Kate Smith	Event Coordinator

PANEL REPORT



Responding to the remit, the panel delivered or achieved:

- ◆ 7 recommendations - each recommendation received 80% or above approval from the panel.
- ◆ 3 minority reports.

TasWater has promised to use the Community Advisory Panel recommendations to the greatest extent possible when preparing their Price and Service Plan 5 (PSP5) (according to the collaborate level of engagement in the International Association of Public Participation engagement spectrum).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following 7 recommendations were written and decided by the TasWater Community Advisory Panel:

1. Protect and improve the environment and water security
2. Education and incentives for water conservation
3. Increase awareness of the TasWater Assist Program
4. Upgrade of metering
5. Remodel the pricing structure
6. Proactive infrastructure management and maintenance
7. Supply water and sewage services to unserved communities

3 minority reports were written by 3 or more panel members following the recommendations.

The panel's final report, containing a description and rationale for each of the recommendations, was presented to TasWater CEO George Theo and Board Director Yvonne Rundle at the end of the deliberative process.

This report can be found in Appendix 2.

PANEL FEEDBACK

Panel members were invited to complete a survey at two points in the process:

- ◆ After the meet and greet session – 43 of the participants responded to the pre-deliberation survey.
- ◆ After panel completion – 32 of the participants responded to the post-deliberation survey.

Feedback received has been summarised in the sections below.

INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIC AFFAIRS

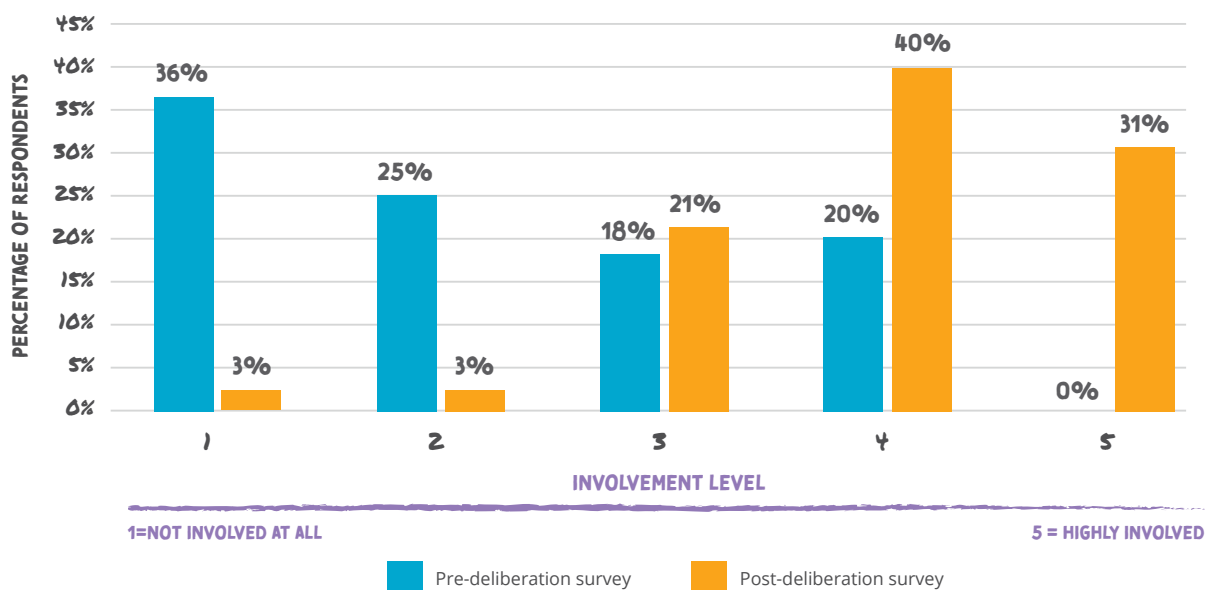
Survey respondents said they thought they would be much more likely to participate in civic activities in future (i.e. get involved in government decisions that affect them) after being involved in the deliberative process.

At the beginning of the process, 61% of the group either were not involved in civic activities in the past or had had very little involvement and only 20% said they had been 'involved' or 'highly involved' in the past. By the end of the process, 71% said they thought they would be involved or highly involved in government decisions that affected them in future.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION How involved are you currently when it comes to government decisions that affect you??

POST-DELIBERATION QUESTION Now you have had this experience, how involved might you be in the future when it comes to government decisions that affect you?

