Improving Water & Sewer Services – Customer Engagement Phase 2

June 2023

Central Coast Council | Water and Sewer

WOOLCOTT RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Woolcott Research and Engagement is an Australian privately owned research and engagement agency that provide professional, independent and timely market research and engagement services. Our professional staff arrange, undertake and publish commissioned research and community engagement projects for industry, corporations, governments, integration agencies and individuals.

We acknowledge the Cammeraygal People as being the traditional owners of this land and pay respect to Elders past and present.

©Woolcott Research Pty Ltd 2023
This work is copyright. Individuals, agencies and corporations wishing to reproduce this material should contact Woolcott Research at the following address.

WOOLCOTT RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary 7
2. Background 14
3. Objectives 16
4. Engagement Design 17
5. Values and Outcomes – Water Supply Findings 22
6. Values and Outcomes – Sewerage Service Findings 29
7. Performance Measures 35
8. Performance Targets 45
9. Customer Charter 51
10. End of Session Feedback 62
11. Further Engagement 63
Appendix A: Forum Agenda 66
Appendix B: Handouts 74

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Combined Performance Measures and Information – 50% or more deemed 'very important' 11

Figure 2: Overview of Engagement Program 17

Figure 3: Individual Token Exercise – Water Supply 23

Figure 4: Individual Token Exercise – Sewerage Service 30

Figure 5: Existing Performance Measures 37

Figure 6: Suggested Additional Performance Measures 39

Figure 7: Suggestions for Further Information 41

Figure 8: Targets for Water and Sewer 46

Figure 9: Level of Agreement with 'End of Session Feedback statements 62

WOOLCOTT
RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Table of Tables

Table 1: Locations & Number of Participants at the Forums in Phase 1 18

Table 2: Forum Participant Demographics (unweighted) 19

Table 3: Groups & Depths 21

Executive Summary

1 Executive Summary

This report summarises key the themes from Phase 2 of Central Coast Council's customer engagement program for ongoing engagement for IPART and the Water and Sewer Masterplan.

1.1 Background & Objectives

The objectives for the ongoing engagement for IPART are to:

- Identify and understand community values
- Gauge community feedback in relation to Council's commitment to a Customer Charter
- Develop a set of performance metrics that customers would like to know about, along with the desired method and frequency of reporting

The obejctives for the engagment for the Water and Sewer Masterplan are to:

- Identify levels of service and customers' expectations (long term)
- Identify the values related to treatment/network planning and ascertain whether they are the same values as for water resource planning
- Identify the issues and priorities that the community want considered as part of long term planning

1.2 Engagement Design

The engagement program consists of three phases that will run from January to July 2023. The engagement components for Phase 2, conducted between March and June 2023, were:

- Two face-to-face community forums with residents and small to medium businesses – one in Gosford and one in Wyong
- One group with young people aged 16-18 years old (six participants)
- Six in-depth interviews with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers (ATSI)
- Six in-depth interviews with culturally and linguistically diverse customers who speak a language other than English at home (CALD)
- Five in-depth interviews with large customers
- Two 'deep dive' groups on the Customer Charter with 16 residential and business customers from the forums

The group and depths were conducted online using the Zoom videoconferencing platform.

In total 92 individual customers took part in the Phase 2 engagement across all components (residential and business customers).

The forums, group and in-depths involved:

- Presenting back the values and outcomes developed from the findings from Phase 1, to test customers' agreement and prioritisation.
- Testing the list of performance measures, and information, developed from Phase 1 and ascertaining the level of importance of each.
- Evaluating the target levels for existing measures and perceptions of Council's performance against those.
- Building awareness of what a Customer Charter is and understanding of what customers would like to see included in it. The Deep Dive Groups went on to test a draft Customer Charter.

The agenda and materials were tailored to each audience and method of engagement so did not always include all of these sections.

The main themes from these activities are outlined below.

1.3 Values and Outcomes

Overall, participants agreed with the summary of the values and outcomes that were developed collaboratively in Phase 1. In terms of prioritisation, there was a belief that they were interlinked and so all are important to some degree.

The order of importance, and indexed weighting given in the forums, for **water supply** was:

- Good water quality – 21%
- Reliable service – 19%
- Affordable service – 19%
- Effective future planning – 15%
- Environmental focus – 14%
- Transparency and education – 12%

In general, there were similar findings in the in-depth interviews and youth group. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants placed a slightly greater emphasis on the environmental focus value. They, and the large customers, wanted more information or outcomes within this value – more about what Council is going to do to ensure this value is met. The Youth Group were slightly more concerned with affordability due to the current cost of living increases. Large customers valued transparency and education, particularly a more direct line of communication to Council.

The order of importance, and indexed weighting given at the forums, for **sewerage service** was very slightly different – reliable service and environmental focus increased in importance:

- Reliable service – 20%
- Quality treatment – 20%
- Affordable service – 17%
- Environmental focus – 15%
- Effective future planning – 15%
- Transparency and education – 12%

For these values environment and quality treatment were seen to be very closely related. The youth group focused more on the environment than forum participants and believed that it was more important than affordability in the context of sewerage services. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants wanted to see outcomes related to improving Council's relationship with the Indigenous community. They too highlighted the importance of the environment and effective planning. Again, large customers valued transparency and education highly as they recognised that businesses' trade waste can have a high environmental impact.

1.4 Performance Measures

For this section participants were presented with three lists:

- Existing performance measures
- Additional suggestions for performance measures (from IPART and the Phase 1 forums)
- Suggestions for information that should be provided by Council

They were asked to provide importance ratings for each.

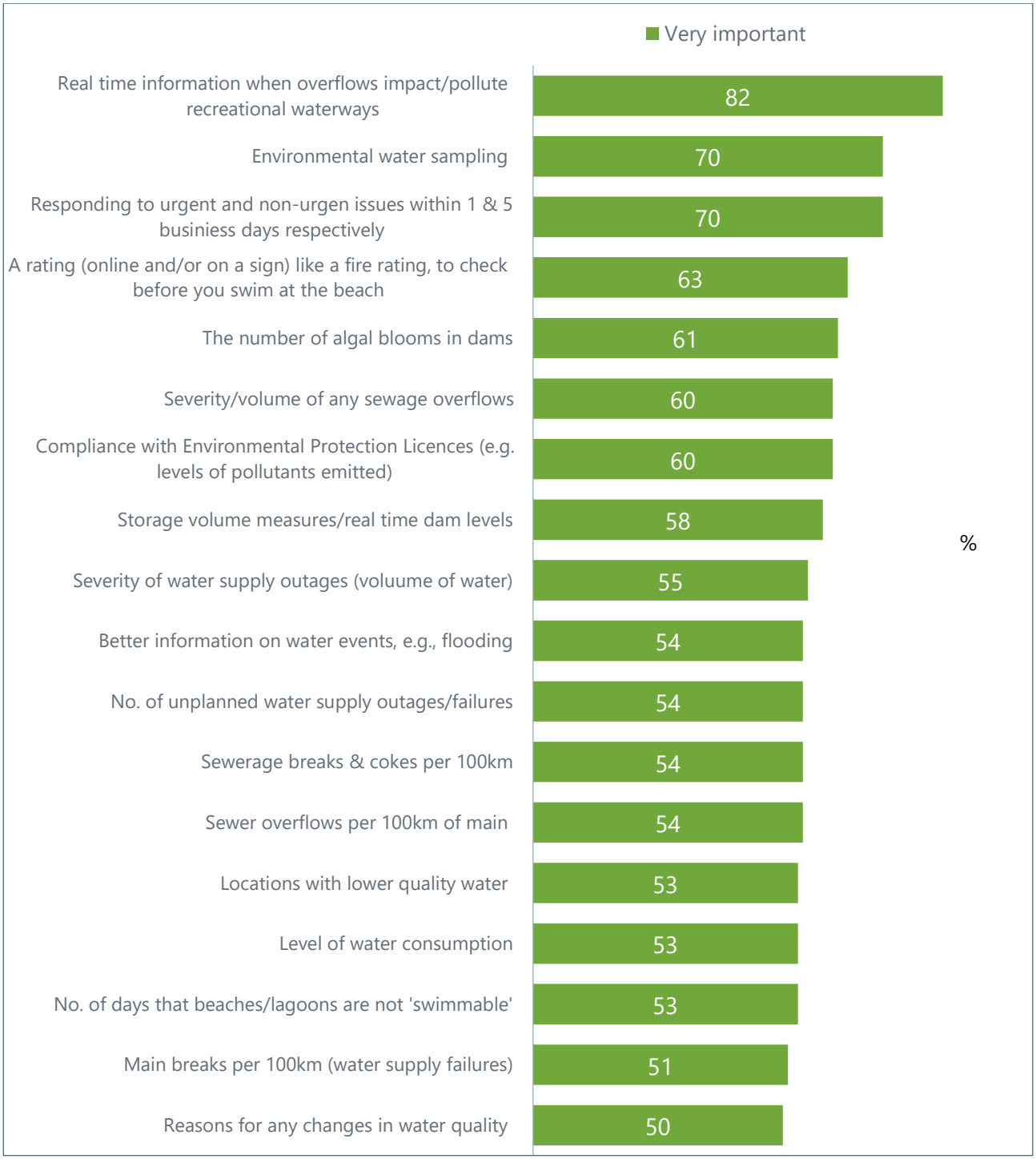
Participants across the forums and depths believed that the vast majority of measures and information was either very or quite important, and as such Council should consider adopting or taking most forward, assuming costs for implementation are not prohibitive.

The measures that were considered most important tended to be those where a poor performance by Council would have a strong impact on their lives, and would affect many people, e.g. measures related to having a reliable sewerage system, having enough water or the environment. Many of the measures chosen reflected the strong priority given to the water and sewer values of quality, reliability and the environment.

The Phase 3 survey is tasked with finding out from the community how performance measures should be communicated, and the frequency with which they should be measured, as well as how the information deemed important should be communicated. Due to the number of measures and items of information thought to be important, there needed to be a decision made about which items to include in the survey. It was decided that for the purpose of the survey the items with a majority of participants stating that it is very important would be included.

The chart below combines the two lists of performances measures and the list of suggested information that Council should provide, where 50% or more of participants rated the measure or piece of information as 'very important'. These were included in the Phase 3 survey.

Figure 1: Combined Performance Measures and Information – those that 50% or more deemed 'very important'



Please indicated how important you think it is that Council adopts each measure/information by placing a tick in the relevant box.
Base: All forum participants; Total (n=69)

It must be stressed that this is not a definitive list of measures and pieces of information that are considered important by the community.

1.5 Performance Targets

Following the discussions about performance measures, participants were provided with information on the current targets set by IPART and the performance of Council, and two other utilities, on five of the existing measures. Participants were asked to provide feedback on the targets set and whether they thought any of the targets needed to be improved.

In general, it was not considered to be 'very important' to change any of the targets by the majority of participants. Some suggested that IPART are the 'experts' so they trust the target levels that the regulator has set. However, of the five performance measures presented, it was deemed most important at the forums that Council improves the target for the number of water quality complaints per 1000 properties (43% very important, 35% quite important). For this measure, Central Coast Council is not performing as well as Hunter Water or Barwon Water but are performing better than the target, so it was deemed appropriate that the target is lowered. It wasn't expected that lowering this target would result in any increases to customer bills.

A clear outcome of this discussion was that customers wanted to ensure that the targets are realistic and achievable for Council, particularly for unplanned water outages. There was not a clear willingness to pay more to improve the targets in the current climate.

1.6 Customer Charter

In the last session of the forum participants were presented with an overview of what a Customer Charter is and some examples of content, in the form of some possible headings and three Customer Charters from other water utilities – ICON Water, SA Water and Yarra Valley Water.

Each table was asked to develop their own contents page for the Central Coast Council Water and Sewer Customer Charter and present it back to the room.

A summary of the collated Tables of Contents is provided later in this report. This was presented to the in-depth and group participants for comment.

Following the forums, Council drafted a full version of its Customer Charter based on the feedback provided. This was tested in the 'Deep Dive Groups' that took place a few weeks after the forums, with a selection of forum participants.

Generally, there was very positive feedback provided at these groups. Council is now in the process of finalising the Charter ready for public exhibition.

Detailed Report

2 Background

Central Coast Council wished to conduct an integrated research and engagement program to inform its ongoing engagement for IPART submissions and the Water and Sewer Masterplan.

2.1 Water & Sewer Ongoing Engagement for IPART

The NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) sets the maximum prices for the water, wastewater and other services provided by Central Coast Council as a Water Supply Authority.

IPART recently reviewed Council's water prices to apply for the 4 years from July 2022 to June 2026. In reviewing these water prices IPART suggested that Council improves its performance and increases its accountability to its customers and regulators.

IPART has recommended that Council:

- Develop a set of performance measures that match the community's preferences and expectations (IPART have suggested some but the final set need to be developed collaboratively with customers)
- Put systems in place to publicly report on its performance against these measures every year starting in 2022-23
- Uses a reporting format that suits customer preferences.

Council has also made several commitments itself to improve its performance and accountability to customers which include:

- Establishing an Accountability Strategy, which will focus on information provision from a customer centric lens

- Developing a revised Customer Charter that will include water related measurable outcomes.
- Improving its asset management strategies
- Developing an outcomes-based reporting framework

2.2 Water & Sewer Masterplan

Council is starting to prepare its Water and Sewer Masterplan in accordance with the new Regulatory and Assurance Framework for local water utilities issued by the Department of Planning and Environment in July 2022.

The next phase of this will involve planning for the regions treatment and network assets and providing a framework for providing water and/or sewerage services to properties outside the Council's existing service area.

The current engagement program aims to assist Council in its planning.

3 Objectives

The objectives for the engagement program are outlined below.

3.1 Water & Sewer Ongoing Engagement for IPART

- Identify and understand community values
- Gauge community feedback in relation to Council's commitment to a Customer Charter
- Develop a set of performance metrics that customer would like to know about, along with the desired method and frequency of reporting

3.2 Water & Sewer Masterplan

- Identify levels of service and customers' expectations (long term)
- Identify the values related to treatment/network planning and ascertain whether they are the same values as for water resource planning
- Identify the issues and priorities that the community want considered as part of long term planning

4 Engagement Design

The engagement program as a whole consists of three phases. For the first two phases the main components are qualitative, for the third phase there will be a quantitative survey.

A summary of the program is outlined in the figure below.

