



Central Coast Council Water price review

Public Hearing Transcript – Session B

Tuesday, 5 April 2022

Water >>

Tribunal Members

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The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)

Further information on IPART can be obtained from [IPART's website](#).

Acknowledgment of Country

IPART acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We pay respect to Elders, past, present and emerging.

We recognise the unique cultural and spiritual relationship and celebrate the contributions of First Nations peoples.

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1 Improving performance workshop

1.1 Overview of workshop

Ms Donnelly: Hello everyone, are we are we ready to resume? Do you think? Yes, well I will just quickly acknowledge the traditional custodians, pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging and all our Aboriginal customers and stakeholders and colleagues and welcome you back. For those that may be joining us now I will just let you know the purpose for this discussion is really to address how our final decision can include recommendations and actions that will help the community hold Central Coast Council accountable for its water business, to address the concern that we've absolutely heard that there is a lack of confidence about whether or not the money will be spent where it needs to be spent.

And so, we definitely think it's crucial to take some actions to ensure that the community is better able to hold the Central Coast Council's water business accountable. And to that end, we're very keen to hear what information you would like to see made public regularly by council to assist the community to see whether or not the performance is as it should be.

And I would just also acknowledge that there's already been some comments in the earlier discussion such as the point that Lorraine Wilson made on behalf of Timothy Kemp in particular, about seeing where the money goes. I would include that in this, you know as being able to see and have public information transparently about what is happening, where is the money going. I mean that is something that I think is relevant to this discussion and so we will pick up the contributions from the earlier discussion that are relevant to this as well.

So, with that I would like to introduce Alan Cartwright who is our facilitator for today's discussion and hand over to Alan to go through some of the housekeeping and set up this facilitated workshop.

Mr Cartwright: Good morning everyone. Thank you very much Carmel. Before we get started, it's Alan Cartwright here. Just a few housekeeping notes, is there anyone who's just joined us for the first time, who was not able to join us for our Session A of our hearing this morning. If you are new, can you just throw your hand up so we can see. Thank you.

Ms Donnelly: I think we have some people in the chat.

Mr Cartwright: Okay thanks that's good to know. So please keep your microphone muted if possible when you're not speaking, to avoid feedback and background noise. We also encourage people in sessions like this to keep their cameras on if your internet connection is up to it, and you're comfortable in doing so, because it helps us all stay connected and noticing what's going on, and what people are how people are responding.

Please make sure that your name and if relevant the organisation that you represent is showing in your footer and address, and instructions for doing so are provided in the chat box if you're not sure.

Just a thing to note to ensure that we have an accurate record of the discussion today the workshop, including the breakout sessions is being recorded and will be published on YouTube after the event. And it will also be transcribed. There will be a copy of the transcript as well as a link to the YouTube video recording placed on the IPART website in a few days.

Obviously being a public event, the media and others who might be present today are free to publish and refer to what is said during this event, and we also want to just remind everyone that is that we have a responsibility to ensure a respectful environment today, so that everyone feels safe to share their views.

So, I'm going to bring up the next slide. So, look just simply this is really the mechanics slide in terms of the work that I'm going to ask everyone to do when we get into our separate breakout rooms. So soon, we will move into 3 rooms for more in-depth discussion about options for performance and accountability measures as Carmel just said.

We did send out an Information Paper to everyone who registered which provided some background that should help this conversation and discussion. I hope that everyone received it and if not please raise your hand or comment in the chat box and an IPART staff member will send those documents to you immediately.

For this workshop there's 3 main questions to work through. You can all see them on the screen. Firstly, you know what are the broad topics or indicators that you want to hear about in terms of performance and then secondly, almost dropping underneath that, what are the performance measures that would be useful for you to see and thirdly, how would you like that information to be provided.

Some examples of these have been provided in the Information Paper and they're up on this slide that you can see now. They're not exhaustive and today we want to hear your ideas and preferences. So, if you look at what's come up onto the screen in the first question, the first question really relates to what you can see in the bigger blue topics, in that dark blue square at the top of the table.

In the second question, we'll get a bit more detailed and if you look at it, for example, the customer service bills. If you drop into the detail of that, this question is about well what are the, what are the measures that might give you a sense of how customer service and billing is going. So once again, please remember this slide isn't locked in, it's not finished, it's not finalised. This is just to explain the sort of indicators that all the domains, if you like, that people might want measured and what the specific measures might be underneath that.

This is where we want information from everyone and hear about it. For some people it might be a few measures that are meaningful to you, and it could be for others a much longer list. I know there's a lot to take in, and we will show this information on this slide again in the breakout rooms.

The focus is on the types of information, how it's delivered. And as we go through some of these measures in the workshops, we understand that you might want to discuss the levels of service or targets, and we're happy to hear feedback, but we won't focus heavily on the specific targets this is about the measures.

Developing targets and specific performance levels should be linked to the regulatory requirements and costs and more detailed analysis and we encourage Central Coast Water to engage further with its community on this.

I want to go to the third question now. So, the third question we want to hear about how you'd like to receive information, and again this slide shows examples just to get you know thinking started. But it's really something that you can design, and I encourage you to think about examples of information that you receive in other areas and of your life and how you interact with it, what works for you and what doesn't work for you.

We're looking also here at methods, as well as timing in terms of there could be a combination like a small amount of succinct information on the website, plus a more detailed annual report for those that want it. So, just think through those different perspectives and domains as we move into it.

So, when we go into the breakout rooms, we'll have time for discussion and questions. We will also be taking notes, as we've prepared some short interactive activities through which everyone can show their preferences, even if you don't do not wish to join in the session. So, that's my way of saying if you don't want to speak up, you can also use some of the technology to place ideas and thinking.

After the breakout rooms we will come back to this group session and hopefully there'll be a willing volunteer from each of those group sessions that we've run, to ask to share a summary of the discussion with people from the other groups.

And then we've got a final poll and we'll move on to some closing remarks and please on behalf of all the facilitators and the participants in the breakout rooms, I really encourage and support everyone to throw your thoughts and ideas, because it can help shape the way information is provided for many, many years to come.

There's a couple of tools on Zoom and I know, some of us have preferences for different, some you know, some of us are Zoomers, and some of us are Microsoft Teams and some of us can do both. But for those of you who are not so familiar, there's a couple of tools on Zoom that we'd like you to use to make it more interactive.