SCALE/MEASURE 1=not involved at all and 5=highly involved



INFLUENCE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Participants were asked two questions in the pre-deliberation survey. First, they shared how confident they had felt in the past about the community’s ability to influence the sponsoring organisation’s decisions in general. They were also asked to indicate how confident they felt that the sponsoring organisation would implement their recommendations on the issue they were about to deliberate on. Results of both of these questions were then compared to the results of one post-deliberation question.

Pre-deliberation question A: Panel members were asked how confident they had been in the past that community input would influence TasWater’s decisions. At the start of the process, 36% said they were very doubtful and doubtful that community input would influence TasWater’s decisions in the past. 14% said they were confident or very confident.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION A In the past, how confident have you been that community input will influence TasWater's decisions?

SCALE/MEASURE 1=very doubtful at all and 5=very confident

Pre-deliberation question B: The panel members were then asked to rate their level of confidence in TasWater implementing the work of the panel. 24% responded that they were confident or very confident, and 24% were doubtful or very doubtful.

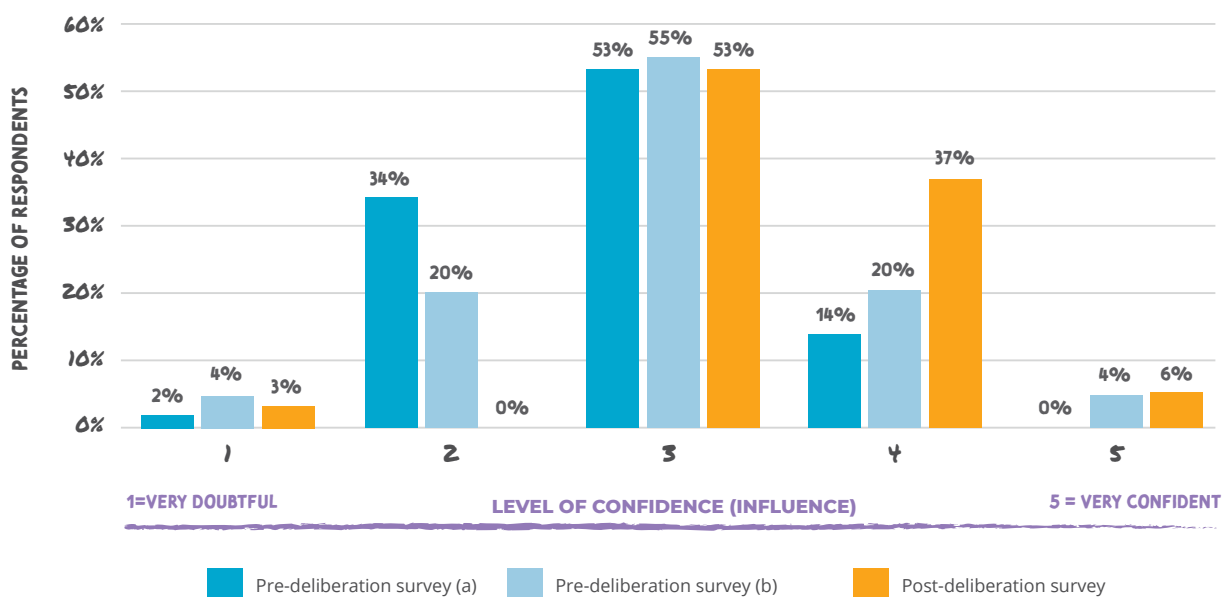
PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION B How confident are you that your recommendations on this current issue will be implemented by TasWater?

SCALE/MEASURE 1=very doubtful at all and 5=very confident

Post-deliberation question: Following the panel process, 43% of panellists were very confident or confident that the work of the panel would be implemented and only 3% were very doubtful or very doubtful.

POST-DELIBERATION QUESTION Now that you have been through the process, how confident are you that your recommendations will be implemented by TasWater?