Figure 2: Overview of Engagement Program

	Planning (Dec 2022-Jan 2023)	Phase 1 - FORUM (Jan-Mar 2023)	Phase 2 - FORUM (Mar-May 2023)	Phase 3 – SURVEY (Apr-Jul 2023)
Engagement	Meetings with CCCW	2 x forums (n=40 each) 12 x in-depths with ATSI and CALD customers 5 x in-depths with large customers 1 x group with young people	2 x forums (n=40 each) 12 x in-depths with ATSI and CALD customers 5 x in-depths with large customers 1 x group with young people 2 x deep dive groups	Customer survey amongst residents (n=500) and businesses (n=120) Open community survey on YVOC
Outcomes	• Finalisation of the Engagement Plan, including the approach, methodologies and timeline	• Educated and informed participants • Identification of what's important to them - values and outcomes • Exploration of desired performance metrics	• Finalisation of values and outcomes • Performance metric prioritisation • Levels of service and customer expectations (long term) • Identification of what should be included in a Customer Charter	• Validation of the customer values and outcomes • How performance metrics should be reported – method and frequency

The engagement program for Phase 2 consisted of the following components:

- Two face-to-face community forums with residents and small to medium businesses – one in Gosford and one in Wyong
- One youth group with 16-18 year olds (six participants)
- Six in-depth interviews with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers (ATSI)
- Six in-depth interviews with culturally and linguistically diverse customers who speak a language other than English at home (CALD)
- Five in-depth interviews with large customers
- Two 'deep dive' groups on the Customer Charter with 16 residential and business customers from the forums

The group and in-depth interviews were conducted online using the Zoom videoconferencing platform.

Phase 2 focussed on:

- Presenting back the values and outcomes developed from the findings from Phase 1, to test customers' agreement and prioritisation.
- Testing the list of performance measures, and information, developed from Phase 1 and ascertaining the level of importance of each.
- Evaluating the target levels for existing measures and perceptions of Council's performance against those.
- Building awareness of what a Customer Charter is and understanding of what customers would like to see included in it. The Deep Dive Groups went on to test a draft Customer Charter.

The agenda and materials were tailored to the audience and method of engagement.

4.1 Community Forums

Two community forums took place in Gosford and Wyong – the same people who attended the Phase 1 forums were invited back for Phase 2.

Table 1: Locations & Number of Participants at the Forums in Phase 2

Location	Date	Number of Forum Attendees
Wyong (Wyong Race Club)	Tues 9 May	34
Gosford (Gosford Entertainment Grounds - Race Club)	Weds 10 May	35
Total		**69**

The forums consisted of a mix of information provision through presentations from Central Coast Council executives along with table discussions and activities. There were 7-9 participants per table, with a mix of age and gender, and each session ran from 6:00pm - 9.00pm including dinner and dessert.

For both forums Woolcott Research & Engagement provided a lead facilitator – Karyn Wong (who chaired the sessions and managed flow and timing), five table facilitators plus an administrative support staff member. Woolcott facilitators ensured all issues were covered and everyone's views were heard and captured in discussions. Further probing by facilitators into the themes that arose within the discussion provided a greater level of detail. A copy of the agenda used by the facilitators is in Appendix A.

Central Coast Council executives presented, observed the discussions throughout the sessions and were on hand to answer any questions that arose. Forum presenters included Jamie Loader (Director of Water and Sewer), Luke Drury (Acting Unit Manager Assets and Projects), Danielle

Hargreaves (Unit Manager Headworks and Treatment). Overall, there were 10 Council attendees across the forums – including presenters and subject matter experts, and one external advisory group observer.

Participants who attended the Phase 1 forums were invited back for Phase 2. There was an 82% repeat attendee rate showing a high level of engagement with the process. Participants were offered $150 to take part in the forum.

Participant Profile

The table below shows the demographics of those who attended the Phase 2 forums.

Table 2: Forum Participant Demographics (unweighted)

Forum Participant Demographics	Total (n=69) %	Gosford (n=35) %	Wyong (n=34) %
Age			
18-34 years	**12**	11	12
35-49 years	**30**	31	29
50-69 years	**42**	49	35
70+years	**16**	9	24
Gender			
Male	**39**	34	44
Female	**59**	63	56
Other	**1**	3	-
Language Other than English (CALD)			
Yes	**1**	3	-
No	**99**	97	100
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI)			
Yes	**6**	9	3
No	**91**	89	94
Prefer not to say	**3**	3	3

Small to Medium Businesses (SMB)			
Yes	**16**	17	15
No	**84**	83	85
Dwelling Ownership			
Currently rent	**16**	20	12
Currently own fully or with a mortgage	**84**	80	88
Income			
Less than $41,600	**17**	23	12
Between $41,600 and $78,000	**20**	11	29
Between $78,000 and $104,000	**20**	23	18
Between $104,000 and $156,000	**19**	20	18
More than $156,000	**10**	9	12
Prefer not to say	**13**	14	12
Difficulty Paying Bills			
Yes	**12**	6	18
No	**83**	91	74
Prefer not to say	**6**	3	9

What age bracket do you fall into? / Do you speak a language other than English at home or with family members? / Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? / Are you the owner or a decision maker for a small or medium enterprise (less than 200 employees) / Which of the following best describes the dwelling where you are currently living? / What is your approximate annual household income (before tax)? / In the last 12 months, have you had any difficulty paying your water bills, e.g. had to ask for an extension or paid late, been on a special payment plan, been disconnected, delayed other payments or borrowed money to pay?
Base: All respondents (n=69); Gosford (n=35); Wyong (n=34)

People who worked in the area of water supply or sewerage services, in market research, or for IPART, NSW Health in a role related to water quality regulation or the NSW Environmental Protection Agency were screened out.

Participants had to receive water/sewerage bills from Council, their body corporate or be charged a specific charge by their landlord for water/sewerage.

4.2 Groups & Depths

As for Phase 1, the forums were supplemented with groups and depths with harder to reach audiences, such as young people and those from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or different language background. There were also depths conducted with large businesses with higher water usage. The same participants were included as for Phase 1.

The forum materials and questions were adapted for an in-depth interview format.

Table 3: Groups & Depths

Customer Type	Participants
ATSI customers	6
CALD customers	6
Large customers	5
Young people (16-18)	6
Total	**23**

As for Phase 1, the youth group were recruited by a professional recruiter. The ATSI/CALD participants were recruited via a variety of means including a recruiter, Facebook and cold calling. The large customers were recruited from a list provided by Central Coast Council.

5 Values and Outcomes – Water Supply Findings

5.1 Forum Findings

The first session of the forum commenced with a Central Coast Council representative presenting a summary of the values and outcomes from Phase 1 for water and sewer. Participants were then asked whether they agreed with the list of values and outcomes, if anything needed changing and if anything was missing. Following on from this they completed an exercise at the table level involving the allocation of 18 tokens to prioritise the values, separately for water and sewer. Prioritisation of the values was completed at both an individual level and at an overall table level – where the table had to try to come to a consensus.

For the water values and outcomes, overall the majority of participants agreed that the list was a good summary and a true reflection of the themes that had emerged and been discussed in the Phase 1 forums. There were frequent comments that there was some overlap between the values.

> *"It's a good list, been put into relevant categories." Residential Participant Gosford*

> *"Overall, it's a good snapshot – a good summary of what we want from both water supply and sewage services." Residential Participant Wyong*

> *"Everything is important and impacts everything else. It's all connected." Residential Participant Gosford*

> *"Yes many of the values are interrelated – if you fix one others will also get better." Residential Participant Wyong*

While it was generally felt to be a complete list, there were some aspects mentioned that were initially thought to be missing, such as innovation regarding water supply, although this was discussed and agreed that it was probably included in effective planning.

As participants started to try to prioritise the values, some found it quite challenging, believing them all the be important and also due to the interrelationships between them.

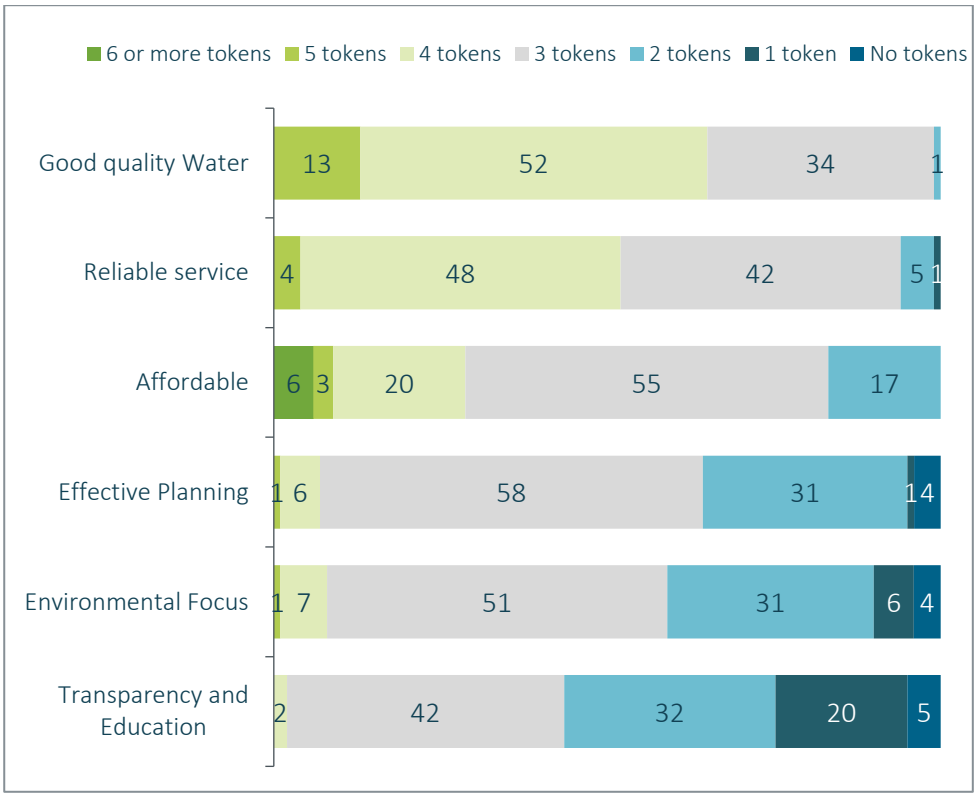
> *"They all have to be there – it's hard to take one out and prioritise it over another." Residential Participant Gosford.*

> *"The things you notice about water supply, like the taste, colour, are the most important but then you read through the others, and you think that it is all important." Small Business Participant Wyong*

Below are the results of the prioritisation exercise for water supply, summarising the results of the token allocation sheet completed by each participant individually. An indexed score is also provided as a reflection of the 'weighting' allocated to each value as a percentage.

Overall 'good quality water' emerged most often as the most important (mean: 3.76 tokens). This was followed by 'reliable service' and 'affordability' which were similarly rated. 'Effective planning' and 'environmental focus' also received a similar number of tokens (means: 2.63 and 2.53 respectively), and 'transparency and education' received the fewest number of tokens on average (mean: 2.16).

Figure 3: Individual Token Exercise – Water Supply



Mean Tokens (out of 18)	Indexed Tokens %
3.76	21
3.50	19
3.47	19
2.63	15
2.53	14
2.16	12

Individual Token Exercise – Water Supply
Base: All forum participants; Total (n=69)

Water quality was deemed particularly important because of health and safety reasons. It was also considered important because some customers were not experiencing clear, clean water currently. The main reason why some participants allocated slightly fewer tokens to water quality was because they felt the Government safety guidelines ensured that quality standards were met, and therefore it was 'a given'.

> *"I think having good quality water is pretty important. You could make everyone sick on the Central Coast with poor quality water. So quality is most important." Residential Participant Wyong*

"I want good quality water and unfortunately something else has to suffer." Residential Participant Gosford

Reliability was also a very important value that many had difficulty trading off tokens, while affordability, effective planning and environment were slightly lower but still difficult to trade off against. Effective planning, in particular, was considered to interlock and influence many of the other values – with participants commenting that if you get planning right, water quality, the environment, reliability, affordability, etc. will all follow and be acceptable.

"If you have effective planning, you get the environment right." Residential Participant Wyong

"Planning is something that we need to do long term and broader strokes. Although they are equally important the first three (quality, reliability, affordability) are immediate and the rest are long term… they need to plan so our kids have enough water." Residential Participant Gosford

"For me I want value for money I don't mind what we pay as long as it's good value - the quality doesn't warrant the charges at the moment." Small Business Participant Gosford

The environment was also considered a value that impacts and is impacted by many of the other values. It was thought to be not just Council's responsibility – it was everyone's, including other Government departments, which made it hard to prioritise.

"If the environment is healthy then everything flows from that." Residential Participant Gosford

"I would prefer not to take from environment because if you don't protect it there won't be water in the future." Residential participant Wyong

"The environmental focus, whilst it is important, is not solely the Council's problem. The environment needs to be a consistent priority across all government departments … it's a value that is at a much broader level." Residential participant Wyong

Transparency and education often received fewer tokens simply because compared to the other values, such as quality, reliability etc, it was deemed less important, as well as the fact that IPART regulates Council so holds them to account to some degree.

"The last one – transparency and education, if we do all the others, this means that this one will come, so it is less important… They have to do it anyway because IPART keeps them honest a bit, so knowing that helps and therefore transparency is slightly less important." Residential Participant Wyong

"Education is just not as important as good quality water." Residential participant Wyong

5.2 Youth Group Findings

Overall, the Youth Group were in agreement with the values and outcomes listed for water supply and did not feel that any changes were needed.

When discussing the importance of the values, the group found that all had some level of importance, however were able to make distinctions between those with perceived 'high' and 'lower' importance. The group suggested that good quality water and affordability were most important to them, due to their impacts on the health of the community. Cost of living increases in the current times meant that there were concerns about people with financial insecurity being able to afford to meet their basic needs, including having access to drinking water.

> *"Compared to other systems, like Sydney and Hunter Water, I think our quality is not where it should be. We need to be focusing on this as we are drinking water every day and it can't be good for our health if it tastes bad or smells." Youth Group Participant*

> *"If water becomes too expensive for some people to afford there's going to be a decrease in health and other aspects of our community. We have to make sure that everyone is able to get access to drinking water." Youth Group Participant*

Having a reliable service, planning effectively and focusing on the environment were also all seen as being important, however less so than the first two values highlighted. Like the forum participants, the inter-relationships between the values were also mentioned.

> *"Making sure that we don't waste any water through leaks and ensuring we have a good enough supply is important in the planning for the future." Youth Group Participant.*

> *"I think the whole system would collapse if they didn't have good planning. This helps all of the other values on this list." Youth Group Participant*

> *"I think the quality of water and the environment are both really important. They interact with each other and help the rest of the values so everything flows from there." Youth Group Participant*

Again similar to the forum participants, transparency and education was seen to be the least important value amongst Youth Group participants, with the feeling being that while this area is still important, the other values were relatively more important.

> *"I'd say if I had to take tokens away from anywhere in particular it would be transparency and education. I feel as though the other values are more important and can impact on our health or the environment. This isn't to say that this important, but I believe there are other areas needing more attention." Youth Group Participant*

> *"I think transparency and education is already good enough. I feel like we need improvement in some of the other areas." Youth Group Participant*

5.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander In-depth Interview Findings

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in-depth interview participants had a particular focus on the environment, with participants indicating that there should be more information or a greater number of outcomes within this value. Some suggested that outcomes for other values be moved under this value.

> *"I think the environmental value needs a lot more information or elaboration on what this means. At the moment there is only one dot point." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

> *"[Raising community awareness about our water supply and water conservation] could be moved to the environment value. They could also change this to 'raising community and cultural awareness…." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

Among the participants, the most important values appeared to be environmental focus, good quality water and effective planning.