The first is the raise your hand function, which people should know, which you can access at the bottom of the screen. You can also lower the hand when it's no longer needed. The second is the annotation stamp function, and the instructions on the slide, show you how to access this.

And we probably won't practice necessarily on this slide, but we will go when we get into our groups, we will practice it there, because it's hard to jump between the technologies at the moment. But basically, just you know, you can start stamping but to stop stamping you select the cursor on the left of the bar, and also don't forget you can also add comments in the chat box.

A couple of, I guess, points to ensure a fair discussion working in this environment when we're sort of not all physically in the room, please keep your microphone on mute and use your raise hand function, to indicate that you'd like to speak. We will get to everyone; you'll be invited to speak. I'll come to the person the facilitators will and then you can remove the raised hand if you're done, thank you.

And while people might have more to say, it's really important that everyone that wants to speak should get a turn before moving on to second or third rounds for people, and please try to stay on topic for the discussion. Other comments can be made through submissions, and I'm now going to move us into breakout rooms so hold firm everyone, and I'll see some of you shortly and I'll see all of you back shortly as well.

Ms Towers: I'm just confirming we've got half an hour in the breakup room is that right?

Mr Cartwright: Yes, we have half an hour in the breakout rooms, thank you Fiona, well spotted.

BREAK OUT ROOMS (30 minutes)

2 Breakout room 1

2.1 Introduction

Mr Cartwright: We've got the Tribunal Member and Chair, Carmel Donnelly, is with us and we've got a number of people from IPART here also to listen and take notes. And there's also some people from Central Coast Water that are on the call as well. I can see Jamie and, I think Jamie's here, yes, I can see Jamie Loader. And if you feel comfortable, share information about yourself in the chat, like where you live and whether you're a resident or a business owner.

And when we return to the main room, we're going to ask someone to briefly summarise the discussion that we have to share with the other groups. Before we kick into it, is there anyone who wants to put their hand up for that now? To be a, it's just that literally that two-minute report back to everyone to say look we talked about these main things. Any residents there and Mark, John, anyone? Merilyn, do you want to do that?

Ms Vale: Sure.

Mr Cartwright: Okay thanks Merilyn. Thank you, much appreciated. So, we'll now move into the discussion, so I'm going to, the slide will come back up on the screen now. And we're here to talk about Central Coast Water's performance and accountability measures, and we've heard through our consultation about some concerns that customers have with the service they receive. This ranges from drinking water quality, to stormwater issues, customer service and issues with wastewater, and some customers have added through the, our, survey that they have no concerns. And before we move on to reporting indicators does anyone want to mention any particular concerns they have?

Mr Skipper: Yeah, I do, Mark here.

Mr Cartwright: Thanks Mark.

Mr Skipper: I was on this session last year with IPART, and the person running the session from IPART, was fully aware of the issues with quality of water in the Saratoga area. He said specifically, and you can play the tape back, 15 years ago he had the same, he remembers the same complaints in the same areas, and not a bloody thing has happened since.

And you're asking us to pay an extra 30, 20 percent, pick a number. It's just unjustified. Where's the money going, what are they doing with the money? They, and then we had another someone from Central Coast Council, on the second one of these last year, or maybe this year, now I've lost track, he said it was a problem because we had some pipe ends in your area.

And I've done some research on that, the nearest pipe ends to us are more than a kilometre away, maybe a kilometre a half away. So, it's just these nonsense excuses keep coming up and you know, you turn the tap on, you get brown water, and it tastes terrible. You can't drink it, you got to get bottled water in, and I understand these issues happen from time to time, but this happens all the time just about. And nothing gets done about it, and you get the same excuses, the same nonsense all the time, and I've just had enough of it.

And you ask us to pay another 20% more, it's just, it's just you know, Central Coast Council can't manage it obviously. I think IPART need to step in there and work out, they need to whip out all the management there, and manage it themselves or get someone else to manage it, because it's not happening at the moment. I'm not sure where the money is going, but it's not going to where it's needed, and drinking water is a basic requirement, you know, sewerage as well and stormwater, but surely basic drinking water is the first priority.

Mr Cartwright: Mark, I might check, Carmel do you want to respond to what IPART's heard so far about, particularly the Saratoga and the service quality?

Mr Skipper: And Davistown. It's not just.

Ms Donnelly: And Davistown.

Mr Cartwright: And Davistown, as well, yes.

Ms Donnelly: And you're right Mark, and I do absolutely recall, over a period of time and throughout this review hearing about Davistown and Saratoga. We have absolutely heard that there's a lack of confidence about whether council would spend the additional money on where it's needed. And we know ourselves, and you know I spoke to this briefly earlier in the earlier session, that we had allowed for Central Coast Council to spend money on water services in that, those previous years, sort of half a dozen years before 2019.

And they weren't spending all of it, and so obviously that was before all of the awareness about whether money was being spent in, on the right things and so on, and financial management. So, I hear you, this is, for me it's important to be clear, we don't have the power to remove council, there may be others that do, but it's not IPART.

But what we do want to do is to the fullest extent of our powers, make sure that the money is spent where it needs to be spent. And so I think from what you've said, I'm going to see what you think. Would you want a commitment about what projects and what expenditure is going to happen in a particular timeframe, and reporting on progress about whether that has been done?

Mr Skipper: Yeah, I think so, my question is why hasn't this been happening in the last 20 years? Where's the accountability been the last 20 years with IPART? That's what I don't understand. Is it we just got accountability now or was there no accountability before this?

Ms Donnelly: Look I'm personally not able to talk about the last 20 years, I am able to say that both the awareness of the mismanagement at Central Coast Council, and the awareness of, certainly I think there was awareness of Davistown and Saratoga absolutely, but the awareness of the extent of the service quality problems is more recent.

And our focus is right now, the future, the Tribunal Members that are in the roles now, what more can we do. I'm you know, I'm sorry that it, there's a whole history.

Mr Skipper: I just think the residents, same as the lady who was on before 10 o'clock, the residents are the ones picking up the tab here for mismanagement and corruption, and there's been corruption at Central Coast Council. The Administrator already identified that with the use of restricted funds in breach of the Local Government Act. That's demonstrated 101 corruption and I'm surprised ICAC's not running through the place. That is a breach the Local Government Act, was taken without permission and no there's nothing happened, there's no consequences.