SCALE/MEASURE 1=very doubtful at all and 5=very confident



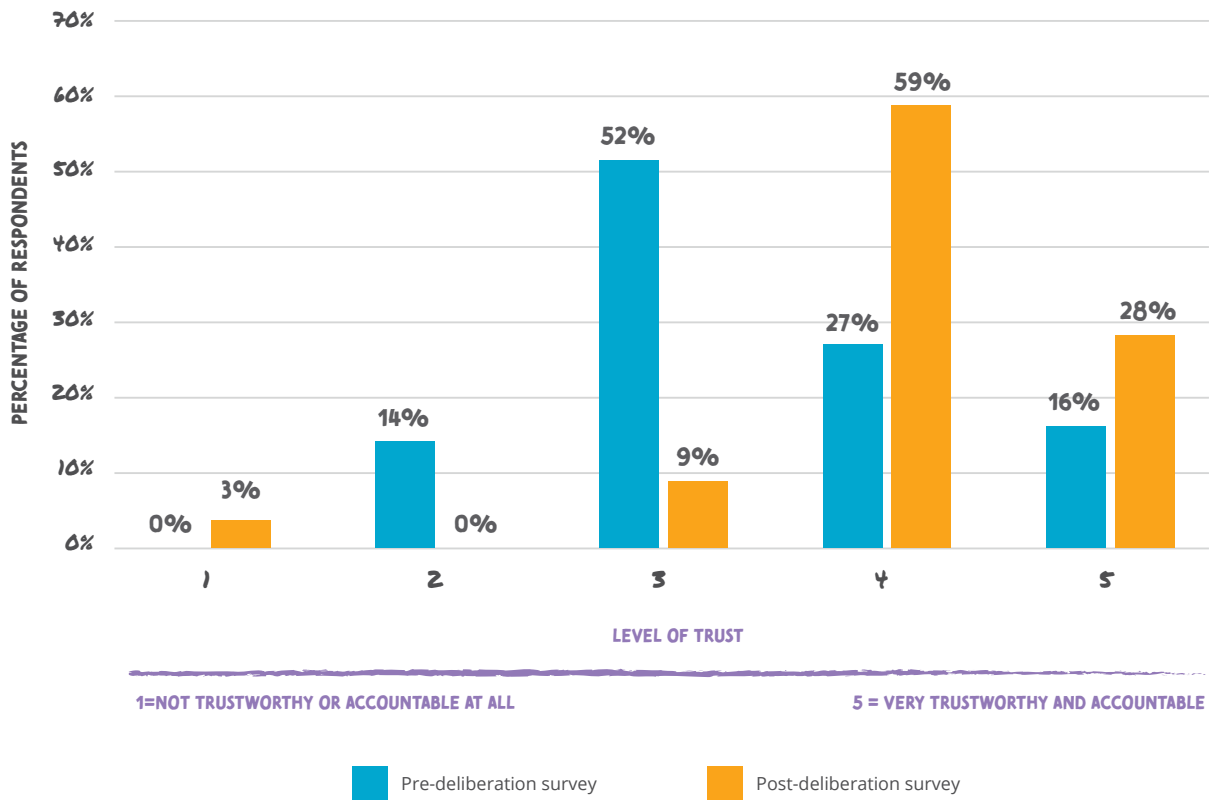
TRUST

Panel members reported an increase in trust in TasWater following the deliberative process. 87% of panel members felt that TasWater was 'trustworthy and accountable' or 'very trustworthy and accountable' by the completion of the process, compared with 43% at the commencement of deliberations.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION In your view, how accountable or trustworthy do you think TasWater is?

POST-DELIBERATION QUESTION How accountable or trustworthy do you think TasWater is now that you have been through this experience?

SCALE/MEASURE 1=not trustworthy or accountable at all and 5=very trustworthy and accountable



COLLABORATION & OVERALL PROCESS AUTHENTICITY

Before deliberations commenced, panel members were asked to indicate how collaborative, genuine and worthwhile they thought TasWater had been in the past with their community engagement activities. 11% of participants felt that TasWater had been 'collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' or 'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' in the past. By the final session, 90% of panellists felt that this deliberative process had been 'collaborative, genuine and worthwhile' or 'very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile'.