> *"Quality water and the environment are by far the most important. They flow and work off of each other, and the system needs both to be healthy and to be effective." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

> *"Effective planning is important as we need to focus on the problem of population growth. Having new infrastructure is vital." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

The least important appeared to be transparency and education. The point was made that while this was important, the other values were seen to be of greater importance and require more attention.

> *"This is still important, but there are other values which probably impact the community more." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

5.4 CALD In-depth Interview Findings

There were no changes required to the water supply values and outcomes as seen by the CALD participants.

Among the CALD in-depth interview participants, good quality water and having a reliable service were found to be most important. All participants indicated these should be the key values for Council with regard to the water supply, given they are the foundations of an effective system.

> *"Good quality water and reliable service are most important to focus on, but I think all of them are important." CALD Participant*

The perceived importance of transparency and education as well as environmental focus differed between the participants. Some felt as though transparency and education was not important due

to a need for greater focus on other values, however others indicated a high importance for this value stemming from Council's past performance.

> *"Transparency and education, I wouldn't rank this anywhere near as high as any of the others. I don't care how transparent they are as long as the outcomes are met." CALD Participant*

> *"Our Council has not done well with being transparent in the past so this is really important. It is hard to find information, so Council needs to be more proactive in educating people." CALD Participant*

> *"As far as I know, Council is doing well in terms of keeping the environment in mind. I don't think this is more or less important than anything else on this list." CALD Participant*

With regards to effective planning, this was considered mid-level in importance by most. Participants felt as though visibility is not needed in this aspect, and they trust Council to plan effectively given the information they have.

> *"Planning is important, but I think Council is doing well enough in this area in the background, and there are areas in more pressing need of attention." CALD Participant*

5.5 Large Customer Findings

Large customers also agreed that the list of values and outcomes was a good summary of what is important to large consumers like themselves.

> *"That matches everything we were saying last time." Large customer*

> *"It gives us the certainty that they are all over it without us having to worry too much." Large customer*

> *"It's pretty straight forward. This stuff should be a given – it's their job as a water utility." Large customer*

One customer felt that the water outcomes related to sustainability could be more specific.

> *"My only point would be there isn't much detail there. What specifically are we trying to protect the environment and how do we want that to be achieved?" Large customer*

Similar to the customer forums, there was a sense that all the values are important and it was quite hard to prioritise one over another.

> *"From a business perspective, I think they are all important. I would say reliability and quality are most important day to day for our product – but the other bits need to be there too." Large customer*

Similar to the forums, large businesses found having good quality water to be most important from their point of view.

"Water is an ingredient for us. If we don't have good quality water then a lot of our processes would simply shut down and we wouldn't be able to produce." Large customer

For a few large businesses that rely heavily on water, transparency and education were considered more important than at the forums, as they wanted more direct contact and communication from Central Coast Council regarding their water supply.

"It would be good to have someone to speak to, a contact for large businesses. That way we can ask questions. They can let us know if something is happening or what their plans are." Large customer

"Transparency and education is really important to us. We feel as though sometimes we lack access in communicating with Council, having a liaison officer would be really helpful and give us that accessibility." Large customer

6 Values and Outcomes – Sewerage Service Findings

6.1 Forum Findings

Similarly for sewerage services, forum participants generally agreed that the summary of the values and outcomes was accurate and reflected their feedback from the previous forum.

Overall, interestingly there appeared to be more differing opinions regarding the sewerage values, compared to water values, and the environmental considerations were noted and considered somewhat more important, in the context of sewer (compared to water supply).

> *"Sewage has way more impact on the environment (than water) so is more important here." Residential Participant Wyong*

Prioritising the sewerage values in terms of importance was again a challenging task for many, with participants indicating that the values were all very important and that many of the values overlapped or affected each other.

> *"I think it matches my memory of the event - it's pretty comprehensive." Small Business participant Gosford*

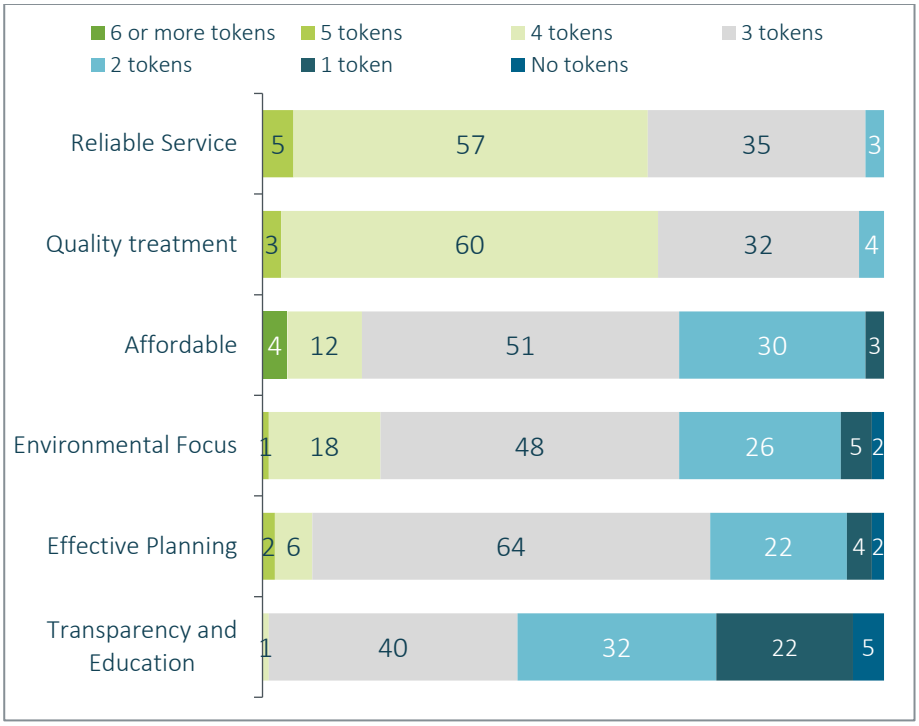
> *"Same as above. They're all equal.... you'd think they'd all have to be equal." Residential Participant Gosford.*

> *"If you're educating people than it's going to help the environment – it's all interconnected." Small Business Participant Wyong*

Figure 2 below shows the results of the prioritisation exercise for sewerage services, again taken from the handouts completed by each participant during the forums.

'Reliable service' and 'quality treatment' gained the greatest number of tokens (mean: 3.65 and 3.63 respectively), indicating a high level of perceived importance. There was a bit of a gap then next was 'Affordability', followed by 'environmental focus' and 'effective planning' (mean: 2.99, 2.78 and 2.78 respectively). Affordability was considered less important for the sewerage service due to it being a fixed charge rather than a usage charge like water supply. Similarly to water supply, 'transparency and education' received the fewest number of tokens for sewer on average (mean: 2.10). However, it must be noted that all were considered important.

Figure 4: Individual Token Exercise – Sewerage Service



Mean Tokens (out of 18)	Indexed Tokens %
3.65	20
3.63	20
2.99	17
2.78	15
2.76	15
2.10	12

Individual Token Exercise – Sewage System
Base: All forum participants; Total (n=69)

Reliable service was considered important again mainly because of health and public safety reasons and the 'yuck' factor. Quality treatment (of effluent) was also considered important for similar reasons and was thought to be closely interconnected with environmental focus, and therefore difficult to separate.

> *"Quality is important because of illness – it not good in the community, and reliability because we've had sewerage come up in our bathroom, it's not good." Residential Participant Gosford*

> *"And reliability because there is a lot of weird smells when you drive around that indicates thing are leaking out." Residential Participant Gosford*

The environment was particularly important in the context of the sewage system, with many conscious of the effect of effluent in the oceans, of sewerage potentially leaking into the ground, and having had experiences with odours associated with water treatment plants and leakages into local lakes. Having said that, like water supply, some moved their tokens off environment because they felt other Government departments were responsible for the environment and would ensure that Council was meeting regulations.

> *"When it comes to sewer, the environmental one comes up." Residential Participant Gosford*

> *"I think we can move one token from environmental focus to education for sewerage as there are so many EPA laws, and they have to work in that system." Small Business Participant Wyong*

Again, effective planning was deemed important because it was felt to affect all of the other values. There were some differing opinions regarding transparency and education, with agreement that the community needed to be informed about what to flush down the toilet and what not to flush, but some stating that this was common knowledge and so less of a priority.

> *"Effective planning will impact everything, so I think that's more important." Residential Participant Gosford*

> *"Transparency and education is more important for sewerage. Schools should be taught, but there is a lot of education anyway. Do we really need more education? Surely everyone knows not to put things down the toilet now." Residential Participant Gosford*

6.2 Youth Group Findings

As in the water supply section, the Youth Group stated there were no changes needed to the values and outcomes listed for sewerage services.

Quality treatment and environmental focus were seen to be the most important values among those listed. In comparison to water supply, participants felt that caring for the environment was more important with regard to the sewage services as sewage has the potential to be more damaging.

> *"I think caring for the environment is really important when talking about sewage. It can have a huge impact on marine life and therefore needs greater attention." Youth Group Participant*

> *"I think quality treatment relates to the environment. If our sewage isn't treated properly then it can really damage the environment around us." Youth Group Participant*

Affordability was seen to be of average importance for sewerage.

> *"Affordability is important however I think there are more important issues to do with sewage which is why I wouldn't give it quite as high rating as I did in the water supply activity." Youth Group Participant*

Overall, effective planning and transparency and education were found to be the least important values with regard to sewage services. Although there was some debate as to whether effective planning should be given a higher token amount compared to transparency and education.

> *"I feel that transparency and education isn't quite as important. We don't need as much improvement in it as we do with the other values." Youth Group Participant*

"I think these values should be equal. Education among the community and making sure they're being transparent with us is also really important." Youth Group Participant

6.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander In-depth Interview Findings

Again, small changes were suggested with regards to the values and outcomes for the sewerage system among the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in-depth interview participants. Most notably they suggested ensuring there are outcomes related to improving Council's relationship with the community.

"Cultural consideration I would put into effective planning. They had issues recently that directly impacted indigenous sites, they need to plan better internally." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant

The most important values among the participants appeared to be environmental focus, reliable service and effective planning.

"Reliable service and environmental focus are most important but they're already pretty good at that." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant

"The environment is most important because sewage can be really harmful to it." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant

"Effective planning is important as with the growing population we need to keep in mind that our system is going to have a lot of pressure put on it. Council needs to have a plan as to what we are going to do." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant

It was acknowledged that affordability may be important to many members of the Indigenous community. The least important value seemed to be transparency and education, primarily due to there being a need for further focus on other values.

"Affordability isn't an issue for me personally, but it may be more of a concern for the wider Aboriginal community in the Central Coast." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant

"I feel we should focus more on other areas rather than transparency and education. This is needed however there are areas more needing of attention." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant

6.4 CALD In-depth Interview Findings

When speaking about the sewage services provided by Council, CALD in-depth interview participants indicated the most important values were having a reliable service and a focus on the environment.

"Sewage affects the environment which in turn hurts the entire system, so I think looking after the environment is especially important." CALD Participant

"I've heard of people within the community having problems with reliability. I think ensuring that the sewage system in the Central Coast is reliable would be important to them." CALD Participant

Having quality treatment of sewage, an affordable service and planning effectively were all seen as being of average importance.

"They've done a decent job so far of ensuring the quality is okay so I think this is fine. They do need to make sure this is kept at a high level, however." CALD Participant

"Planning effectively is especially important, keeping in mind the growing population on the Central Coast." CALD Participant

The least important value among CALD participants for Councils' sewage services was seen to be transparency and education. Similarly to the water supply, participants indicated that while this is still an important value, it is less important relative to the others.

"I think other values are relatively more important. I also don't think many people go out of their way to research this information from Council, so this should be less important." CALD Participant

6.5 Large Customer Findings

Large customers also agreed that these values reflected their feedback from Phase 1.

"That covers everything I think." Large customer

Again, transparency and education were quite important for some large customers as they recognised that their trade waste can have a high environmental impact. Some suggested more proactive interaction by Council to ensure businesses are doing the right thing.

"There should be more interaction – checking of large business. I know we do the right thing, but it would be good if businesses knew the Council was ensuring that. We can cause large issues for treatment plans. If someone does the wrong thing, the impact can be quite large." Large customer

"Sewerage is a big focus - it would be good to have the right support from Council to help our people and processes." Large customer

"Having direct access to a representative from Council such as a Liaison Officer would be beneficial to us as a business. It would give us a better understanding of what requirements there are from Council and how we can meet them." Large customer

"I don't think there is enough of a demarcation between manufacturers and residents. We need different information to them." Large cutomer

One large customer indicated that upgrades and system changes could minimise sewer overflows and environmental impacts.

> *"They have more overflows because they rely on gravity. Their infrastructure is old and they don't recycle any sewerage. That would minimise effluent discharges – they should maximise recycling." Large customer*

7 Performance Measures

7.1 Forum Findings

This section of the forum focused on the performance measures and the information that Council should be reporting on. A representative from Central Coast Council presented a broad overview of the categories of lists that had been compiled following feedback from the previous forum. Feedback at the table level was then gained regarding:

1. The existing performance measures that Council measures and reports on;

2. The performance measure that customers suggested in the last forum combined with the suggestions from IPART; and

3. The information and education that customers suggested in the last forum along with IPART suggestions.

On a handout, participants were asked to indicate their perceived level of importance that Council measures or communicates each of the aspects listed.

Existing Performance Measures

Shown on the following page is the full list (22 items) of existing performance measures that Council currently reports on, with the results from the forums, showing level of importance. A weighted score has also been provided that considers the ratio between very important and quite important answers (2 points for very important, 1 point for quite important). They have been put into bands of importance – the darker shading being most important, down to no shading which are the ones of least importance.

The measures that participants deemed most important to continue to report on, based on the measures considered 'very important', included:

- Responding to urgent and non-urgent issues within 1 and 5 business days respectively (70%)
- Compliance with Environmental Protection Licences (e.g., levels of pollutants emitted) (60%)
- Storage volume measures/real time dam levels (58%)
- Number of unplanned water supply outages/failures (54%)
- Sewerage breaks and chokes per 100km (54%)
- Sewer overflows per 100km of main (54%)
- Level of water consumption (53%)
- Main breaks per 100km (water supply failures) (51%)

- Infrastructure upgrades and new infrastructure projects – planned and completed (50%)

The measures that were considered very important tended to be those where a poor performance by Council would have a strong impact on their lives, and would affect many people, e.g. measures related to having a reliable sewerage system, having enough water or the environment. Many of the measures chosen reflected the strong priority given to the water and sewer values of quality, reliability and the environment.