Ms Donnelly: Yes, I think there are, look no doubt that is...

Mr Skipper: It's a police matter, it's theft, it's fraud.

Mr Cartwright: So Mark can I just jump in there, and with you, as you're quite right, remember those, for individual residents, you know that, that frustration in my experience as a resident, I'm not a resident of Central Coast but, when those investigative matters need to happen where there's you know allegations of fraud and ICAC and the things you've talked about is, those wheels do turn slowly in community and that's in itself is non-ideal as you know. And also the great thing about sessions like this is, and it's annoying because in a way we have to stay to the lane that IPART can operate in, does that make sense?

Mr Skipper: Okay, I don't want to take up too much time, I run companies, I understand what needs to be done, they need to be managed within the microscope, you know monthly, weekly and quarterly – not after 2 years and find out where the money is going. You can't just wait 2 years. They need to be managed very closely.

Mr Cartwright: Yeah, okay so look.

Mr Skipper: That's my that's my feedback.

Mr Cartwright: So Mark with your permission, I might take Mark's lead there, and there might be other questions others want to ask as we unfold as well, but I might take your lead there and let's just jump in to start working up through some of the thinking that gets some of that stuff built. So, if we just go to the next slide.

2.2 What broad topics do you want to hear about?

Mr Cartwright: Mark your comment as I just handed into this was more probably about the third question in a way, does that make sense, how often, you know..., remember, Carmel's rightly just flagged we could do other things as well.

So, remember, this first question is, what broad topics do people want to hear about, so in a way you can see some sort of thought starters there, I'm going to throw to Douglas McCloskey first. Douglas, you've got the floor

Mr McCloskey: Yeah probably a little bit just to go to Mark's issue, and around some of the structural issues that are leading to those problems and that have led to those problems. And I think it's something that was raised during the session around the comparison between Sydney and Hunter Water and Central Coast Water, and IPART's ability to set performance indicators and to audit them. And I think on a regular basis, and to provide that constant check-in that the business is doing what, doing its due diligence, is performing against the levels that the community and IPART expect.

And I think while I absolutely accept that that's currently not within the scope of IPART's powers to do that for the Central Coast Council, it seems to me that the fairly obvious thing is not necessarily identifying different performance indicators, but fixing that structural issue as saying it's an equivalent type of business to both Hunter and Sydney Water. It's between those 2 businesses, and residents of that area should expect a similar structures of performance measurement and auditing to residents that surround them.

And I think it may be within, and I understand that obviously the identifying 2 years, hence to have the Minister give IPART direction to undertake that auditing, I think, perhaps there is the extra step to address Mark's concerns, to say why are we waiting 2 years, why don't we say can we request that now, to say that we need to consider what functions need to be put in place for IPART to undertake an equivalent function to the licensing and auditing of those other businesses, accepting that it is a different legislative arrangement but to actually actively investigate how to undertake that and commence that now rather than wait 2 years.

Mr Cartwright: Right, okay so we've wandered a lot off the... I might just throw to Carmel.

Ms Donnelly: I might just help Alan, and just say look obviously this is all recorded and that's feedback that we can take into account, and Douglas I can clarify if I recall correctly the legislation that makes Central Coast Council a Water Management Authority is probably, a Water Management Authority, probably is the starting point. I mean it would be in the hands of the Members of Parliament at State Government and Parliament to make a change and require it to have a licence like the other Water Management Authorities under that legislation.

I have heard the feedback and certainly if the government decided to do that IPART would be up for it, and that would be a role that we would do to the best of our ability as we do with Sydney Water and Hunter Water. But we don't have that power to, for there to be a licence, and so on. But that's a little bit of a steer to you as to how things stand now and certainly we've heard that feedback from you and some, to some degree, requiring what, I would bring us back, Alan, to these measures and public information and so on, is IPART considering within the status quo, what can we do immediately that gets close, as close as possible to that kind of regime where there is transparency over the performance, things have to be reported and the water business will know that we'll be back to look at things.

So that informs that, the actions that we're looking to recommend. So we are really keen, and I would just say Alan, what I've heard from Mark is, and it may fit in a few different categories there, and from the sessions this morning, is transparency, not just about council financial management but where the money is going, and whether it is being spent on the items that has been you know respond, agreed as the to-do list in response to community needs and concerns and I think we'd note that somewhere.

Mr Skipper: In a corporate sense, it's like an internal auditor, you get your external auditor to come in once a year, the internal auditors are there all the time. I don't want to create administrative burden for the council, it costs more money, you should be able to, they should know that you can come there at any time and check the invoices, check the work is being done so they know they're on their toes every day. That's what I'm saying.

Mr Cartwright: So can I, can I just check if I thread some of what Mark said and what you've said there as well Douglas, if you if you lend out to those Hunter Water or Sydney Water you might find sort of broad domains like those navy blue ones that are on the screen that sort of start to shape some of the areas where you gauge performance. What are people's thoughts on these ones, are there any there that people go hate it, you've missed one, etcetera? I'm also going to go to Marilyn as well.

Ms Vale: Thank you, I think it was in Attachment 12 they said that they were going to hire another 60 people, so I guess that comes under financial management. If they get the IPART increase, has IPART looked at that to see whether that's... sorry

Ms Donnelly: Marilyn, I can jump in there, a couple of things.

The proposal from Central Coast did have some areas where they wanted to bring more staff in who work on stormwater into the water charges and we've not agreed to that. We've said no the stormwater belongs in local government and in fact at the end of this 4-year period, it should shift the other way.

More broadly while, the Central Coast Council as the water authority is still accountable for managing financially, and where it spends its money and hiring people. I think I would just pick up from that and say that good clear information about how much it's spending on staff, and benchmarking that to others, that might be some of the information that could be made more visible to the community coming out of what you're suggesting. So I, you may have been interrupted by something there so, I don't want to put words in your mouth but that that seemed to me what you were saying.

Ms Vale: Yeah no, that's good, thank you.

Mr Cartwright: Alright, so do people have a view about the, are they the right sort of areas that you look at in terms of, I know there's the layers of detail underneath it, are they right? Do we want to, do people want to use the sort of stamp function to give us any indicators of which ones you love the most, and which ones you sort of can live without? Marilyn have you re-raised your hand, or is that from before?