PRE-DELIBERATION QUESTION

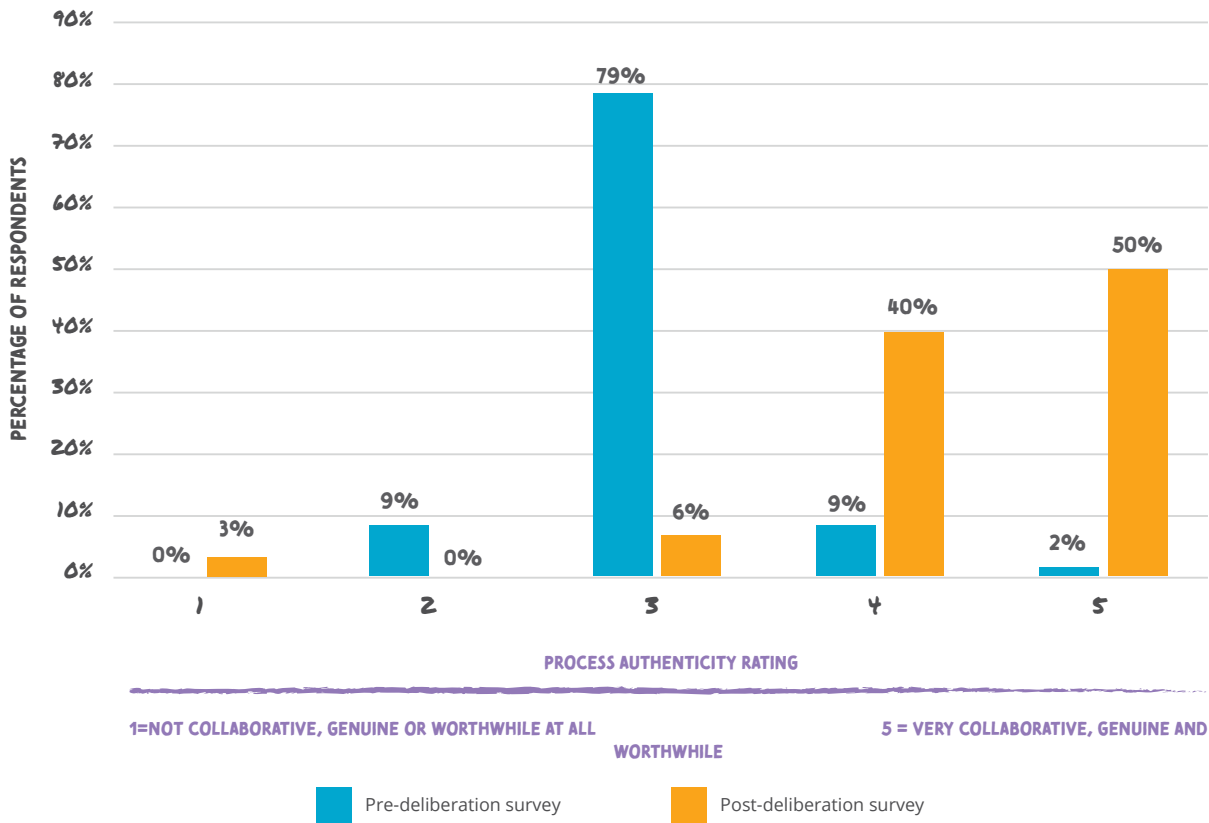
How collaborative, genuine and worthwhile do you think TasWater's community engagement activities have been in the past?

POST-DELIBERATION QUESTION

How collaborative, genuine and worthwhile do you think TasWater's engagement activities have been through this experience?

SCALE/MEASURE

1=not collaborative, genuine or worthwhile at all and 5=very collaborative, genuine and worthwhile