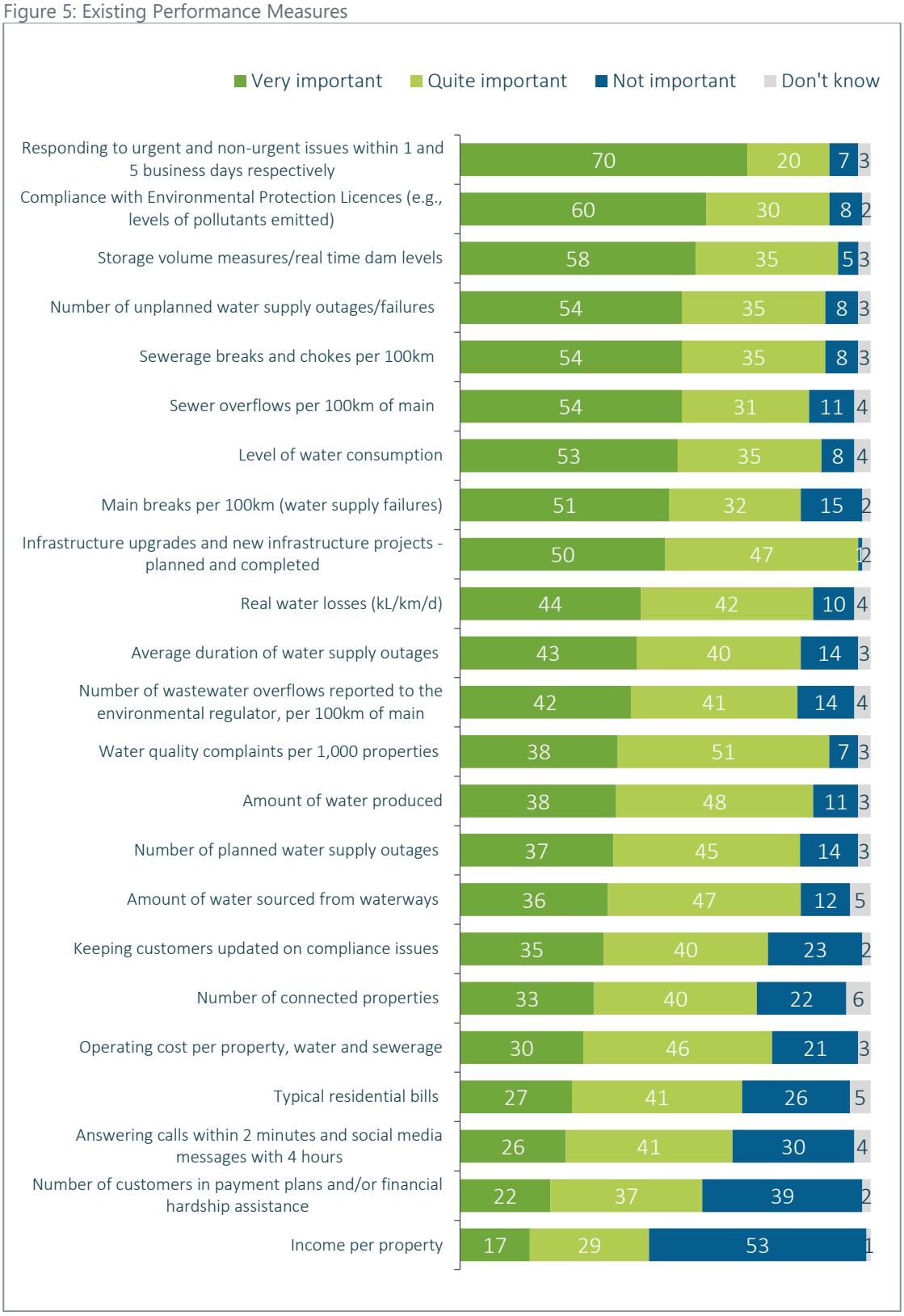
> *"Reliability for sewer is very important." Small Business Participant Gosford*
>
> *"Reliability ones are key – as well as the number of outages. If there is a break in the line, we need that fixed. That's important – anything to do with the sewerage." Residential Participant Wyong*
>
> *"I think it's really important to see how much we have in our dams in any point in time, as we have had droughts in the past and it shows how prepared we are." Residential Participant Wyong*

Measures that were considered relatively lower in importance to continue to report on included:

- Income per property (17%)
- Number of customers in payment plans and/or financial hardship assistance (22%)
- Answering calls within 2 minutes and social media messages within 4 hours (26%)
- Typical residential bills (27%)

> *"Some things are personal between Council and the customer; we don't need to know all this." Residential Participant Wyong*
>
> *"Who cares about income per property – it's just an average anyway, who cares?" Residential Participant Gosford*
>
> *"Payment plans for financial hardship has nothing to do with Council." Residential Participant Gosford*
>
> *"You are never going to get through to them within 2 minutes. That one isn't important. If it is not urgent, then it doesn't matter to answer within 2 minutes." Residential Participant Wyong*

Figure 5: Existing Performance Measures



Weighted score
160
150
151
143
143
139
141
134
147
130
126
125
127
124
119
119
110
106
106
95
93
81
63

Below is a list of performance measures that Council has already adopted. We would like to find out how important you think it is that each one is continued. Please place a tick in the relevant box.
Base: All forum participants; Total (n=69)

Suggested Additional Performance Measures

In terms of the suggested performance measures (from forum participants and IPART), the graph below outlines the level of importance participants placed on Council adopting and reporting on each measure (a total of 14 measures).

The measures that participants most often deemed 'very important' for Council to adopt and report on, included:

- Number of algal blooms in dams (61%)
- Severity/volume of any sewage overflows (60%)
- Severity of water supply outages (volume of water lost through mains breaks) (55%)
- The number of days that beaches/lagoons are not 'swimmable' (53%)

Again, the reasons given for these being very important related to the impact they have on their health, lifestyle and enjoyment of the area as well as the scale of impact (number of people affected).

> *"Environment ones are very important – people are going swimming". Small Business participant Gosford*
>
> *"Those that pose an immediate risk – it's not just sample of trends – can I swim or drinking the water today – that's very important…. As well as location where works are being done – do you know when you are getting dirty water". Small Business participant Gosford*
>
> *"Days that the beaches are not swimmable – I want to take my kids there, that's key too me. The severity of any overflows too". Residential Participant Wyong*
>
> *"The first two are really important (algal blooms and number of days beaches/lagoons are not swimmable). That affects you physically. It affects your lifestyle. We live on the coast, so you want to see and use the waterways." Residential Participant Wyong*

While performance measures that fewer participants considered 'most important' to adopt included:

- Volume of solids recycled – and information about how it is used/where it goes (25%)
- Percentage of power used for water/sewerage treatment plants that has been generated by alternative power sources (27%)
- Consumption by comparison with other/different households and previous consumption – bar chart on bills (28%)
- Number of water pressure complaints per 1000 properties (28%)

Although these measures were considered less important than some of the others, they were still considered important by the majority of participants (either quite or very important).

> *"Just to know these things is good, it comes back to the transparency – it is good to see areas that we are on the average or areas where we're doing better". Residential Participant Gosford*

Figure 6: Suggested Additional Performance Measures

Below is a list of additional performance measures suggested by participants in Forum 1, along with some suggestions from IPART. Please indicated how important you think it is that Council adopts each measure by placing a tick in the relevant box.
Base: All forum participants; Total (n=69)

Suggestions for Further Information

A third list was presented to participants, outlining a range of pieces of information that Council could provide to customers (24 in total). The graph below outlines the level of importance participants placed on Council provides each piece of information to customers.

Participants most often indicated that the following pieces of information were 'very important' for Council to provide:

- Real time information when overflows impact/pollute recreational waterways (82%)
- Environmental water sampling (70%)
- A rating (online and/or on a sign) like a fire rating, to check before you swim at the beach (63%)
- Better information on water events, e.g., flooding (54%)
- Locations with lower quality water (53%)

Again, information about how the sewerage system impacts the environment and waterways was deemed most important because of the impact on health and lifestyle.

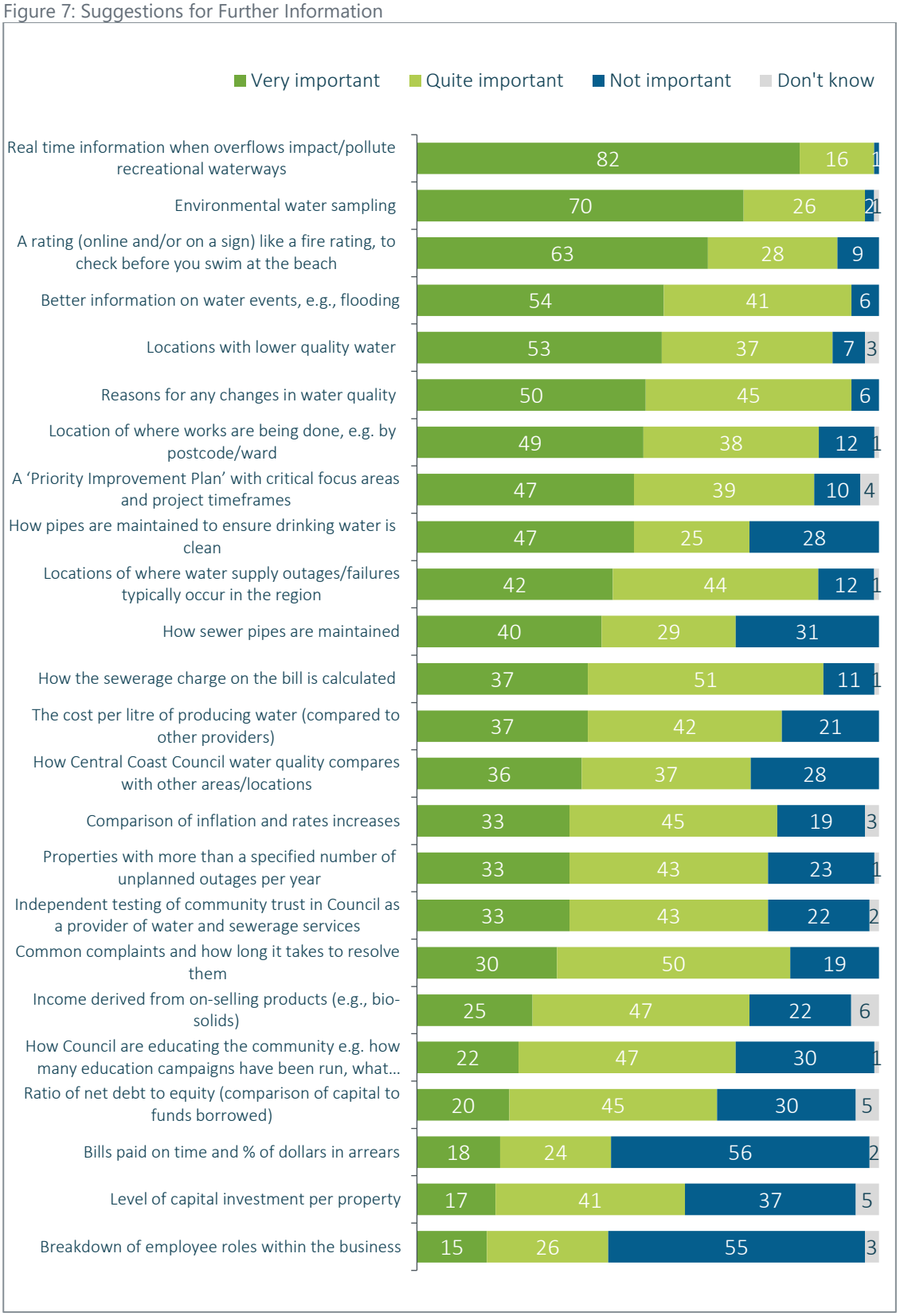
> *"Sewer overflows in beach areas is very important because people swim in it and it can cause health issues. And we are a tourist destination so we should be giving information on this. Tourists need to know as well as people living here." Residential Participant Gosford*

Information that fewer participants considered 'most important' for Council to provide included:

- Breakdown of employee roles within the business (15%)
- Level of capital investment per property (17%)
- Bills paid on time and % of dollars in arrears (18%)
- Ratio of net debt to equity (comparison of capital to funds borrowed) (20%)

> *"I don't think gathering data about greenhouse emission is going to be very useful. I don't think it will have a big impact and in terms of gathering statistics it's wasting time when you should focus on reducing breakages and overflows. That's why they are less important". Residential participant Wyong*

Figure 7: Suggestions for Further Information



Below is a list of information suggestions from customers in Forum 1 along with some suggestions from IPART. Please indicate how important you think it is that Council provides each piece of information by placing a tick in the relevant box.
Base: All forum participants; Total (n=69)

7.2 Youth Group Findings

The youth group found that most of the measures shown to them were either very or quite important, leading to minimal distinctions between them. Despite this however, it appeared as though for this group, and similar to the forum participants, the measures for quality, reliability and the environment were the most important.

> *"The number of planned and unplanned outages is really important as this affects people severely." Youth Group Participant*

> *"I think all the proposed environment measures are really important and should be adopted by Council. Net greenhouse gas emissions in particular due to climate change being a growing concern." Youth Group Participant*

> *"The number of days beaches aren't swimmable and a rating to check before you swim would be really good. My favourite part about living on the Central Coast is the beaches, so knowing whether it is safe to swim would be worthwhile." Youth Group Participant*

7.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander In-depth Interview Findings

Among the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, most found the reliability, environmental and planning measures to be most important.

> *"Existing water and sewer reliability measures are all very important because everyone needs to have access to water and working pipes. These are good measures to show this." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

> *"Algal blooms is important as it directly affects your health." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

> *"Volume of the solids recycled is important to let people know what gets recycled and showing initiative for environmental conservation." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

> *"Location of works being done is useful so people can prepare, as well as new infrastructure upgrades and new projects so people can see that Council is planning for a larger system with population growth." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

> *"All of the environmental measures are really important. It shows us that Council is trying to take care of the environment." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

7.4 CALD In-depth Interview Findings

Overall, for all three handouts of existing and proposed performance measures and pieces of information and education, the measures seen to be most important among the CALD participants

were seen to be those under the headings of reliability, the environment and planning for the future.

> *"All measures under the reliability headings, particular for sewer, are really important." CALD Participant*

> *"More people are moving into the area and we need to make sure that people know how reliable the system is, as well as those already here knowing how Council is planning for the future." CALD Participant*

> *"All drinking water quality measures are quite important. I think comparison is important especially for the elderly Chinese community as people like to know whether they should buy property or move to other areas within the Central Coast." CALD Participant*

> *"Knowing the percentage of sewer complaints resolved would be really good to know as it shows how reliable Council's services are." CALD Participant*

7.5 Large Customer Findings

Most large customers thought that the existing measures were important and should be continued. Particularly around water quality and reliability.

> *"Again, it's all very important. Especially around quality and reliability." Large customer*

> *"Some of those planning ones are important for us to know as a business." Large customer*

> *"We filter our water but it's good to know what the quality is generally." Large customer*

> *"These are all standard, every water authority has to report these." Large customer*

> *"All of these are important. The water quality testing and planning measures are especially important for us as a business. I think, if anything, the only changes to be made would be to make this testing updated more regularly, such as quarterly (if not already) or when there is a big weather event." Large customer*

Most large customers felt that the optional measures were more relevant for residential customers than large businesses or they believed the information was available elsewhere.