Ms Vale: Sorry, I haven't got rid of that.

Mr Cartwright: Oh, that's all right, that's okay.

Ms Vale: But I will, but I mean they seem to cover it from what I can see, from what residents complain about.

Mr Cartwright: Other thoughts, others on the call like, Anne D, did you have a view on this?

Ms Doran: Sorry about that, no, yeah, I think that's the same as Marilyn, like some of the issues don't affect the area that I live in like it did with Mark.

Mr Cartwright: Yes.

Ms Doran: But certainly the, yeah, the rest of it, and the fact that it needs to be overseen, well they need to be overseen to make sure.

Mr Cartwright: Yes, which probably does, I mean the grab we can get with that today is what does that look like by way of frequency as well as what are the actual sort of measures that you put underneath it.

I mean, I think the challenge in this afternoon's conversation is what I imagined would happen is that, unless anyone had vigorous disagreement that more than likely people would generally agree with the blue boxes, does that make sense?

And as I'll keep saying if there's one that's missed in that sort of you know, I call it the sort of start the auction piece, does that make sense, if there's one that missed throw it up. But I'm wondering whether people are more comfortable to just go look let's go, let's go into the next detail of it about what are the sorts of things that you'd measure under each of those domains, can I.

2.3 What are 2 performance measures that are importance for you for each topic/indicator area?

Mr Cartwright: I'll keep moving and if people want to go back we can, so I might get the second slide up, which is really to say well look hypothetically, if they are the sort of areas that you look for performance, what are the actual measures that you put underneath it?

Now once again, please remember the risk of me putting up this slide with written information in it, it looks like it's locked in and it's loaded, and it's not, does that make sense? It's really there to give you an example and it's a little like, you know if you, if you wanted to work out, in lots of environments this one's particularly you know, a water supply environment, how do you, how do you actually, what are the best measures to put in place?

So, once again, what are people's thoughts on the measures, and particularly, what are the 2 performance measures that are important to you on each of those areas? So I'm wondering whether maybe the most efficient way is we just go left, I'm happy to go anywhere we like but I'm also going to suggest we just move left to right to be, to be honest, we're a small enough group that we can do that, so in terms of that whole customer service and the billing ones, what are people's thoughts on what the measures should be there?

And we can get these keyed in by the way as people say them even if it's a draft thought, don't worry just throw the draft thought out there we'll, you'll see writing come up on the screen we can get these keyed in as we go. Thoughts?

Mr Skipper: With customer service, it's the time taken to respond to complaints.

Mr Cartwright: Yep okay, do you, and can I just check that one, is it the time, I know exactly what you just said, time taken to respond to complaints, is it also resolution of complaints or just time to respond, does that make sense? Right you can ring me up as, you know, you can ring me up and complain about something and I can answer the phone.

Mr Skipper: Yeah, but if I ring up and complain, I've complained about the water at Saratoga before, 13 years ago, so I don't know, you know.

Mr Cartwright: Oh so, I beg your pardon, so when you say time to response, you mean both time to respond to the complaint and also the resolution of the complaint?

Mr Skipper: Yeah, I meant the time to actually respond, probably 2 parts there.

Mr Cartwright: I was going to say don't let me lead the witness here Mark, because I, my job is to be the independent facilitator, but I don't want to put words into anyone's mouth so if I say anything that you vigorously disagree with please say no I didn't mean that.

Other thoughts?

Ms Vale: Everyone complains about the coloured water, but I've never worked out from council, I've never heard from council why we get it. Whether we get it at certain times, whether they can do anything about it, like what's the story behind it? If people say, "oh we've got brown water", there never seems to be an answer as to why.

Mr Cartwright: So, some maybe an indicator there, you can see it coming up on the screen, reasons for changing water quality, slash colour, something like that yeah?

Ms Vale: Yeah, I mean if someone in you know, in Woy Woy says I've got bad water they should be able to go to the website and work out why from a council explanation.

Mr Cartwright: Yeah, and as you know this is really about the micro of it sometimes it's because you go to other parts of Australia and everyone knows exactly what the water quality is like because it's in the local narrative, does that make sense? Doesn't mean it's agreed with, but it's there.

Other thoughts on where else, and I think this is a great way to run it, let's just keep wandering wherever people want to, but other thoughts on what are the other measures that should be in place? Judi did you want to add anything or? I can see there's an MS here, but I can't tell, MS, that's all I know you as, anything you want to add in?

Ms Turner: Hi, it's Emma Turner here from Hunter Water.

Mr Cartwright: Thanks Emma, then I'm coming to Ian Carruthers after that.

Ms Turner: Okay, sorry, I just thought I'd add in some of the suggestions about things that we've been discussing in terms of performance measures and some of the challenges, particularly in relation to total number of complaints.

I think it's a useful measure but there are challenges because we wouldn't want to discourage people from making complaints so sometimes actually a higher number of complaints is good because it signals that the utility is actually receptive to hearing from customers. So that's just a bit of a challenge.

We also do some customer experience monitoring so that people that make contact with our call centre, we have a separate company that, that does a brief survey with them to see how easy it was for them to do business with us, did they have their issue resolved, is there anything they'd do differently etc and we wonder if some of those indicators may be useful in indicating that level of service and interaction between the utility and the customer. So just some food for thought.

Mr Cartwright: Yes, now I've lost sight of it on my screen, Ian did you have your hand up or did I imagine that?

Mr Carruthers: Yeah, thanks very much, the hand keeps falling off.

Mr Cartwright: Oh good, okay

Mr Carruthers: It must be tired or something,

Mr Cartwright: I wasn't going mad was I.

Mr Carruthers: No, I don't know, I don't know what's going on, but it stays there for you, then drops off.

Mr Cartwright: You've got the floor, fire away.

Mr Carruthers: Thank you very much. Look, I wanted to address really a set of the performance indicators which I think in large measure lie at the core about performance. If you take the case study that Mark provided for Davistown and Saratoga water quality problems, and I might say we raised similar problems in our submission to IPART 6 months ago, particularly around a dreadful state of water main breakages in a localised area on The Round Drive in Avoca Beach, which has now been fixed when it eventually got to crisis point.