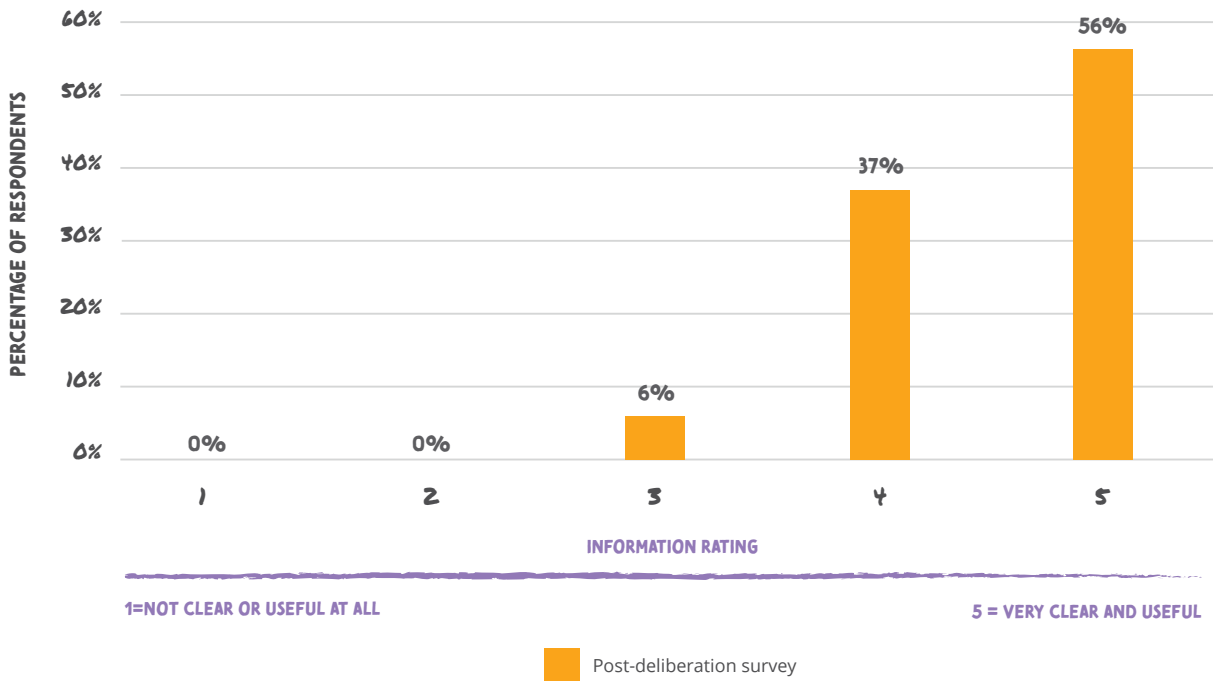


CLEAR, USEFUL AND BALANCED INFORMATION

Panellists were asked to consider how clear, useful and balanced the information they had been provided throughout the process was. They were asked to consider this in the context of how the information provided had helped them to respond to the remit. This question was only asked at the end of the process and hence there is no comparison of pre and post survey results. Overall, 93% of panellists felt that TasWater had provided 'clear' or 'very clear, useful and balanced information' throughout the process.

POST-DELIBERATION QUESTION How clear, useful and balanced was the information provided to you during this process? (i.e. to what extent was it helpful in supporting you to respond to your remit).

SCALE/MEASURE 1=not clear, useful or balanced and 5=very clear, useful and balanced



QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

Three questions were asked at the completion of the TasWater Community Advisory Panel to better understand participants' overall experience of the process. All questions were asked in the post-deliberation survey. The participants' comments have been provided in full, unedited, below. Comments reflect **individual participant views only** and are not representative of TasWater, MosaicLab or other members of the Community Advisory Panel.



I found it to be a very well thought out process that stayed relevant and true to its goal. I was disappointed at the end that a metering minority report was able to be put forward considering that this recommendation passed - I would have thought it would have been more appropriate as an individual submission (that had the support of more than one individual). I thought the minority report was a way for people to put forward a recommendation that ultimately the group did not agree to pass?

I think the final day voting process somewhat let down the overall process. The voting criteria verbal explanation was rushed and not clearly understood. We should have been advised of the voting process prior to the day as many people were confused about implications of standing or sitting with the required numbers to have a recommendation passed. Maybe the numbers required to pass a recommendation could have been left on screen and people placed in circle for voting. People at the front couldn't see what others were doing (standing or sitting) but those at the back could. During the early voting on recommendations there wasn't an opportunity provided for clarification on points about intent, but further down the list of recommendations there was an opportunity to ask for clarification from with writing team. Consistency is needed.

I felt it wasn't really clear about what we needed to do, i.e. the scope, until quite late in the process. I did not like how changes were made to the recommendations right at the end based on 1 person making a suggestion, when we were voting. But overall, I thought the process worked well.

QUESTION 2

What would you suggest we could improve about the process you went through?

I suggest that TasWater could have clarified that the Committee was to only consider and offer comments for 20mm water line connection clients.

Excellent process. Really well thought through. Superb use of technology. I did find some of the positive language used a bit cloying & unnecessary. So many things were amazing. I think it would have been helpful to have spent a bit more time explaining the voting process at the end. It felt very, very rushed. A discussion around what we understand to be a something we can or cannot live with. What do we mean by that? Personally I could have lived with all the recommendations. Also the time pressure to write the dissenting recommendations on a faulty laptop in a jumpy document was ridiculous & unnecessary. One recommendation in particular was amended & nearly knocked out without its original wording being put to the vote. That really did feel bewilderingly rushed

Please read the below with the proviso that I was still very favourably impressed with the process and result, but you asked for feedback... Some breaks were long. If the breakout groups (e.g. online) were too small e.g. 2 or 3 people only they seemed sometimes not as effective as 4-5 people. The early stages seemed a little slow then it seemed slightly rushed at the end in particular, the real topic was price and we didn't spend enough time or focus on that at the end, more spent on ancillary areas, a lot of repetition re environment etc at expense of pricing options. A couple of times briefing info came in late not allowing enough time to absorb if we had a prior commitment....



