

# AUSTRALIAN WATER REFORM ROADSHOW



**TRANCHE 3** STORMWATER, ENGAGEMENT  
THE FUTURE OF WATER

**MODULE 3** COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
& CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



**Evelyn Rodrigues**

Manager, Customer &  
Community at Water Service  
Association of Australia  
(WSAA)



**Catherine Ferrari**

Engagement &  
Communications Specialist



**Jayne Shepherd**

Acting GM Corporate  
& Community Relations  
at TasWater

# Rules of Engagement / Code of Conduct

- SPICAE & our panel are cognizant of the NZ Reforms.
- These sessions are on the Australian Reforms & aimed at enabling a reference point for attendees to draw comparisons to the current reforms in New Zealand.
- SPICAE & our panel will endeavour to provide an **Unbiased View** in this session.
- **Please align questions to the Module Topic.**
- While this is being done for the DIA & 3 Waters Steering Committee, please do not ask us question for either of them.

TRANCHE	TRANCHE THEME	MODULE TOPIC
1	REFORM & GOVERNANCE	WATER REFORM JOURNEY (VIC)
		WATER REFORM JOURNEY (TAS)
		GOVERNANCE (BOARDS, OWNERSHIP & LEGISLATION)
2	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT STATE OF WATER SERVICES - REGIONAL & IRRIGATION (VIC)
		CURRENT STATE OF WATER SERVICES - METRO VICTORIA
		CURRENT STATE OF WATER SERVICES - TASWATER
3	STORMWATER, ENGAGEMENT & THE FUTURE OF WATER	THE FUTURE OF WATER
		STORM WATER CLIMATE CHANGE & RESILIENCE
		<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT &amp; CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE</b>
		INDIGENEOUS ENGAGEMENT (WA and VIC)
4	COUNCILS	HOW DID TASMANIAN COUNCILS MANAGE REFORMS
		THE CURRENT STATE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
		THE FUTURE ROADMAP FOR COUNCILS



**RECORDING & SLIDES WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM:**  
[www.spicae.com.au/about-spicae/nz-roadshow/](http://www.spicae.com.au/about-spicae/nz-roadshow/)



# Involving customers and communities in water businesses

**Evelyn Rodrigues**

Manager, Customer & Community at Water Service Association of Australia (WSAA)





- Water utilities in Australia are government owned
- Most are run as government owned corporations (mainly state-owned, some are local government owned)
- They are all monopolies (though competition does exist in some areas)
- Economic regulation differs from state to state
- The economic regulator is independent and sets the prices.
- In some states, this is more of a price monitoring role with the government having the final say.
- Since corporatisation and particularly in the last 5 – 10 years, water utilities have become MORE focused and engaged with their customers and communities.

1. Engagement to determine investment and service levels, usually done when setting prices
2. Engagement for long-term water planning
3. Consultation on a particular project

There is also the ongoing customer research and input from brand tracking, voice of customer and journey mapping that is used to improve the customer experience



- Customer expectations are pushed higher by other competitive sectors
- It has become an integral part of regulatory models
- It fills the ‘good will’ bucket and protects the utility when things go wrong
- If communities can see their priorities and views reflected, they are less likely to complain to government - and this is better for the utility
- It builds trust and brand perception
- A trusted water utility is more likely to have a greater role in strategic planning in their city and region -  
Good for the utility, good for the community

- What happens in Australia (and the UK)
- The regulator requires a water utility to carry out customer engagement and this needs to be reflected in the pricing submission.
- This is similar to the model in the UK where water utilities are privately owned, and Scotland (owned by the Scottish government).





# How does it work?

The utility has the relationship with the customer rather than the regulator or government taking full responsibility for the interests of the customer.

This means customer research, engagement and tracking customer perceptions and satisfaction is a core function of the business.



- Water security has been a major issue in Australia but particularly since 2000
- Most cities in Australia were facing severe water shortages and restrictions
- All cities need diverse sources of water. But we need the community to play their part and accept the different sources of water.



1. Start early and give enough time
2. It is not a single engagement activity but a series of activities and research that make up a program
3. Be clear what is up for engagement
4. Allow for flexibility
5. Remove all bias: information provided, who is delivering, facilitation etc
6. Inclusive and universal engagement
7. Use more than one source of truth for decisions
8. Demonstrate where customer input has impacted decisions
9. Close the loop throughout the process
10. Use 'challenge panels' to check your program and process



# Some of the trends we are seeing

1. Regulation models putting customers at the centre.
2. Engagement across the IAP2 spectrum
3. Incorporate all sources of customer data and intel into the engagement program
4. Customers have expectations to engage on public value, not just on service levels and costs
5. The topics for engagement are influenced by the customer – not just the utility or the regulator





INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 

	<b>INFORM</b>	<b>CONSULT</b>	<b>INVOLVE</b>	<b>COLLABORATE</b>	<b>EMPOWER</b>
<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
<b>PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.



**Catherine Ferrari**

Engagement &  
Communications Specialist

## Engagement on Future Water Strategy for Western Australia

Three key stages

1. Water efficiency
2. Groundwater replenishment scheme
3. Customer and community voice





# Case Study

spicae



**Jayne Shepherd**

Acting GM Corporate &  
Community Relations at TasWater

## Engagement for Taswater pricing submission

The logo for Taswater, featuring a stylized blue arc above the word "Taswater" in a bold, sans-serif font.