We think that, in addition to these indicators that deal with things like wastewater overflows per 100 kilometres, water main breakages per 100 kilometres, complaints per 1,000 residents, in fact that sort of is disguising you know where the real problems are. They use they're useful indicators but they're really only useful when you've got a reasonably uniform performance network and we don't have a uniform performance network.

For example, the Saratoga, Davistown story. And what we need are some indicators that drive that, the heterogeneous nature of the problem and in other words we need to have a listing of the hotspot situations that are then become the priorities for investment decisions. And Frontier Economics dealt with that in terms of the summary information provided in the Information Paper.

And so, we think that for these circumstances, firstly, you have a definition of a hotspot, and we can offer sort of in a generic way what we think, how you would go about defining localised hotspot situations. I'm sure the council does that internally but it's not, it's not transparently out there in the public domain and then secondly, you would have an annual listing of each of those hotspots, and you would indicate how long it's been a hotspot and what, and what the timing is and remediation.

Mr Cartwright: Status and timing. Yeah ok. Cool, cool, cool, thank you.

Mr Carruthers: And I think that, you know council must have a GIS system that's you know.

Mr Cartwright: Overlay.

Mr Carruthers: Should be relatively straightforward to do, the second dimension that I think is missing from all of this, is the time series in the, these perform, these numeric performance indicators. In the Information Paper it gives the reporting of performance over the last 3 years but a lot of these actions and interventions that council will take, take a much longer period of time to actually deliver results and there's also inter-annual variability due to various things.

So, you don't really get a true picture over 3 years. We think a much longer trend period maybe a decade, it should be presented. Thanks very much.

2.4 How would you like performance information to be provided?

Mr Cartwright: Yeah thank you you've naturally taken us on to the third question if we get time we'll come back to this one, can we quickly jump to the third question which brings us back to the arc that Mark firstly kicked off.

People's thoughts on performance, how you want the information provided? And some of the comments people have made will land in here as well, but other thoughts on you know, there's the examples? Thoughts, are they roughly the right sort of things and what I hear more is the nuances around frequency and you know?

Mr Skipper: Yeah, I think to keep cost down, you know it should be an email to the, everyone's got an email these days and it should be an email to the residents. You know, don't waste money with using flyers and, you know because it just costs money printing them, you know, emails and, people have got emails now, most people have and you know that's the cheapest way to do it.

Mr Cartwright: Okay cool, other thoughts? Marilyn and others okay, Judi, Anne, anything you want to add in here? Oh, we've got 59 seconds to go ladies and gentlemen so it's a bit like.

Ms Donnelly: Alan, Douglas had.

Mr Cartwright: Douglas, I'm going to go to Douglas then Ian.

Mr McCloskey: Oh look, it's just our usual point, I think you know we should have multiple platforms to be providing this information, and just making sure that we don't make assumptions, that, absolutely agree with Mark, many people do have email, but many people don't and you don't want to be.

Mr Skipper: Well, have it on the website too, that's fine or link from the water bill on the website.

Mr Cartwright: Thank you. Ian? Microphone Ian.

Mr Carruthers: Carmel spoke earlier about and various interventions this morning pointed to a sort of lack of confidence amongst the residents over council performance and whether they're getting value for money so this is about, a large measure of this is confidence building with the community, and so.

3 Breakout room 2

3.1 Introduction

Ms Towers: Hi everyone. I hope everyone's found their way into the virtual breakout room. My name is Fiona Towers, I'm an Executive Director at IPART, and I'll be facilitating this session today. We're lucky enough to have Deborah Cope, one of our Tribunal Members in the session, and we also have 2 Secretariat members I think Scott and Lawson that are here as well. We've also invited Central Coast Water to join in this group. And I think we have the CEO, do we, I can't actually see him, that's okay. But we've got Boris, and we may have a couple of other Central Coast people who are here just to help us with the conversation as well.

So, I'll just repeat a few of the housekeeping rules if that's okay. If when you want to contribute if you can put your electronic hand up, or just write in the chat that'll be helpful and I will invite you to make a comment, and then we'll try and get everyone to have a comment before we go back.

The first thing I'm supposed to do is see if anyone would like to volunteer to just do a short summary of the discussion. So, if anyone would like to volunteer, feel free to but I was actually going to dive in, or suggest that maybe Scott, are you happy to do a summary of the session, is that okay, great?

Mr Chapman: Yep no worries, I can handle that.

Ms Towers: Thank you very much alright. So, should we move on, so Scott are we doing the slides as well, yeah okay, so should we go with the first slide, thank you.

Alright, so can everyone see the slide. Okay, so we're here today to talk about Central Coast's Water's performance and accountability measures. We've heard through our consultation process during this review that some customers have concerns with the services they're receiving. Those concerns range from drinking water quality, to stormwater services to you know answering phone calls and getting back to, general customer service and issues with wastewater, some of which are these things we heard in the first session today.

3.2 What broad topics do you want to hear about?

Ms Towers: We also note that some of the responses we received to the survey that IPART ran, the customers were satisfied with their services. So, the first question, so if we could just move on Scott to the next one, so the first question we're sort of keen to get your input on, is what are the broad topics do you want to hear about regarding Central Coast Water's performance.

We have on the slide you know and as Alan mentioned we send out an Information Paper, we've got the 6 sort of broad topics there: customer service, service reliability, water quality, financial management, environment and public health and asset management.

We're keen to hear what your thoughts are on these. Are these the sort of topics that are of interest to you, have we missed any topics that are you know at this broad level, should we remove any of them? Yep so it's super keen to hear your thoughts. Who would like to open up? I just got a little technical issue with my screen, who would like to go first though, I'm struggling, Sorry, so who would like to say something? Jenny or Joy, sorry would you like to make a comment?

Ms Cooper: Yeah I just did in the in the comments section, that there should also be the number of staff that are there, in that I'll say department and the changes with that, whether it increases or decreases, because that was an indicator of issues in the past with Central Coast Council.

Ms Towers: Okay, so it'd be helpful for you to get information on numbers of staff okay.

Ms Cooper: But not just the number of staff, but the type of staff, at what level they're at.

Ms Cope: Right, so is it what their role is to, whether they're the engineers doing the water things or the people in the back office so the corporate staff versus the operational staff, is that the sort of thing you're talking about Joy?

Ms Cooper: How many people are digging holes, how many people are telling them what to do and how many people are pushing paper, that's yeah, I think that should be made clear in some way. I mean I'm being very general there, but I think you get the gist of it.