> *"I don't think they are as important – maybe for more remote residential customers perhaps they have more quality or pressure issues. But that's more information than we need." Large customer*

> *"Some of these aren't really relevant to us as a business. They're probably more important from a customer point of view but I think a lot of this is superfluous. I think perhaps businesses may need a different list of performance measures and information, we need to be different from residents as we have different interests and needs." Large customer*

"They are relevant but some of these I think perhaps the EPA or DPIE may report – or a 3rd party. I don't think council needs to do this." Large customer

When it came to optional information that the Council could provide, there were mixed opinions. Some large customers could see utility in some additional information – particularly around planning and water quality, while others felt it wasn't essential that customers could access this information. They thought Council should weigh up whether it is worth providing the information against the cost and also how easy it would be for customers to understand the information.

"Some of it would be useful – we see discolouration in the water, it would be nice to know if it's a water quality issue. And knowing where things are planned." Large customer

"Reasons for changes in water quality, where works are being done and how pipes are being cleaned would be interesting for our business, I think. They would help us in planning." Large customer

"I think a lot of these are more leaning towards residents. The comparisons with other locations in particular are not quite as important for us. The only reason we'd be looking at these would be if we were planning on moving site, which realistically is an internal conversation we have only every 20 or so years." Large customer

"It's all about the cost to provide this information versus its utility. If it costs a lot to do, and only a few people look at it, don't do it. But if a lot of people want it maybe it's worthwhile. Most residents won't get the technical stuff – and it's not that useful for us." Large customer

"It's not important – this information doesn't really help us. Perhaps other customers would want it, maybe the outage stuff, but we're quite happy." Large customer

8 Performance Targets

8.1 Forum Findings

Following the discussions about performance measures, participants were provided with information on the targets set by IPART and the performance of Council on five of the existing measures:

Performance measure	Actual performance	Target
Average duration of unplanned water outages	203 mins	140 mins
Number of unplanned water outages per 1000 properties (shut down)	146	115
Number of water main breaks and bursts per 100 km	14	16
Number of sewer main breaks and chokes per 100 km	30	28
Number of water quality complaints per 1000 properties	7	8

Council also informed participants that the typical annual water and sewer bill for Central Coast Council residents is lower than for comparative water utilities such as Barwon Water and Hunter Water. It was explained that the revenue collected is invested in operating and maintaining existing assets as well as going towards building new assets, therefore the level of the bill influences how much Council can spend.

In the table discussion facilitators guided participants to provide feedback on the targets set for Council by IPART. It was explained that this is the start of a journey between Council and customers to evaluate the balance between the level of cost, targets and performance.

On the tables, participants were given further information on the performance of Barwon Water and Hunter Water on the same performance measures. They were asked to provide feedback on whether they thought the targets set for Council are at the right level or need to be changed. Then they were asked to provide a rating for each of the five performance measures on how important it is to improve the target (i.e. lower the target).

In general, it was not considered to be 'very important' by a majority of participants to change any of the targets. Some suggested that IPART are the 'experts' so they trust the target levels that the regulator has set.

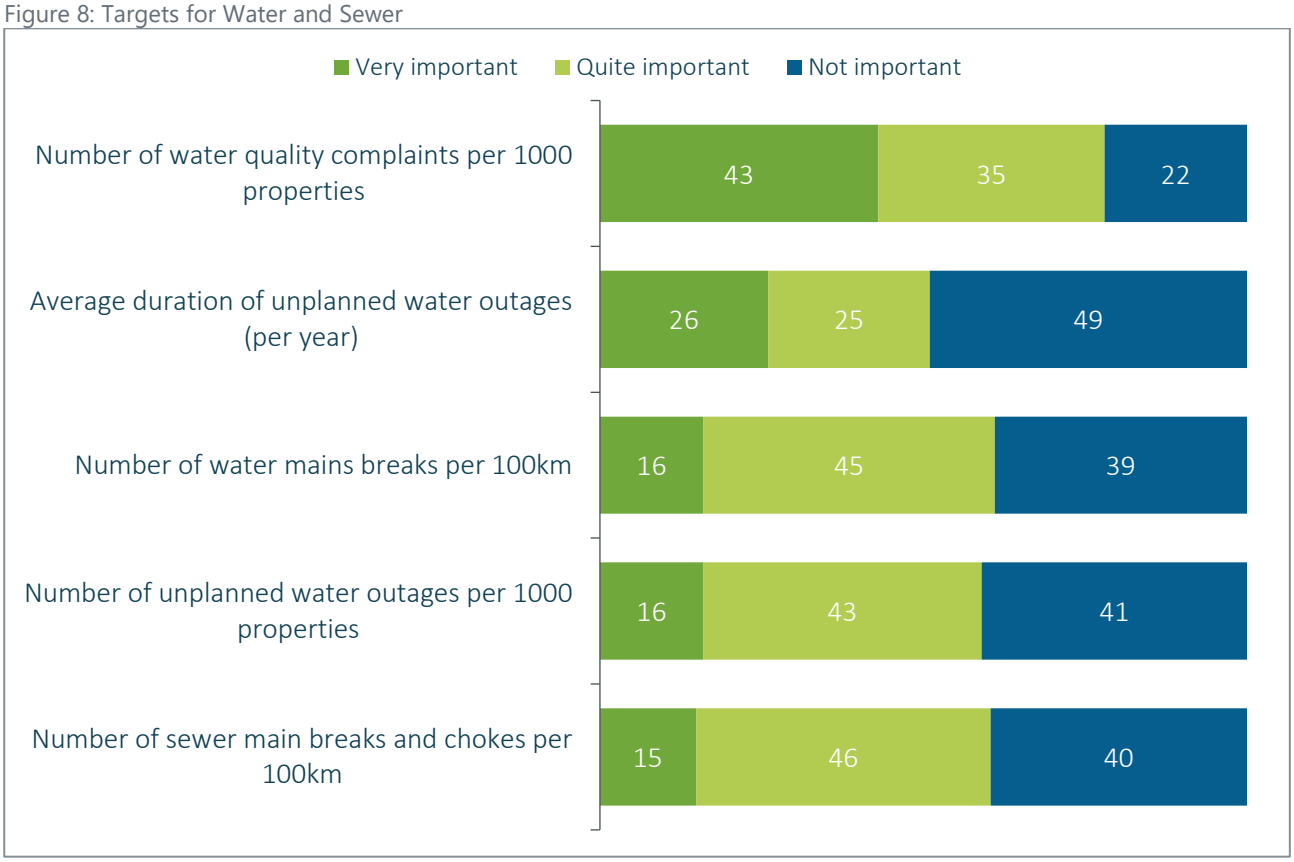
Of the five performance measures presented, it was deemed most important that Council improves the target for the number of water quality complaints per 1000 properties (43% very important). Since complaints are generally only made when a customer's service is severely impacted, it was thought to be important to ensure that these serious issues are kept to a minimum. It was noticeable to participants that Council is not performing as well as Barwon Water or Hunter Water for the number of water quality complaints so it was felt that more could be done to improve performance in this area. Council is also currently performing better on this measure than the target set, so participants believed that improving the target shouldn't result in any change to costs, and therefore to customer bills.

> *"Water quality – our performance is so much worse than the average and the comparable ones. It needs to be better." Small Business Participant Gosford*

> *"Complaints are very important; we need to decrease this." Residential Participant Wyong*

> *"Water quality is very important if we are complaining about it. Everyone is entitled to good quality water." Residential Participant Wyong*

Figure 8: Targets for Water and Sewer



What are your thoughts on the level of the targets set for CCC on each of these performance measures – do you think they are appropriate or should any be improved.
Base: All forum participants; Total (n=69)

Participants believed that the question should be asked to Council and IPART about whether the targets set are achievable, in particular the unplanned water outages ones, as Council is nowhere near achieving the targets set for those currently. Additionally, the national average for the number of unplanned water outages per 1000 properties, and Hunter Water's performance, is worse than Central Coast Council's.

> *"The challenge is that if you lower any targets then you might be making an unrealistic target and that brings frustration. Are these targets achievable is the question?" Small Business Participant Wyong*

> *"The targets need to be realistic. Have they worked out if that is actually possible? I don't think that the duration one would be attainable. There is no value in setting a target that is unattainable." Small Business Participant Wyong*

> *"The targets need to actually be attainable." Residential Participant Gosford*

There was not a clear desire by participants to pay more to improve any of the targets, or Council's performance on any of these measures.

> *"A perfect system is unrealistic, I think these targets are good and no increases of bills are needed." Residential Participant Wyong*

> *"Outages are not a very big impact on my life, so if you are going to spend a lot of money fixing it, then perhaps it's not worth it." Residential Participant Wyong*

If anything, some participants voiced their support for paying a very small amount more to increase water quality and therefore reduce customer complaints, but they would need the assurance that the extra funds were being spent directly on water quality and nothing else. There was a general distrust about Council putting bills up in the current climate due to the recent financial issues.

> *"I would be willing to pay a bit more to increase quality but it would be hard to sell to the community. They are scarred by the general council's financial troubles. Even though it would be a small amount I am sure – a few cents would actually raise a lot of money." Small Business Participant Wyong*

As a general point, participants struggled to understand why Council has been compared to Barwon Water. Council and table facilitators explained that IPART uses Barwon Water as a comparison with Central Coast Council as it is deemed similar in terms of its characteristics. Participants still struggled to comprehend why there is not a comparison made between more 'relevant' water utilities based in NSW.

8.2 Youth Group Findings

The Youth Group trusted that Council and IPART would have the best idea on appropriate targets and felt it was hard to comment.

Despite this, the group indicated that they thought the targets seemed at a reasonable level considering that lowering them may increase customer bills.

> *"It could be less but taking into consideration affordability, I think the level they've set it as is pretty good." Youth Group Participant*

The only one that the group thought deserving of the consideration of a lower target was for the number of sewer mains breaks and chokes per 100km. As well as citing the damaging effect of sewage on the environment, the group also decided this target should at least be at, or lower than, the national average.

> *"I think we should have this as low as possible. Considering the impact sewage can have on the environment we need to really focus on this." Youth Group Participant*

8.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander In-depth Interview Findings

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in-depth interview participants agreed with the suggested targets.

There were mixed views on which targets should be improved. Despite this, there seemed to be a common view that the number of water quality complaints and average duration of unplanned water quality outages should be considered for lower targets.

> *"It's appalling that their target for complaints is 4 times the national average." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

> *"Targeting the complaints to be higher doesn't make sense to me." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

> *"I would be happy if the unplanned outages had a more gradual improvement, if it meant the other targets had a bigger improvement now." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

> *"The average duration of unplanned water outages needs to be lowered as this disrupts people's daily lives." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

With regards to paying more as a result of lower target levels, all participants indicated they would not want to pay higher bills. As a result, most conceded that the current targets, and remaining at their current bill levels, were appropriate. There was a suggestion, however, that Council could possible manage resources and budgets better to lower some targets, rather than increasing bills.

> *"I personally don't want bills to increase, I would be okay financially if they were, but I think some within the community may not be. I believe Council resources should allow them to*

reach at least the current level for those targets we are currently below at our current bills. Council needs to be more accountable and use their resources more efficiently." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant

8.4 CALD In-depth Interview Findings

Overall, the majority of CALD in-depth interview participants agreed with the suggested targets.

Having said that, some felt as though the number of unplanned water outages per 1000 properties could be made less strict. The feeling amongst these participants was that the target was perhaps too low relative to the national average and therefore doesn't necessitate such a target.

"It's only a couple of hours per year, so it's not too big of an issue. It can probably afford to be worse than that and doesn't need to be targeted that aggressively." CALD Participant

"It isn't too bad. We can probably just make it the average." CALD Participant

Some felt that the targeted number of water quality complaints per 1000 properties could be lower, but only if it didn't result in an increase in bills. Others indicated that this was not the most important measure on the list presented to them.

"It would be nice if this was lower however I think it is at an okay level and if I did have to pay more I would want it focused on other areas." CALD Participant

Only one believed that targets should be lowered, for the number of sewer main breaks and chokes per 100km and the number of water quality complaints per 1000 properties. For both, the key reason was the need to have the target at the level, or lower than, the national average.

"Make it lower than, or equal to, the national averages as this affects people's lives more directly." CALD Participant

"This is too high, and it must be lower than the current level. This is a lot higher than the national average and other systems." CALD Participant

Participants were split as to whether they, and their communities, would be willing to endure a bill increase given their choices in the activity. Some indicated that higher bills as a result of pushing further towards the national average on all measures would be understood and promoted by the community.

"I think if Council were to increase bills and therefore lower these targets further the community would understand. They key thing would be explaining why their bills are increasing and showing them data on why they need to improve." CALD Participant

Others felt that their communities would not be comfortable with a bill increase and were content with how the system is operating at the moment.

"The Chinese community, especially the elderly, have experienced worse conditions that these so many would be considered as being at acceptable levels. They also probably wouldn't want to pay more even if it meant a more efficient system." CALD Participant

9 Customer Charter

9.1 Forum Findings

At the end of the forum participants were presented with an overview of what a Customer Charter is and some examples of content, in the form of some possible headings and three Customer Charters from other water utilities – ICON Water, SA Water and Yarra Valley Water.

Each table was asked to develop their own contents page for the Central Coast Council Water and Sewer Customer Charter and present it back to the room.

Overall participants suggested that the Charter should be simple, short and concise, outlining the main responsibilities that Council has to customers. They wanted it written in plain English so that those with English as a second language could read and understand it.

> *"Keep it simple so that immigrants can read it. Less is more, make it visual, with tables and not too long." Residential Participant Wyong.*

They suggested that it should be inviting to read rather than being long and dry with lots of text, so that people are more likely to read it. They wanted the inclusion of images and a visually appealing design.

> *"People are not going to read reams of words. Don't make it like insurance terms and conditions!" Residential Participant Gosford.*

> *"Make it as brief as possible. Make it succinct. Do not make it long and convoluted, otherwise people will not read it." Residential Participant Wyong*

They suggested that there should be Councils and customers rights and responsibilities under each heading, similar to some of the other Charters provided as examples. Some suggested copying the format of the ICON or South Australia Water Charters as they were viewed quite positively.

> *"ICON Water clearly highlight their responsibilities. If you are moving to the area you want something like that. It is clear and simple at a glance. Have rights and responsibilities under each section." Small Business Participant Wyong.*

> *"Copy and paste the SA Water one!" Residential Participant Gosford*

> *"I don't think you want to reinvent the wheel – you look at what other utilities do and are doing and what you are doing and then try and get something that meets the expectations." Residential Participant Wyong*

They wanted assurance that information about Councils' responsibilities will be clearly provided in the Charter for each of the customer values discussed earlier in the session, as these were seen as priorities for customers.

There was also the expectation that customers have responsibilities too and that these should be clearly outlined, for example what customers shouldn't do – put certain things down the toilet or plant trees next to sewer pipes.

The purpose would be to provide information about Council's role in Water and Sewer, and customers rights and responsibilities, particularly for those who are new to an area.

> *"This should be the document that customers would go to if they wanted to question how the water/sewer works, what Council's obligations are. If someone has bought a house or is new to the area, then they need to know how it all works and fits together." Residential Participant Gosford*

There were questions from participants about what the format will be for the Customer Charter. The desire was for an online document that would be easy to navigate.