*This comment was summarised rather than published verbatim due to it being in direct contravention of TasWater's Diversity and Inclusion Policy and more broadly, the organisation's values.





NEXT STEPS

TasWater will use the Panel's recommendations, in addition to the wider engagement inputs, to draft their Price and Service Plan 5.

An online recall session is being planned for 22 February 2025. This session will provide an opportunity for the Community Advisory Panel to hear how TasWater has incorporated their recommendations into the draft plan and to test and provide feedback on their response.





What matters to us	We will...	We support each other by...
 <p>Being open to different perspectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to disagree. • Don't interrupt people and recognise people will have different points of view. Have positive body language. • Focus on the problem and not the person. • Listen, think, understand, consider, disagree respectfully, step away for a break and to reset. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sure that everybody has a say. • Keeping in mind that you could always take a break and come back to it later. • Keep asking questions until we understand each other. • Staying polite with each other. • Giving everyone the chance to speak their opinion. • Thinking about what you're going to say before you un-mute and use the 'raise hand' reaction. This allows time to self-censor.
 <p>Listening and being heard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always listen and stay on the topic. • Give everyone the same airtime. • Encourage everyone to participate. • Listen to each other. • Ensure everyone feels like they have been heard and has nothing else to add - even when a decision has been made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not jumping in with disagreements. • Having a timer. • Making sure everyone is heard, giving everyone a fair turn to speak. • Remembering to prompt people, some people can feel shy in group settings. • Not interrupting, ensuring everyone has a chance to share their thoughts. Using the 'raise hand' feature on Zoom.
 <p>Honest and respectful communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be respectful of each other. • Listen and treat people equally, don't dominate conversations. • Listening to all viewpoints and keeping collaboration in mind. • Allow others to voice their opinion, you won't have all the information. • Respect others and allow people to feel comfortable. • Respect other opinions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping the space safe (democracy only works in civility). • Hearing everyone's viewpoint -people will feel heard and acknowledged. • Respectfully pointing out that there's a problem. • Being respectful to each other - listen, allow people to vocalise fully. • Allowing others to voice their opinion, so that we have all the information.
 <p>Sharing the load</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the papers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All contributing to the work.

Below is the Water Future Community Advisory Panel report at the end of the deliberative process (Day 5). Nothing has been edited or changed in this report to ensure the words of the panel members themselves are directly relayed to TasWater.

TasWater's Water Future Community Advisory Panel PSP5 Deliberation Panel Report November 2024

Our challenge:

TasWater is at a critical juncture - we have unique assets, our climate is changing, and customer expectations are growing. We need to prepare for an uncertain future and find the balance of price and service that is fair for all Tasmanians, shaping the future of water services in our state.

How do we prepare for tomorrow while being fair to customers today?

Introduction

We are a diverse group of 45 Tasmanians, randomly selected from a pool of over 500 Tasmanians who registered to participate in TasWater's Water Future Community Advisory Panel. Our panel was tasked with deliberating on TasWater's remit of 'How do we prepare for tomorrow while being fair to customers today?'. Key issues were considered, relating to water and sewage management and infrastructure in Tasmania to provide community input to assist TasWater in the development of Price and Service Plan 5 (PSP5).

To achieve this, we reviewed detailed information about TasWater's operations and challenges, wider engagement data and worked together to develop recommendations that reflect community priorities. Our participation included online meetings, site visits and in-person workshops during October and November 2024, facilitated by MosaicLab in partnership with TasWater. Experts and stakeholders also contributed, providing insights to inform our deliberations.