Ms Towers: Yeah no that's helpful thank you. Anyone else would like to say what would be helpful for them?

Ms Cope: Can I just ask a question then from the customers. So that's around, a theme of, how is the money being spent, and one of the things is the money being spent on people that are delivering services, which I think is what fundamentally Joy's getting at with her suggestion. If there are other things around how the money is spent that people think is particularly important?

Ms Towers: Yes. Jacqueline would you like to say something? Oh, we can't hear you Jacqueline. No, can anyone hear Jacqueline? No, sorry. Do you want to put it into, is it possible to type into the chat what you'd like to say, and I can read it out?

Ms Cope: While there's a question here from Joy, while we're trying to get Jacqueline on the line around a comparison about how the how other council's share information. They do provide reports, but it triggered an issue in my mind was, whether people think that information about other council's that would allow you to compare Central Coast's performance to that of other council's whether that would be a useful addition to this?

Ms Towers: And just to help people, sorry I didn't mention this, Alan mentioned that an annotate function in Zoom. If you go to the top of your screen you can go view options, and if you drop down you see annotate, and then you can put a thumbs up or a tick or a cross, if that's you know, if you can't like, if we can't hear your voice, you could potentially use that annotate function on these slides and that's of help.

Ms Cope: Yep, the stamp gives you the ticks and crosses.

Ms Towers: Yep. Okay so Jacqueline was asking, just wondering if they could also ask for more transparency about where the money is spent. Yes, okay so it's a similar thing for instance water mains breaks, okay yeah, I think that's a great suggestion, and then perhaps a breakdown per ward and capex and maintenance expenditure, okay. Thank you for that Jacqueline, because it was one of the questions I had, was whether people wanted information at sort of postcode level, or ward level, or averaged across the council, because obviously you know that information is going to indicate different things. So, I take from Jacqueline that she suggested a ward, but potentially lower down.

Okay, alright see that potentially a postcode. Is there somebody from Central Coast Council that could potentially, sorry to put you on the spot, but to talk about the feasibility of information at a postcode level?

Mr Bolgoff: That's Boris Bolgoff, Director of Infrastructure Services and if you can hear me okay?

Ms Towers: Yes, we can.

Mr Bolgoff: Look, there's certainly 2 different areas, one is your capex which is quite defined, and the reporting on that is you know quite detailed, you know down to you know the particular jobs, so that is certainly quite easy to do, and we currently do, do that. The operational spend, it can be done we have got a works, an asset system that allows us to pinpoint where we do certain works.

Now I'm just going back on Joy's suggestion in relation to staff. So, some staff will do work on roads, and then they might do work on some trees, and they might do work on some drainage and we capture that through cost codes. So the implications with the staff, I think will be a little bit complex, the way that we can report is certainly by job activity, that would be the way, that would be a lot easier in relation to what we do, if that makes sense to the group. I don't know if Danielle wanted to add any more in relation to a little bit more in the water and sewer space?

Ms Hargreaves: Thanks Boris, I think we would be in the same situation as you in that capital projects can be reported at that level of location of that they're undertaken, but more operational based projects are at a cost code level.

Ms Towers: Thanks for that. Does anyone in the group have further questions around that?

Ms Cope: Is there any of these topics that you're not interested in, or if you had to pick your top 2, which would they be?

Ms Towers: Or we could ask people to pick the top 2 at the next slide actually.

Ms Cope: I'm sorry.

Ms Towers: Is it something that we've missed out on, like is there a topic he likes to, thank you for Joy's contribution, but is there's something else that we that there's a you know a topic area that we just have missed that would be of interest to you. Alright, we might move on Scott to the next slide.

3.3 What are 2 performance measures that are important for you each topic/indicator area?

Ms Towers: So, the next area we want to chat about is, this just delves a bit deeper into what information would be meaningful. So, these are sort of the actual measures that would be presented as data, and performance would be tracked over time.

And I guess here's where we'll be interested to hear the top 2 performance measures that are important to you as a consumer and like whether we've got you know we've got suggestions there about what the indicators would be. Many of these are already tracked by the council, they may not be published, but I think there's information available in some of them and other water utilities often measure these things as well.

So, for example under water quality, it's a common measure that the number of water quality complaints per thousand properties is something that water utilities often track and publish, and you can do a bit of comparison analysis. I mean in our draft Information Paper we propose that the number of water quality measures be published, specifically reported for Davistown and Saratoga regions, in response to high number of complaints in these areas.

So here we're interested in what would be useful for you. We've got some suggestions there as I said, you could use the annotate function, but you know really if you want to put your hand up or put something in the chat, it'd be great to hear from your perspective what would be useful to the measures to look like. Yep, Joy that'd be great.

Ms Cooper: Yeah, there's not just, well Davistown, whoops, has had a representative, there's a number of other locations where there's issues with water and problems with water, Terrigal for example, with the breakage inline, Avoca the same thing, and Kanwal, so while there's been a representative and they've included information specifically to their suburb, there's other suburbs as well that have quite serious issues with water.

For me, I think my water quality is fine, I can't complain at all, but I do know that there's other locations where there's infrastructure issues. So, I think that needs to be noted that it's not just Davistown.

Mr Chapman: Sorry Joy, I apologise just for clarity that, you mentioned main breaks there, are we talking about water quality issues in wider areas you mentioned Terrigal or is it more about water service problems in general across the shire, the council area sorry.

Ms Cooper: Sorry I missed those words there.

Mr Chapman: Sorry you mentioned, main breaks for instance and Terrigal for instance in regarding where other service issues you know might apply more widely than Davistown and Saratoga. Are you aware of, are they around water quality issues or water service levels more generally, those sort of wider issues you're aware of?

Ms Cooper: Yeah Copacabana and Avoca specifically have had quite serious main breakages where at Avoca and a couple of houses were flooded.

Mr Chapman: Right.

Ms Cooper: So, if that answers your question.

Mr Chapman: It does.

Ms Cooper: And I'm sure in other areas as well, I'm just not aware of them. And I know that there's been kind of huge amounts of water pouring out all over the place, and I think that that needs to be just because someone comes and speaks for a particular area, and yes there are issues at Davistown, it shouldn't be just that area that's addressed. There's lots of other areas that have quite, they may not even know that this this event is on, or they may be working or whatever, so I don't think it's fair on them to not have those concerns or issues noted because of that. And I'm sure Central Coast Council are aware of those locations.