The following is a summary of the content suggested by participants at the forums:

- Table of Contents
- Introduction
    - Who Council is, how Water and Sewer differ from Council – i.e. independent, who we report to
    - What we do – provide water and sewer services
    - Characteristics of our area - Size of the geographic area, number of customers, a map of the catchment areas and the treatment plants etc
    - What a customer charter is and what its purpose is
- Water Services
    - Our aim - Intro paragraph that highlights how the business aims to provide a water service that meets their key values
    - Our responsibilities e.g.
        - meeting the Australian drinking water guidelines
        - keeping water pressure at a certain level
        - informing you of planned water interruptions
        - etc
    - Your responsibilities e.g.
        - maintaining and repairing pipes on your property
        - notifying us of any issues
        - letting us onto your property if needed
        - etc
- Sewerage Services

- Our aim - Intro paragraph that highlights how the business aims to provide a sewerage service that meets their key values
- Our responsibilities e.g.
  - providing a safe service with minimal issues
  - informing you of planned service interruptions
  - responding quickly to any issues
  - etc
- Your responsibilities e.g.
  - maintaining and repairing sewer pipes on your property
  - minimising the probability of blockages by disposing of things correctly (link to website page on how to dispose of different items i.e. what you should and shouldn't put down the sewer system)
  - not connecting stormwater to wastewater system - illegal connections
  - letting us onto your property if needed

- Service standards
  - What you can expect from your service
  - KPIs (link to performance measures and targets)
  - What happens if we don't meet our targets
- Environmental obligations
  - What they are
  - What we do with trade waste
  - Encouraging water conservation and storage - water tanks
- Planning for the future
  - Our plans for the future (link to documents)
- Your account
  - How often we will bill, when you have to pay by and how you can pay
  - Estimated bills and what happens if you are overcharged
  - Understanding your bill
  - Financial hardship customers (link/reference to policy)
- Customers with special health needs
  - What we will do

- Customer service and complaints
    - What you can expect in terms of customer service
    - What to do if you have a complaint
- Accountability
    - Organisations/govt departments that hold us to account
- Privacy and data protection
    - How your data is kept safe and secure
- Contacts (phone, website, email, postal address)
- Further information links
- Where to get large print version/ translated versions

Participants were told that there would be a follow up discussion group to provide feedback on the draft Customer Charter (findings outlined in the 'Deep Dive Group Findings' below.

The table of contents developed from the forums was further tested in the group and depths below.

9.2 Youth Group Findings

Youth Group participants were overall satisfied with the table of contents for the Customer Charter developed from the outcomes of the forums.

Although the group did not have any changes to the proposed Customer of Charter table of contents, they did highlight the importance of being thorough within the sections, going into detail for all.

The participants were pleased with the inclusion of the 'further links' section as well as the inclusivity of large print and translated versions.

> *"A lot of different people with different problems and needs would be reading this. Having links to other Council websites where they could find further information as well as having options for people not able to see small font or speak English well is important." Youth Group Participant*

All participants recognised the importance of having the Customer Charter available to them and the wider community, however indicated this would not necessarily mean they would read the document unless they had a specific problem or query.

9.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander In-depth Interview Findings

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants agreed with the Customer Charter table of contents presented to them.

Small changes were noted, however, primarily regarding the community specifically. Firstly, some felt as though the Acknowledgement of Country should be included periodically throughout the document, rather than just at the beginning. Others felt that more emphasis needed to be placed on engaging and reconciling with the Indigenous community on the Central Coast. Some suggested including this in specific sections, and others that it should be its own section.

> *"I think there needs to be a section on reconciliation with the Aboriginal community. They should outline how they're improving their services to the community, how they are engaging with them and how they are focusing on improving for the future." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

> *"As long as they do the Acknowledgement of Country at the start of every page I'm fine with the rest." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

> *"In their responsibilities – Council is responsible to the local indigenous people and the land. They need to mention this and their cultural impact." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants appreciated the 'further links' suggestion towards the end of the table of contents, noting that the document needs to show how to get further information on all issues to do with Council. Some suggested that these further links should be included throughout the text of the document where relevant.

9.4 CALD In-depth Interview Findings

The CALD In-depth Interview participants indicated they did not need any changes to the suggested table of contents for the Customer Charter.

There were, however, a few suggestions made. The first was to ensure the information on where to find large print and translated versions was towards the front of the document. Participants felt that those who would require these more accessible options would appreciate information on them being easier to find. CALD participants also indicated the need for further accessibility options than what is currently indicated in the document, suggesting an audio version.

> *"The information about translated versions should be towards the front so they are more easily findable. They should also have large fonts and noticeable colours." CALD Participant*

> *"They should ensure it is accessible to all, including those who are deaf and blind. They should have an audio version." CALD Participant*

The point was also made that the 'Service Standards' should be moved - rather than having a lone section, to instead being incorporated throughout the document, particularly in the 'responsibilities' headings.

"I'd like to understand what their metrics are and how they are tracking towards those towards each one of their services during the council responsibility section instead of during a different section." CALD Participant

9.5 Deep Dive Group Findings

Generally there were mainly positive initial reactions to the draft Customer Charter document in the deep dive groups. They felt that it was clear that Council had listened to customers at the forums and taken their feedback on board when drafting it. It was also thought to be comprehensive.

"They've included everything we talked about." Deep Dive Group Participant

Lengthwise, on the whole it seemed appropriate to participants. However, some thought it was marginally too long and suggested that in some places the full pages could be reduced, and some things deleted.

"They've tried to fit absolutely everything in to it!" Deep Dive Group Participant

The first half of the document was thought to have a very positive 'look and feel' – it was seen to be well designed and appealing to look at. However, from page 9-14, and in particular 12-14, it was felt that design was lacking and the pages become visually unappealing and offputting.

"It feels like they gave up half way through or ran out of time". "They have given up making it look interesting." Deep Dive Group Participant

It was thought that the pages in the second half of the document need some visuals, clearer headings and greater clarity between the sub-sections. It seemed hard to read/follow in the current format. The idea of two columns with 'Your responsibility/Our responsibility' set out beside each other was thought to be a good idea by both groups.

In particular there were positive comments about the images used - the photos of dams/local area were very well received. They suggested that they should all include a reference/description of where it is in the Central Coast (like the one on the cover).

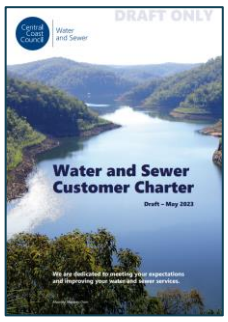
It was thought that links/QR codes should be included where websites and further information is referenced.

The structure and flow of the document seemed fine to most. One of the groups preferred that the environmental obligations come earlier in the document (after the 'Acknowledgement of Country' or after 'your sewerage services' and before the hazardous waste disposal table).

Many felt that the whole document needed editing or 'wordsmithing' as well as simply checking for grammar and spelling. Comments included that there were some typos, sentences seemed a bit longwinded/clunky in places and there is a lot of repetition of 'we …' at the beginning of bullet points which could be mixed up a little.

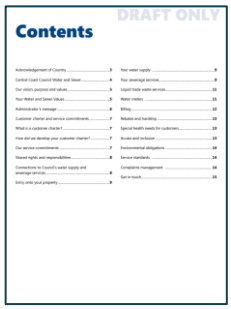
A page-by-page account of the feedback is provided below.

Cover page



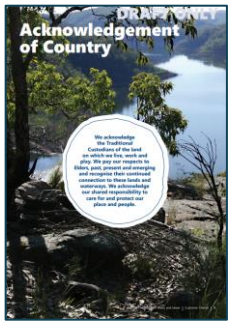
- This page was seen very positively with many comments about the 'beautiful' image.

Contents page



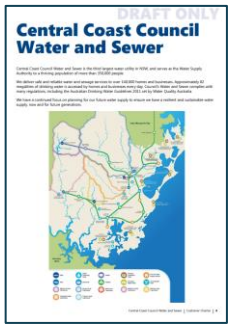
- It was thought to be a bit hard to take in the contents of the document from this contents page as all items are at the same 'level', i.e. it needs a mix of headings and subheadings (levels of headings). It was suggested that maybe it would be clearer if not in two columns, but only if length allows as they did not want it to go over two pages.
- It was suggested that there should be hyperlinks to the relevant pages of the document in the contents page, to make it easy for the reader to jump to the relevant sections.

Acknowledgement of Country



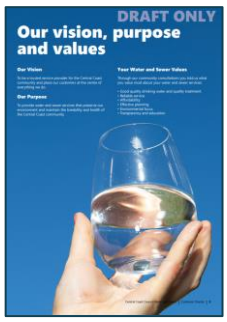
- This page was thought to be well designed and visually appealing.
- The image was well liked but it was suggested that it needs a description of where it is.
- Some praised the fact that it takes up a whole page as it is very impactful, whereas others suggested that it takes up too much space in the document as a whole page

Pg 4



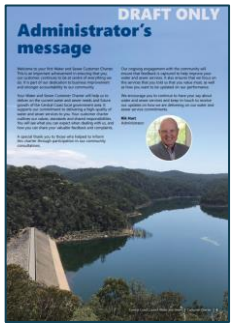
- On the whole, this page was positively regarded – it was thought to be clear and concise and they liked the inclusion of the map.
- The font on this page seemed slightly small to a few.
- It was noticed that the map is missing some text.
- There was a suggestion that the third paragraph includes a reference to sewerage as well as water supply.

Pg 5



- The font on this page seemed small to some – it seemed out of balance with the picture. Use of images was welcomed in general but this picture was thought to be too big as it takes over the whole page. *"The glass is huge!"*
- Having this as a standalone page was thought to be excessive and there were suggestions that it could be combined with something else. *"Seems like a waste of a page."*
- The full stops after each value seemed cluttered and unnecessary.

Pg 6 Administrator's Message



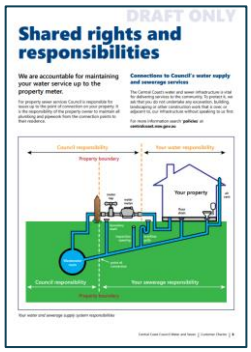
- There was strong agreement from both groups to delete this page.
- It was thought to feel political/unnecessary/out of place and could just be on the website.
- It is a reminder to customers that Council is in administration and of all the trouble Council has had. *"Puts a downer on things.", "I don't trust politicians."*
- A concern was also that it will cause the document to 'date' as it will be out of date soon – Council won't always be in administration/ Rik won't always be the Admistrator and the Charter will last longer.
- The statement was thought to be too long and very repetative – it has already been said in the document elsewhere.
- They liked the image used of the dam and suggested that this is used somewhere else if page is removed, along with a caption.
- If there must be an Admistrators message then the suggestion was to make it shorter and less prominent rather than a whole page.

Pg 7

- Some thought that this page should be earlier in the document as it is explaining what the document is – what is a Customer Charter.
- Again it was suggested that there shouldn't be full stops at the end of the bullet points.
- Some service commitments seemed long (bullet points 2 and 8) – and it was suggested that they could be shortened/written better.

- There were comments in both groups about the image used on this page. They questionned its relevance, whether it was really Council staff and what they are doing. *"Looks like people on a train", "Is this staff from a health centre?"*. There was also thought to be a lot of black in the photo. They suggested using actual pictures of the forums. They also wanted a a description included again.

Pg 8


DRAFT ONLY

Shared rights and responsibilities

We are accountable for maintaining your water service up to the property meter.

For property water service Council is responsible for issuing up to the point of connection on your property. It is the responsibility of the property owner to maintain all plumbing and pipework from the connection points to their residence.

Connections to Council's water supply and sewerage services

The Central Coast water and sewer infrastructure is vital for delivering services to the community. To protect it, we ask that you do not undertake any excavation, building, landscaping or other construction work that is over, or adjacent to, our infrastructure without speaking to us first.

For more information search **yoWater** or **centralcoast.nsw.gov.au**

Your water and sewerage supply system responsibilities

Central Coast Council Water and Sewer | Customer Charter | 8

- The diagram concept was thought to be good but it was a bit confusing for some – perhaps it needs different colours for the sewer versus water (some thought the wastewater and water pipes were combined at some stage!)
- Mention relevance to those living in apartments rather than houses.

Pg 9

DRAFT ONLY

Entry onto your property

Our staff may access your property to:

- read the meter located at the property;
- inspect pipes and fittings connected to our infrastructure;
- investigate suspected water theft; or
- carry out other investigations and inspections, including in emergencies.

Our employees and contractors must carry photographic employment identification when entering your property.

Your water supply

Our commitment is to provide you with a dependable water supply that meets the Australian Standards and applicable public health, environmental and regulatory requirements.

Our responsibility

- Ensure minimum water pressure levels are met.
- Supply safe drinking water for you and your family.
- Monitor and assess the quality of drinking water supplied.
- Inform you of planned works that may interrupt your services.
- If we have had to excavate the verge or road outside your property, we will leave your street or property in a similar state (short term depend on works required).

Your responsibility

- Install, maintain and repair all pipes and fittings on your property from the point of connection with our meter – this includes garden taps, hot water service and water tanks.
- Protect your water meter from damage or theft.
- Ensure your water meter is easy to access.
- Report any significant change in the flow, quality or pressure of your water.

Your sewerage services

We strive to remove wastewater from your property, then treat it to a high standard to safeguard public health and the environment and ensure a reliable service.

Our responsibility

- We will respond as soon as possible to sewer issues this will take place within 6 hours.
- We will give you notice of any planned works that may interrupt your services.
- If there is any damage or inconvenience caused, we will make every effort to minimise it. In the unlikely event of a sewage spill, we will promptly and adequately clean up the site. The time taken to clean up and repair for restoration works may depend on the works required and may not take place at the time of the works.

Your responsibility

- The maintenance and repair of all pipework from the inspection point into your property is your responsibility.
- Ensuring the overflow gully is not obstructed. It is designed to allow sewerage to flow from the grate and reduce the chances of an overflow inside your home.
- In the case of a sewer blockage within your property's pipework, it is your responsibility to arrange for repairs.
- Sewer blockages are sometimes caused by tree roots even of clearing it. However, if your actions contributed to the blockage, you may be responsible for paying for the portion of the blockage you caused.
- Ensuring all stormwater connections are connected to the stormwater system and not to sewer as the sewerage system can overload it during periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall, causing overflow on your property or your neighbours.

For more information on how to dispose of common household products search **'Hazardous waste disposal'** or **centralcoast.nsw.gov.au**

Central Coast Council Water and Sewer | Customer Charter | 9

- This page was seen to be particularly visually unappealing as it is just text, with no colour.
- This is where the suggestion about using the 'table' approach of 'our responsibility' and 'your responsibility' side by side was welcomed. They suggested using more colour and design elements to make the page more appealing and perhaps also including an icon for each topic/section.
- There were some questions about entry onto property – it was thought this could be made clearer, e.g. at anytime? Do they need permission?
- It was thought that quality of water should be more prominent under 'your water supply, our responsibility' along with a link to the reporting of quality. The last bullet seemed strangely worded – 'exit your street or property in a similar state'.
- Your sewerage services – the term wastewater is used here which is not normally used. It was suggested that the same term 'sewage' should be used throughout.
- It was suggested that an emergency contact number should be given on this page in particular – for water and sewerage issues. This could be on every page in the footer so it is easy to see.