Our independent report summarises our recommendations, focused on ensuring sustainable, reliable, and equitable water and sewage services for all Tasmanians. This report will inform TasWater's submission to the economic regulator for PSP5.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Heading	Protect and improve the environment and water security
Description of this recommendation	<p>Provide reliable access to quality water amid challenges like climate change (eg drought risk).</p> <p>Consider population growth, conserve resources and reduce water loss from leaks.</p> <p>Ensure that all infrastructure, upgrades and new projects ensure minimal harm.</p>
Why is this important?	<p>Access to quality and safe water, and efficient recycling management of effluent, is essential to ensure equity amongst communities and for future generations.</p> <p>Environmental sustainability is crucial to protect the planet for future generations e.g. effluents/outputs from treatment of sewage must not pollute our waterways.</p>

Recommendation 2:

Heading	Education and incentives for water conservation
Description of this recommendation	<p>TasWater should develop comprehensive strategies to help customers maximise water efficiency, including educational programs in schools and the broader community. By promoting awareness and practical solutions, these initiatives will empower individuals, households and businesses to conserve water effectively. Additionally, TasWater must collaborate with local, state and federal governments to implement water-saving rebates or subsidy programs, encouraging the adoption of water-efficient devices such as showerheads and tanks. These combined efforts will foster a culture of conservation and ensure sustainable water use across Tasmania.</p>
Why is this important?	<p>To improve community knowledge in water conservation to encourage reduced water consumption.</p> <p>To encourage the government and councils to incentivise water conservation programs working alongside TasWater to do this.</p> <p>Customer education in how to control their water usage will assist their capacity to pay their bills and assist in the future proofing of the Network.</p>

Recommendation 3:

Heading	Increase awareness of the TasWater Assist Program
Description of this recommendation	<p>Increase awareness of the TasWater Assist Program and the flexible payment options available.</p> <p>Provide support for those impacted by pricing changes to ensure that all Tasmanians have reliable access to basic water needs for drinking and hygiene.</p>
Why is this important?	<p>The TasWater Assist Program is an important initiative as it provides financial relief and support for Tasmanians experiencing financial hardship with their water bills.</p> <p>The proposed changes to the pricing mechanism requires additional support to the TasWater Assist Program so that financially vulnerable people get assistance.</p>

Recommendation 4:

Heading	Upgrade of metering
Description of this recommendation	<p>We recommend that TasWater install digital smart meters across the network, as a high priority, where net benefit can be demonstrated i.e. where the trial has proved successful for TasWater and customers. On that basis, we should accelerate pilots and broaden rollouts. Taswater should consider optional early customer opt in.</p>
Why is this important?	<p>Enhanced quality data allows better decisions to be made by TasWater and their customers. This can improve billing options for customers.</p>

Recommendation 5:

Heading	Remodel the pricing structure
Description of this recommendation	<p>We recommend that TasWater increase the variable component of the pricing structure for water and sewerage and in turn, reduce the fixed cost component so it is more reflective of a usage-based system.</p> <p>We recommend that TasWater provide comprehensive information on these changes including payment options, weekly/fortnightly BPay payments or recurring direct debits.</p>
Why is this important?	<p>Changing the pricing structure aims to make costs fairer, encourage water conservation, and provide flexibility for customers to control their bills based on usage.</p> <p>More information on payment options and changing pricing to more of a usage-based system can help protect vulnerable customers from sudden financial impacts, allowing for a smoother transition over time.</p>

Recommendation 6:

Heading	Proactive Infrastructure management and maintenance.
Description of this recommendation	We recommend that TasWater focus on future-proofing and consolidating infrastructure by addressing critical needs first, with ongoing proactive/preventative maintenance, rationalising infrastructure based on cost benefit to customers prioritised to meet future demands.
Why is this important?	Utilising the current assets efficiently will see a return on investment in the future for all, ensuring continuity and quality service by prioritising water and sewage needs and utilisation in the future. It also minimises long-term operational costs, enhances service reliability, safeguards public health and supports sustainable economic growth and environmental protection.

Recommendation 7:

Heading	Supply water and sewage services to unserved communities
Description of this recommendation	TasWater to review: <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ the adequacy and location of filling stations in order to ensure they are close to communities that need them◆ their arrangements with cartage contractors to ensure a reasonable and equitable cost of supply to unserved communities◆ demand for expanding reticulated water and sewage services in unserved communities through proactive engagement.
Why is this important?	So that potable water and sewage services can be supplied to unserved communities in an equitable manner.