Ms Cope: So that's saying to me Joy, that what would be useful, is a system that tracks where the problems are, and makes that information public. Is that what you're saying?

Ms Cooper: Yes, that would be yeah.

Ms Cope: I'd have to think about how that would work I'm having trouble getting my head around it but is that kind of.

Ms Cooper: And is this only for water or is this sewer that needs to be mentioned as well.

Ms Cope: Water and sewer and stormwater.

Ms Cooper: Okay, so sewer, there's problems in Terrigal, there's problems in Wamberal, there's flooding's of lagoons in Wamberal, there's flooding's of the lagoon in Terrigal regularly, and there's huge issues at Kanwal, with large amounts of sewage actually flowing through people's yards, and it has previously, where they've been quite I've been ill, the entire family was sick because of that.

They may not even be aware that this event is on so they're all sewer issues, that are quite substantial, and I'm told that the sewer infrastructure in Terrigal, because of the contours of the land and because there's a lot of holiday homes that aren't used very often. At Christmas time, Easter time, that's when a lot of the issues come about.

There has been investigations into that but I don't believe that it's been properly fixed and I know that they smoke the pipes, but it can't have all been addressed because it's not the water quality in Terrigal hasn't been fixed yet, and I say Terrigal but there's also Kanwal and I'm sure other locations as well.

Ms Towers: Thanks for that Joy. I think yeah potentially the postcode option there could be a good one potentially.

Ms Cooper: But you need to be more specific as suburbs, because for example in Kanwal, Kanwal has established older suburbs, and it also has newer suburbs around it, so if it was it wouldn't give you a true result, because some of the postcodes there some of the houses and the postcodes they're have brand new infrastructure, that would be you know weeks, months, years old where others are decades old in Kanwal for example. So, that postcodes may not be adequate.

Ms Towers: Okay that's, thank you that's very helpful. I see Jacqueline, would you like to, hopefully we can hear you? Sorry you're talking, sorry we can't hear you. That's a bit of a shame, is it again can you go to the chat or yeah thank you.

While Jacqueline's putting something in the chat, is there anyone else that would like to make a contribution because this is you know everyone's view is very important to us and obviously you know different people value things slightly differently, so we are keen to get your views.

Mr Chapman: I wonder whether Danielle or Boris from council, might have a view on any steps that council might be taking to improve, or make more transparent locational or general performance levels. Anything else might be undertaking that space to sort of progress this issue and how realistic it might be to do area, suburb or you know, map-based performance reporting and these sorts of indicators.

Mr Bolgoff: I'll kick off just quickly, and then pass on to Danielle. As I said the map-based proposal to keep track of capital works is certainly yeah live now, that's something that with our roads and drainage and footpath network, you can go in and get the yeah the progress on a monthly basis of all the capital works projects.

As I mentioned before operationally, I'm trying to understand what Joy wants to try and achieve to then to what end, because the mapping system, through our works and asset system might be a little bit more complex in doing that, so there's slightly more complications in relation to that.

We can certainly give data, and is it around like, I'm just trying to think, is it repeat number of main breaks in a certain area that the community want to know about, to be able to advocate more towards you know why isn't this getting fixed earlier in the capital works program.

I think that's where Joy's going. I'm not quite sure, it's probably a bit of a yeah to Joy in relation to, if we could before we hand over to Danielle

Ms Towers: So, Joy are you okay to sort of provide a comment back or anyone else that's interested in this as a performance measure as well, I'm more than welcome to hear your views? Oh sorry, Helen, would you like to say something.

Ms Orchard: Yes, what I'm finding, can you hear me? Yes.

What I'm finding is, that it's like the residents are policing the council in what's going on, surely they have their own gauges to be able to pinpoint the problems, as with down on The Peninsula, the water quality down there.

Ms Towers: Boris do you want to respond to that in terms of what you know, how you do keep it, how you monitor your own infrastructure?

Mr Bolgoff: Look we've got 2 different networks that are obviously managed quite differently, in if we're talking about you know stormwater. So, in relation to what we can do in the roads and the drainage area, we can pinpoint the location and number of I suppose events or accomplishments that you know we go to. So, for instance, in relation to Davistown, and this covers anywhere, like there was a you know 107 accomplishments in that area, to do with drainage over the last 2 years. So, we do have that data and through the asset management and improved inspections, that's, that information informs some of that inspection regime as well. So, in relation to being proactive that is something that we do do.

Unfortunately, the cost of that isn't where we, you know I expect the expenditure, and the allowance, isn't where we wanted that to be in this particular draft determination, so we need to recut that, but it's really important about for my network in relation to the stormwater, is to get being proactive so we don't have to rely on the residents to say we've got a problem here. So, essentially yes, we can pick up and we use that information if we're going back to repeat locations using a software called Reflect. To Danielle as well.

Ms Hargreaves: Can I just add to what Boris has said so in some of the water and sewer areas we collect incidents, collect the data by incidents, in other areas we collect it by suburbs, so the 3 that we currently collect by suburb would be sewer main breaks, water quality complaints and water services shut down by suburb. So we already collect that data and that could be incorporated into the performance reporting measures under this determination, then a lot of the other areas that you've got on the screen as examples, are some of the things that we already collect but they are collected by incident type if that makes sense.

Ms Towers: Yeah thank you for that. And Jacqueline, thank you for your very helpful contributions in the chat around affordability and then just around sort of priority work, and then your question around IPART's powers compared to Hunter Water and Sydney Water. Deb, I was just wondering would you is there anything you'd like to say around that.

Ms Cope: I'm actually having trouble reading the chat. I'm not getting the full boxes so if could you just read me the comment so that I can answer it properly.

Ms Towers: Sure. so Jacqueline noted that IPART doesn't have the same powers to sort of effectively regulate Central Coast as it does for Sydney Water and Hunter Water, perhaps a better approach would be for IPART as part of its Final Report to recommend Central Coast Water accepts adoption of the same levels of accountability as Sydney and Hunter and that we spell out what those measures are.