Pg 10

- Participants liked the table – it was thought to be important and useful information.
- It was thought a bit out of place here though, particularly without a heading.
- Some thought it could be better designed e.g. arrows, clearer icons.
- Translation services for this table should be offered to those without English as their first language.
- This was a particular section where a QR code or link was thought to be necessary to further information.

Pg 11

- Pages from now on seem to lack an overarching heading.
- Some questioned the need for the liquid trade waste section as it isn't relevant to most customers – perhaps remove/not necessary.
- Meter pictures seemed simplistic/childish/an inconsistent style to the rest of the document.
- There was a question as to whether the second meter image is even required. They suggested deleting it as it was thought to be confusing/unnecessary -*"Everyone knows what a meter looks like"*. Alternatively perhaps replace both images with a real photograph of a meter.

Pg 12

- In the first bullet on the page the word 'goal' seems wrong – perhaps aim?
- Swap the first and second bullet points under 'Billing/your responsibility' around as it was thought to be a more logical order.
- The icons don't seem to line up with the text in the payment options box. Spacing between the text needs amending.
- There is a typo under BPAY – 'registered'.

Pg 13

- Again this page was thought to lack design elements. It is visually unappealing with lots of text.
- It also feels a bit repetitive – suggest to add some icons.
- There is mention of 'rates notice' under 'rebates and hardship' which suggests Council services not water and sewer services.
- There is a typo in first paragraph under access and inclusion.
- There was a suggestion to include translation services under access and inclusion.
- One participant mentioned that bills are quite hard to understand, particularly for those with access issues. There was a suggestion to perhaps include a link to how to read a bill.

Pg 14

- Again lacks design elements and interest.
- There was a suggestion to mention fines and penalties here – holding Council to account.
- Environmental obligations – as mentioned, there was a suggestion to move to earlier in the document as a natural precurser to the table on p10.
- It was thought that there should be a contact number under the complaints section (if on every page then this isn't needed).

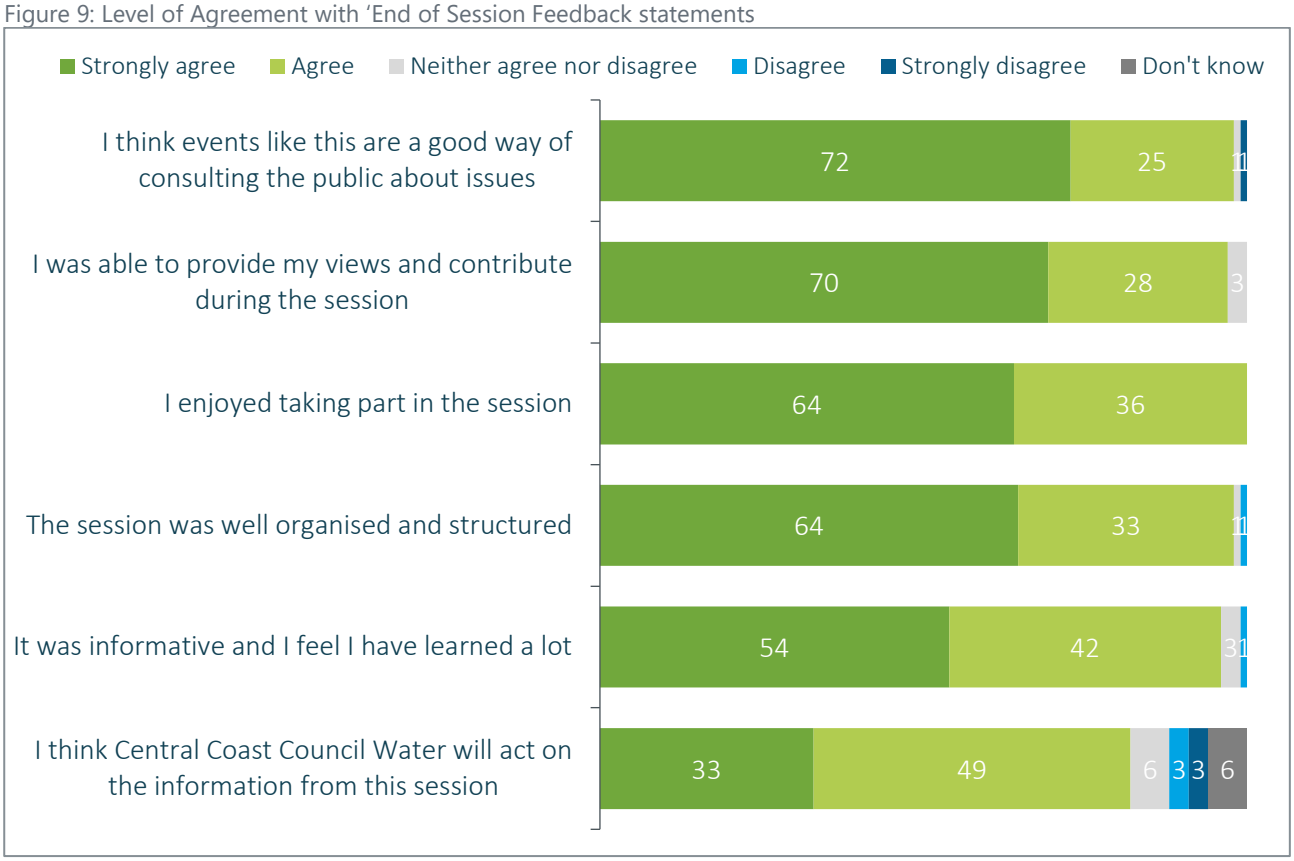
Get in touch

- This page was thought to be necessary and in the correct place at the end of the Charter.
- The image was liked (although the description says 'dame') – but the relevance of the image to 'contact us' was questionned. Consider changing the image to a more relevant one.

10 End of Session Feedback

After the forums, residential and small business attendees were asked for their feedback by rating their level of agreement with several statements.

Figure 9: Level of Agreement with 'End of Session Feedback statements



a. I enjoyed taking part in the session
b. It was informative and I feel I have learned a lot
c. The session was well organised and structured
d. I was able to provide my views and contribute during the session
e. I think Central Coast Council Water will act on the information from this session
f. I think events like this are a good way of consulting the public about issues
Base: All forum participants; Total (n=69)

11 Further Engagement

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD in-depth interview participants were asked about how they thought Council should engage with their community and the best way to build relationships and trust.

11.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander In-depth Interview Findings

When asked about further engagement, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants outlined that going through organisations or community elders would be most effective in engaging the community.

All participants noted that in-person engagement, rather than over the phone or through email would be preferred.

> *"Sponsor or be involved in local community groups, more than just a letter in your letterbox." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

When asked on which topics the community would be most interested in, most participants indicated engagement should be made regarding all topics, however a few noted the need for Council to present themselves as being accountable, open to answering questions and being transparent.

> *"Central Coast does not have an Aboriginal member on the DA panel. Aboriginal people should be consulted on our land." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participants*

> *"Town halls often don't have time for questions from the public and questions must be submitted beforehand. Have honest town halls where people feel comfortable." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participant*

11.2 CALD In-depth Interview Findings

CALD in-depth interview participants felt as though engagement with their community would be best made through community centres or events. All suggested that engagement would be better made through in-person events such as forums or town halls rather than other platforms such as emails, phone calls and letters.

> *"Get in contact with the community group and ensure that there is information in their native language, especially for older members of the community." CALD Participant*

> *"Some events, such as being more involved in community markets or encouraging community events would make the community more engaged. For example, the Chinese Moon Festival." CALD Participant*

A few participants indicated that the community does not require further engagement from Council, stating that either their community group was too small, or highlighting that they did not need further attention different to other residents of the Central Coast.

> *"Our community within the Central Coast is very small. I don't see the need for further engagement with us beyond what they do with other members of the general public." CALD Participant*

With regards to which topics would be best to engage the CALD community within the Central Coast, most stated that all topics would be of interest. One participant suggested that, especially among the elderly CALD participants, field trips to see how the processes work would be most interesting to that group.

> *"The elderly community would most likely be retired and therefore have more free time. I think the elderly community in particular would be most interested in trips and tours to facilities so that they could be educated further." CALD Participant*

11.3 Large Customers

Large customers were also asked about the best way to engagement with them and involve them in Council's decision making.

It was thought that Council could adopt a similar approach to other water utilities whereby large customers are treated differently to the rest of the customer base. Due to their size, and level of water usage, they are given a more personalised customer service. One suggestion was to provide a portal, maybe online, for large customers rather than asking them to go through the regular website.

> *"In Sydney you go through a Sydney Water portal and that is great because it's a lot easier to find what you're looking for, we don't really have anything like that."*

A higher level of communication, more one-on-one meetings and a dedicated relationship manager were also suggested by this group.

Appendices

Appendix A: Forum Agenda

Project:	Water and Sewer IPART ongoing engagement				
Event:	Phase 2 Forums				
Details:					
Dates and location:	Tuesday 9th May 2023: Wyong Race Club- Address: 71-73 Howarth St, Wyong NSW 2259. Wednesday 10th May 2023: Gosford Entertainment Grounds (Race Club)- Address: 4 Racecourse Rd, West Gosford NSW.	Time:	6.00pm-9.00pm	Duration:	3 hours
Forum objectives:	• Test agreement with the list of values and outcomes developed from Phase 1 with customers. • Prioritise the values. • Test the list of performance measures developed from Phase 1 and ascertain level of importance. • Evaluate target levels for existing measures and perceptions of Council's performance against those. • Build awareness of what a Customer Charter is and start to understand what customers would like to see included in it.				

Time	Session details	Responsibility	Materials
Before 6.00pm	**Pre-forum** • Registration • Provide participants with filming/photography permission forms and signing sheet • Reminder of boards – 'parking lot' and 'further thoughts' • Sign up sheet - to receive updates from Council on this project	WR	Filming/ photography form Signing sheet Boards and post it notes
6.00-6.10pm (10 mins)	**Welcome and guidelines** • Acknowledgement of Country • Overview of engagement program to date • Structure and agenda for tonight's session • Location of toilets and evacuation in emergency • Introduce first speaker	WR Lead Facilitator – Karyn Wong	PPT slides

SECTION: VALUES AND OUTCOMES			
6.10-6.15pm (5 mins)	**Presentation 1: Values and outcomes – what we heard from Phase 1** • Present a summary of the values and outcomes from Phase 1 for water and sewer. • Explain that we are going to ask whether they agree with the lists we have developed based on their input from Phase 1. • Explain that we will ask them to prioritise them through allocating tokens – we need to know which values are most important so we can use this in our planning for the future investment in our water and sewer services.	CCC – Jaime Loader	PPT slides

6:15-6.40pm
 	
(25 mins)
	Table activity: Values and outcomes prioritisation
	
	Introductions on tables*: Ask participants to introduce themselves – where they live and one thing they like about the area they live in. SME table – ask them what their business does.*
	
	Give your own guidelines on tables: *e.g. speaking one at a time so you can take notes, you will move them on at times so we can cover all the topics, you may ask more talkative members to let others speak sometimes etc.*
	
	Remind about boards *– the room level 'parking lot' board is for any thoughts/feedback they want to provide that is 'off topic'. The A3 'further thoughts' board on the table is for anything that comes to mind outside the time of the discussion e.g. if they think of something at dinner that they wish they'd said.*
	
	Give out Handout 1: list of values and outcomes along with column for tokens (double sided)
	
	• Firstly, do you agree with the values and outcomes developed from the last forum for water and sewer?
	  ○ Should anything be changed/added/deleted?
	  ○ Any wording changes?
	If there are any suggested changes then ask a spokesperson to write them on the flipchart.
		WR Table Facilitators	Handout 1: list of values and outcomes for water and sewer along with column for token allocation
			
			Table token activity sheets for water supply and sewer (A3 sheets)
			
			18 Tokens per table
			
			Texta

	• **Group token exercise**:
	  ○ *Put the water supply table token activity sheet in the middle of the table along with 18 tokens.*
	  ○ *Ask them to discuss as a group and work out how many tokens to put on each value for **water supply,** according to how important they think that value is. If they think that all the values are equally important, then they would put 3 tokens on each one. However, they might think that some are more or less important than others (this is probably a good discussion starting point).*
	  ○ *Have a spokesperson place the allocated number of tokens on each value.*
	  ○ *Write the final number of tokens allocated to each value on the sheet and clip it to the flipchart.*
	
	• *After they have done the exercise as a group ask participants to fill in their individual token sheet (handout 1a) with the number of tokens they would like to allocate to each value for water supply. This can be the same or different to the group sheet.*
	
	• ***Token exercise**: Do the same exercise for the **sewer system** values - as a group ask them to discuss and work out how many tokens to put on each value. Have a spokesperson place the allocated number of tokens on each value on the table activity sheet. Write the number of tokens on the sheet and clip to the flipchart.*
	
	• *Ask them to fill in their individual token sheet for sewer (handout 1b).*
	
	Choose a spokesperson to report back any overarching comments on the values and the number of tokens allocated to each in the table feedback session.		