MINORITY REPORTS

Minority report 1

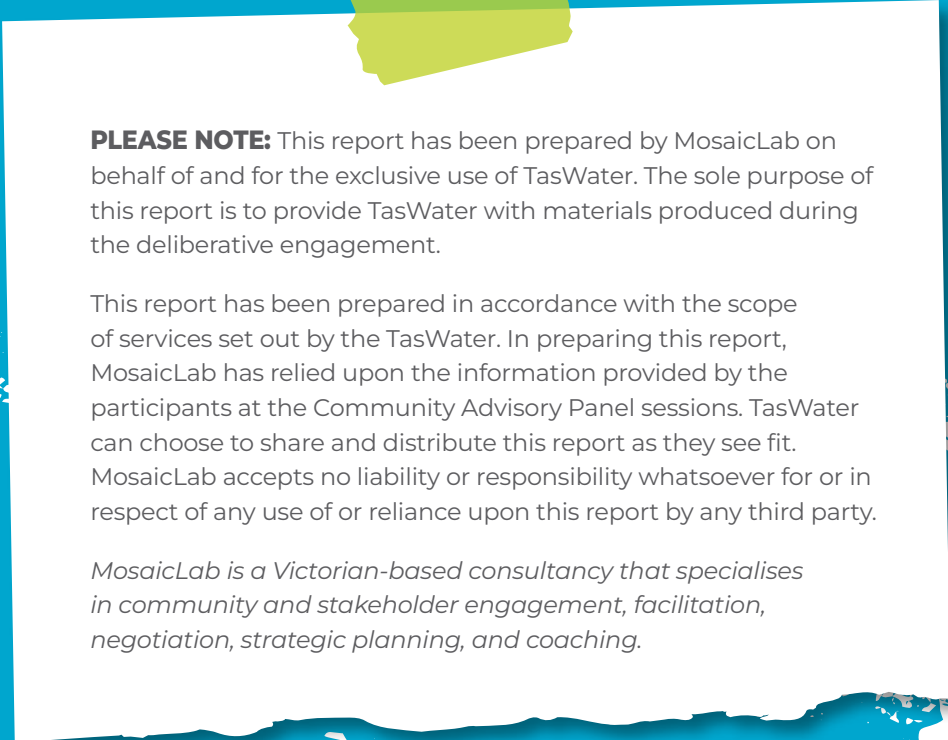
<p>What is this in relation to?</p>	<p>The panel developed the following recommendation that was eliminated in the final vote:</p> <p><i>“TasWater will actively engage the community and local governments in order to prioritise projects, build support and source and secure funding [for example, from state and federal grants]. Additionally, we will actively pursue funding incentive programs for communities lacking reliable reticulated water, such as community water tanks or rebates for rainwater tank and septic installations”</i></p>
<p>Comments we would like noted:</p>	<p>As group we suggest that community engagement on developing priorities is vital if Taswater is to expand its services.</p> <p>State and Local Government, as key stakeholders and shareholders in Taswater have option to invest in services to increase water security for their communities.</p> <p>We suggest the following is a more accurate representation of the intent of the recommendation as developed by the panel:</p> <p><i>“TasWater actively engage with community and local governments in order to prioritise projects, build support and source and secure funding [for example, from state and federal grants]. Additionally, Taswater should actively pursue funding incentive programs and rebates for increased water harvesting in communities across Tasmania”</i></p>

Minority report 2

<p>What is this in relation to?</p>	<p>The following recommendation was eliminated by the panel in its final vote:</p> <p><i>“We recommend that TasWater continues with and updates its Incident and Emergency Management Plan that outlines the system and process to control any Major Incident, State Emergency situation or significant business interruption.”.</i></p>
<p>Comments we would like noted:</p>	<p><i>We would like it noted that disaster mitigation and management it vital in planning for future scenarios in these times of climate change.</i></p>

Minority report 3

<p>What is this in relation to?</p>	<p>Upgrade of metering</p>
<p>Comments we would like noted:</p>	<p>We voted against this recommendation. We did so because we are concerned about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ <i>Affordability (we would like to see greater emphasis on customers being able to opt out or in for household digital meters)</i> ♦ <i>Environmental impacts (the meters have an unknown lifespan and will be replaced with a new unit when their battery fails, creating waste - a solar rechargeable option would be better)</i> <p>This recommendation carries a very high price increase, which will greatly impact lower income households.</p>



PLEASE NOTE: This report has been prepared by MosaicLab on behalf of and for the exclusive use of TasWater. The sole purpose of this report is to provide TasWater with materials produced during the deliberative engagement.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the scope of services set out by the TasWater. In preparing this report, MosaicLab has relied upon the information provided by the participants at the Community Advisory Panel sessions. TasWater can choose to share and distribute this report as they see fit. MosaicLab accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for or in respect of any use of or reliance upon this report by any third party.

MosaicLab is a Victorian-based consultancy that specialises in community and stakeholder engagement, facilitation, negotiation, strategic planning, and coaching.



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