6.40-6.50pm (10 mins)	**Table feedback session 1** • Spokesperson from each table to feedback any comments on the values and tell the room how	Table spokesperson	

	many tokens they allocated to each value for water and sewer • Lead facilitator to write the totals down so they can say which ones were most important for water and sewer		
SECTION: TARGETS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES			
6.50-6.55pm (5 mins)	**Presentation 2: Performance measures** • Reminder of the Performance Report and the existing measures that Council is reporting on. • Explain that we have compiled a list of additional measures that have come from customers and IPART. • There is also information/education suggestions that we would like their feedback on.	CCC – Danielle Hargreaves	PPT slides
6.55-7.20 (25 mins)	**Table discussion: Performance measures** *Explain that we are going to go through each list in turn.* **Give out Handout 2a** This list is the existing performance measures – we want to find out how important you think it is that Council keeps measuring, and reporting on, these things. *Ask participants to fill in the sheet.* • *When everyone has finished* - Which measures do you think are most important to continue? Why? Any that are less important – why? • Do you have any comments/feedback on any of the measures? **Give out Handout 2b** This list is the performance measures that customers came up with in the last forum, and those suggested by IPART. *Ask participants to fill in the sheet.* • *When everyone has finished* - Which measures do you think it is most important for Council to adopt? Why? Any that are less important – why?	WR Table Facilitators	Handout 2a, 2b, 2c: Performance measures rating sheets

	• Do you have any comments/feedback on any of the suggestions for measures? **Give out Handout 2c** This list is the information/education that customers wanted in the last forum, and those suggested by IPART. *Ask participants to fill in the sheet.* • *When everyone has finished* - Which information do you think it is most important for Council to provide? Why? Any that is less important – why? • Do you have any comments/feedback on any of the information suggestions? • Are there any further measures/information you can think of that you would like added to these lists?		
7.20-7.45pm (25 mins)	**DINNER** Buffet style – participants to get up, help themselves and bring back to tables to eat Participants encouraged to add to the 'further thoughts board' on their table if they think of things they wanted to mention		
7.45-7.55pm (10 mins)	**Presentation 3: Targets and Performance** • Show what the targets are on the existing measures and how CCC is performing. • How other organisations are performing will be provided during the discussion as a frame of reference.	CCC – Luke Drury	PPT slides
7.55-8.10pm (15 mins)	**Table discussion: Satisfaction with targets** **Give out Handout 3** • What are your thoughts on: ○ The level of the targets set for CCC on each of these performance measures - do you think they are appropriate or should any be improved?	WR Table Facilitators	Handout 3: Targets

	• ***Ask them to fill in the rating column*** *on the sheet with ticks and crosses. Ensure they understand that if CCC improves the target then there is a cost implication to meet the targets.* *After they have completed it discuss:* • What, if any, are the areas that you think it would be important to improve the targets? • Are there any trade-offs you are willing to make, i.e. Council could spend more to improve the target and performance in one area and less on another area (but where they spend less then performance would decrease)? • Or are you willing to pay more overall to improve targets in any of these areas (without decreasing any targets)? • If so, how much would you be willing to pay per quarter to improve the target and performance for that aspect? *Ask each participant for an amount.*		
SECTION: CUSTOMER CHARTER			
8.10-8.20pm (10 mins)	**DESSERT** - This could be rotated by table, depending on whether we are running to time. - Put the examples of other utilities Customer Charters on the tables for people to flick through whilst eating dessert. - Explain that we will be talking about what we should have in our own CCC Customer Charter in the next session.		Examples of customer charters on each table
8.20-8.25pm (5 mins)	**Presentation 4: Customer Charter** • Explain what a customer charter is. • Give some examples of the types of content in a customer charter (e.g. headings) and say which organisations these are from. • We would like to hear what broad info. customers would like to see in a Customer Charter from CCC.	CCC – Danielle Hargreaves	PPT slides
8.25-8.45pm	**Table discussion: Customer Charter**	WR Table Facilitators	3 example Customer Charters

(20 mins)	*Explain that Council wants to create a Customer Charter in the next few months. This will be a collaborative process with the community. The first step is to work out what should go into it and we want their help to create a Table of Contents for it. That's what the purpose of this final session is.* *There will be a lot of different stimuli for this table discussion/activity for them to flick through/have a look at:* ○ *Example Charters from other water utilities* ○ *Customer Service Promises table handout* ○ *Values and outcomes (from token exercise)* ○ *Example topics (handout 4) – TO BE GIVEN OUT LATER.* *Have a general discussion first and then the activity will be to develop the Table of Contents on a flipchart.* • Firstly, what should be the purpose of our Customer Charter? • What kinds of things do you think is important to have in a Customer Charter and why? • Is there anything from the discussions you've had about your values that you think is important to have in a Customer Charter? E.g. about quality, reliability, affordability, future planning, environment, education/ transparency? • Do you have any ideas about how it should be structured? • Charters vary in length – what is the ideal length do you think? **Give out Handout 4 – list of types of information in other water utilities' Customer Charters** • FLIPCHART THE TABLE OF CONTENTS: What is the main content (headings) you would like to see in a Customer Charter? ***Ask a spokesperson to write up the main Table of Contents headings for the Customer Charter on a flipchart***		provided on each table (1 copy of each) Values and outcomes (from earlier token exercise) Customer service promises table handout Handout 4: example topics for Customer Charter Flipchart with 'Table of Contents' at the top and Council's logo
8.45-8.55pm	**Feedback session 2 from each group to the room**	Table spokesperson	Flipchart

(10 mins)	• Spokesperson from each table to present their table's ideas for the main content for a Customer Charter.		
8.55-9.00pm (5 mins)	Summing up and thanks Closing remarks: • Recap on the deliverables/purpose • What CCC has heard this evening and what we will take from today • Next steps • Keeping you in the loop • *Woolcott Research Lead Facilitator – thanks and reminder to fill in end of session questionnaire on tables.*	CCC WR Lead Fac WR Table Facilitators	End of session questionnaire and signing sheet Incentive
CLOSE			

Appendix B: Handouts

Handout 1a: Water supply values

Values	Outcomes	Tokens
Good quality water	• Clean, clear and safe drinking water. • Good taste and smell. • Water content is tested/monitored regularly, e.g. for chlorine levels, microplastics.	
Reliable service	• Consistent water supply, available to everyone • Good water pressure. • Well maintained network, reducing leaks. • Responding to faults and issues quickly.	
Affordable	• Cost efficient - keeping costs as low as possible. • Consistent bills over time (predictable). • Fair allocation of costs between customers.	
Effective planning	• Have enough water for an increased population. • Using a variety of sources for non-drinking purposes and to deal with varied climate conditions, e.g. recycled water, stormwater capture. • Collecting and reusing more water at household level e.g., rainwater tanks, use of greywater.	
Environmental focus	• Protecting the natural environment within catchment areas	

Transparency and education	• Providing clear, easy to understand information and good communication. • Raising community awareness about our water supply and water conservation. • Transparent pricing and costs – showing where money is spent. • Greater public trust that council has the expertise and resources needed to deliver on its promises.	
Total (must add up to 18)		**18**

Handout 1b: sewer system values

Values	Outcomes	Tokens
Quality treatment	• No health impacts on customers or workers. • Suitable effluent quality. • Minimal odours.	
Reliable service	• Minimal overflows, broken pipes – responding quickly to issues. • Suitable infrastructure, well maintained.	
Affordable	• Cost efficient - keeping costs as low as possible for customers. • Fair allocation of costs between customers.	
Effective planning	• Long-term planning to ensure the sewerage service is sufficient for future needs. • Using the latest technology/innovations/learning from other countries. • Adaption to a changing climate.	

Environmental focus	• Protecting the oceans and marine life. • Using renewable power for treatment plants. • Greater use of bio solids.	
Transparency and education	• Providing clear, easy to understand information and good communication. • Raising community awareness – what to put down the toilet, implications of not doing this, what happens to waste. • Transparent pricing and costs – what the service fee is made up of. • Easier accessible water safety ratings for beaches and recreation areas. • Greater public trust that council has the expertise and resources needed to deliver on its promises.	
Total (must add up to 18)		**18**

Handout 2a Existing performance measures and information - rating sheet

Below is a list of performance measures that Council has already adopted. We would like to find out how important you think it is that each one is continued. Please place a tick in the relevant box.

The first three have to be continued as regulatory requirements.

Drinking water quality	**Very important**	**Quite important**	**Not important**	**Don't know**
Water quality testing results	MUST BE CONTINUED			
Compliance with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines – bacterial and chemical guidelines and values	MUST BE CONTINUED			
Number of incidents of not meeting quality standards	MUST BE CONTINUED			
Water quality complaints per 1,000 properties	☐	☐	☐	☐

Reliability – water supply	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
Number of planned water supply outages	☐	☐	☐	☐
Number of unplanned water supply outages/failures	☐	☐	☐	☐
Average duration of water supply outages	☐	☐	☐	☐
Main breaks per 100km (water supply failures)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Number of connected properties	☐	☐	☐	☐

Reliability – sewer	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
Sewerage breaks and chokes per 100km	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sewer overflows per 100km of main	☐	☐	☐	☐

Affordability	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
Number of customers in payment plans and/or financial hardship assistance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Income per property	☐	☐	☐	☐
Operating cost per property, water and sewerage	☐	☐	☐	☐
Typical residential bills	☐	☐	☐	☐

Planning for the future	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
Storage volume measures/real time dam levels	☐	☐	☐	☐
Infrastructure upgrades and new infrastructure projects - planned and completed	☐	☐	☐	☐

Environment and water conservation	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know

Compliance with Environmental Protection Licences (e.g., levels of pollutants emitted)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Number of wastewater overflows reported to the environmental regulator, per 100km of main	☐	☐	☐	☐
Amount of water sourced from waterways	☐	☐	☐	☐
Amount of water produced	☐	☐	☐	☐
Level of water consumption	☐	☐	☐	☐
Real water losses (kL/km/d)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Customer service/communication	**Very important**	**Quite important**	**Not important**	**Don't know**
Answering calls within 2 minutes and social media messages with 4 hours	☐	☐	☐	☐
Responding to urgent and non-urgent issues within 1 and 5 business days respectively	☐	☐	☐	☐
Keeping customers updated on compliance issues	☐	☐	☐	☐

Handout 2b: Suggestions for performance measures - rating sheet

Below is a list of additional performance measures suggested by participants in Forum 1, along with some suggestions from IPART.

Please indicate how important you think it is that Council adopts each measure by placing a tick in the relevant box.

Drinking water quality	**Very important**	**Quite important**	**Not important**	**Don't know**
The number of algal blooms in dams	☐	☐	☐	☐

Effluent quality	**Very important**	**Quite important**	**Not important**	**Don't know**
The number of days that beaches/lagoons are not 'swimmable'	☐	☐	☐	☐

Reliability – water supply	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
Total complaints per 1,000 properties for water supply	☐	☐	☐	☐
Percentage of water supply complaints resolved	☐	☐	☐	☐
Number of water pressure complaints per 1000 properties	☐	☐	☐	☐
Severity of water supply outages (volume of water)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Reliability – sewer	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
Severity/volume of any sewage overflows	☐	☐	☐	☐
Total complaints per 1,000 properties for sewer issues	☐	☐	☐	☐
Percentage of sewer complaints resolved	☐	☐	☐	☐

Environment	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
Volume of solids recycled – and information about how it is used/where it goes	☐	☐	☐	☐
Net greenhouse gas emissions	☐	☐	☐	☐
Level of microplastics in effluent released	☐	☐	☐	☐
Percentage of power used for water/sewerage treatment plants that has been generated by alternative power sources	☐	☐	☐	☐

Transparency and education	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
Consumption by comparison with other/different households and previous consumption – bar chart on bills	☐	☐	☐	☐

Handout 2c: Suggestions for Further Information - Rating Sheet

Below is a list of information suggestions from customers in Forum 1 along with some suggestions from IPART.

Please indicate how important you think it is that Council provides each piece of information by placing a tick in the relevant box.

Drinking water quality	**Very important**	**Quite important**	**Not important**	**Don't know**
Reasons for any changes in water quality	☐	☐	☐	☐
How Central Coast Council water quality compares with other areas/locations	☐	☐	☐	☐
Locations with lower quality water	☐	☐	☐	☐

Effluent quality	**Very important**	**Quite important**	**Not important**	**Don't know**
A rating (online and/or on a sign) like a fire rating, to check before you swim at the beach	☐	☐	☐	☐

Reliability – water supply	**Very important**	**Quite important**	**Not important**	**Don't know**
Better information on water events, e.g., flooding	☐	☐	☐	☐
Locations of where water supply outages/failures typically occur in the region	☐	☐	☐	☐
Properties with more than a specified number of unplanned outages per year	☐	☐	☐	☐
Location of where works are being done, e.g. by postcode/ward	☐	☐	☐	☐
How pipes are maintained to ensure drinking water is clean	☐	☐	☐	☐

Reliability – sewer	**Very important**	**Quite important**	**Not important**	**Don't know**
How sewer pipes are maintained	☐	☐	☐	☐

Affordability	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
How the sewerage charge on the bill is calculated	☐	☐	☐	☐
The cost per litre of producing water (compared to other providers)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bills paid on time and % of dollars in arrears	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comparison of inflation and rates increases	☐	☐	☐	☐
Breakdown of employee roles within the business	☐	☐	☐	☐
Level of capital investment per property	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ratio of net debt to equity (comparison of capital to funds borrowed)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Income derived from on-selling products (e.g., bio-solids)	☐	☐	☐	☐

Planning for the future	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
A 'Priority Improvement Plan' with critical focus areas and project timeframes	☐	☐	☐	☐

Environment	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
Real time information when overflows impact/pollute recreational waterways	☐	☐	☐	☐
Environmental water sampling	☐	☐	☐	☐

Transparency and education	Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't know
How Council are educating the community e.g. how many education campaigns have been run, what they do to educate children/the community	☐	☐	☐	☐
Common complaints and how long it takes to resolve them	☐	☐	☐	☐

Independent testing of community trust in Council as a provider of water and sewerage services	☐	☐	☐	☐

Handout 3: Targets – water and sewer

Name:

	Actual Performance (Data is from the National Performance Report)				Central Coast Council Target	How important is it that Council improves (lowers) this target?* Very important = ✓✓ Quite important = ✓ Not important = x
	National Average	Hunter Water	Barwon Water	Central Coast Council		
Average duration of unplanned water outages (per year)	142 mins	138 mins	99 mins	203 mins	**140 mins^**	
Number of unplanned water outages per 1000 properties	132	242	80	146	**115**	
Number of water mains breaks per 100km	18	21	25	14	**16**	
Number of sewer main breaks and chokes per 100km	27	27	54	30	**28**	
Number of water quality complaints per 1000 properties	2	1	1	7	**8**	

^ This is not a Council target but is based on the national average.

* Note that there would be a cost implication for any improvements in performance to meet an improved target.

Central Coast Council | Water and Sewer

centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

Handout 4: Customer Charter

Some ideas about the kinds of information that could be in a Customer Charter:

Services

- The water and sewer services provided by Council
- Service standards and commitments – the minimum level of service customers can expect

Water supply

- Council's responsibilities, e.g. water quality, pressure, maintenance and repairs, providing information about planned and unplanned interruptions

- Customers' responsibilities, e.g. keeping your pipes maintained and repaired, protecting your meter from damage

Sewerage services

- Council's responsibilities, e.g. maintenance and repairs, clearing blockages in Council pipes, cleaning up sewage spills
- Customers' responsibilities, e.g. keeping your pipes maintained and repaired, clearing blockages in your pipes

Trade waste

- What this is

Environmental obligations

- Environmental commitments

Connecting to water and sewer infrastructure

- Connecting to the water supply and sewerage service
- Building over Council's infrastructure or on your property
- Defective or unauthorised work

Meters

- Council's responsibilities, e.g. meter reading, testing
- Customers' responsibilities, e.g. protecting from damage, reporting errors

Entry onto property

- In what circumstances Council can access a customer's property

Restriction and disconnection of services

- In what circumstances Council could restrict or disconnect a customer's service

Special health needs customers

- Special health needs customers – responsibilities and management

Billing and payments

- How charges are calculated
- Payment options
- Financial hardship assistance
- Errors in billing

Customer service

- Customer service commitments and responsiveness, e.g., time taken to answer phone calls and respond to issues, out of hours support
- What if there's a problem with the service or you are not happy
- Complaints management – process and escalation

Access and inclusion

- How Council makes things accessible and inclusive for all members of the community, e.g. people with hearing or speech impairments, disabilities

Customer privacy and protection of data

- Privacy of personal information

Contact us

- How to contact CCC

WOOLCOTT
RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Woolcott Research & Engagement

Level 6, 104 Mount Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

+61 2 9261 5221

www.woolcott.com.au

Contacts: Lucy Economus, Leconomus@woolcott.com.au
Liz Sparham, LSparham@woolcott.com.au