Ms Cope: So yes, that's correct we don't have the same powers and because we don't licence the council water business, in the same way as we license Sydney and Hunter which allows a few different things, and I think it's a really good idea to spell out those differences in the Final Report.

It allows a few different things; it means that we set performance standards in the licence and there are minimum standards that the water utility needs to meet. They're required to report against those standards, and we set a reporting manual that sets out everything that needs to report. We can audit. So, we can have independent people go in and check the books to see whether that that's what's been happening in practice.

They have to have a customer contract which sets out their standards for customers and in that they have for some of the problems that the customers identify as particularly concern. And the sorts of things are sewage overflow in dry weather for example, where is something and there's actually rebates for customers if those sorts of, if you get really big problems occurring you get a reduction in your bill to reflect that. And so there's a couple of those built into the current Sydney Water and Hunter Water customers contracts. So, there are, they are, there are some significant differences.

In terms of all of this, Central Coast is actually the same as every other local government in terms of the quality, of the way the quality works, but it is different from Sydney Water and Hunter Water.

3.4 How would you like performance information to be provided?

Ms Towers: Thanks for that. We might move on to the last slide. I'm just conscious that we're just going to run out of time. So, this is around finding out what sort of information you would find helpful and how to receive the information, and how frequently.

So, you know again we've given examples that you could get an annual report on performance, or an annual flyer or email or potentially and you know an informative webpage, updates in your bills, all sort of council meetings.

We're also interested to hear from you do you want it quarterly, annually, 6-monthly and then yeah, so and we've got we've only got a few minutes left so if anyone's got any thoughts on that it'll be really helpful and Jacqueline if you'd like to type them in the chat we can record those as well.

And I guess just in terms of helping you thinking about it a tiny bit, you know this is how you get information for other things that you're interested in and how frequently do it. I mean I know everyone's very busy these days and gets millions of emails and everyone has lots of things to read, so I guess it's like in what form and the frequency that we're really interested to hear.

Ms Cooper: Isn't it better to ask what Central Coast Council can do, rather than what we want I mean what, what do they have at the moment, so that we can like I'd rather have reduced rates than have huge reports on what can and can't be done. I mean this then burdens them with paperwork.

Ms Towers: Sure, okay, yep. Deb, were you going to say something then?

Ms Cope: Sorry, we've about run out of time but Helen's point about not holding them, it's not the residents' role to hold them to account and identify the problems. I think's a really important one because it but it is, I think important for residents to know what's happening and to have that information. So, you want the council's systems to work well so that they fix the problems themselves, but I think it is still important that the customers know when and how that's happening.

Ms Towers: Well thanks everyone, it's been really helpful, really appreciate your input we're going to be zoomed into the main...

4 Breakout room 3

4.1 Introduction

Ms Livingstone: Tribunal members and we also have a number of other IPART staff who are here to listen and to take notes for us, as well as some people from Central Coast Water who are here to hear what you have to say, and we have Vivienne and Jenny Black from Central Coast Water and Luke. Are there any others have I missed? No? We have Vivienne, Jenny and Luke from Central Coast Water.

Please feel free to share information about yourself in the, in the chat. It's a bit more interactive in, in this session. If there are things that are pertinent to your perspective, like whether you're a resident on the Central Coast or a business owner, whereabouts you live, feel free to share that with us because that helps contextualize the conversation.

As Alan said when we return to the main room at the end of our half hour we will ask someone to briefly summarise the discussion that we have to share with the other groups, and I just want to test whether we have someone who wants to volunteer to do that right from the start because then you're primed and ready to go when the time comes to report back. Is there anyone who would like to volunteer to do that?

No? Lorraine, well done so thank you. Lorraine presented earlier and is also willing to be our spokesperson. We appreciate that. Okay, well let's move on to our discussion and this session is all about talking about Central Coast Water's performance and accountability measures. We've heard through consultation and some of the issues were raised this morning in our first session that customers do have some concerns about the services they receive. They range from drinking water quality to the stormwater services provided, customer service issues and even some issues with wastewater. In the survey we've conducted, some customers have also said they have no concerns, so not everybody has concerns but a few have been raised.

We're going to work through 3 questions to try and see if we can come up with areas that is going to be useful to develop measures and indicators for, so that Central Coast Council can share information that's meaningful for you about your concerns. But before we do that, were there other concerns that people wanted to get on our radar that we haven't touched on already outside those broad groups? Are there any particular concerns for people in this group that we ought to focus on? Sandra? You've got your hand up?

Ms Gamble: I think it'd be fair to say if I'm hearing correctly that performance in financial management would also be one of the concerns. I think that's really valid. What we're focusing here is on the service delivery. But I think it's fair that we acknowledge that performance in financial management is also a key concern.

Ms Livingstone: I've certainly heard that as well. Thanks Sandra.

4.2 What broad topics do you want to hear about?

Ms Livingstone: If there's no others that people want to raise, we'll move on to the to the next slide. And this is about thinking about what broad topics do you want to hear about regarding Central Coast Water's performance. On this slide, we've got 6 topics in the blue boxes, that are examples. And then under each in the grey boxes, some of the concerns that might fall under each. Now's, the time to hear from you, what are your thoughts on these? Do you think any information on these particular topics would be meaningful? Which ones are most important to you to you? Are there more that you want to add or some that are less important that you think we could remove. I want to open that up now for discussion.

Given we're a relatively small group, I'm happy if you want to talk to just take yourself off mute and share your thoughts on whether these 6 main areas and some of the concerns under them are the things that represent the concerns of most interest to you. Whether some are more important than others or whether there are some that that we could add.

Ms Gamble: And of course, we heard Lorraine talking about poor drainage. That was definitely something I heard. It doesn't necessarily have to be a concern. It could also be an anecdote. If you've rung the council and made a complaint, what's been the response? That would fall under the first category.

Ms Livingstone: Ruth, did you want to say something there? You're on mute. Maybe you weren't, I just couldn't hear. There we go. Sorry we can't hear you; Ruth and I think, I think you're logged in twice. Okay, well does someone else have something while we wait for Ruth to get her audio going.

Ms Wilson: Do you realise you've got poor stormwater drainage in 2 areas?

Ms Livingstone: It's under asset management and we've added it to service reliability as well. Thanks for pointing that out.

Ms Gamble: Has any of the group experienced discoloured water and bad taste, and bad smell? Lorraine, I think you've got your hand up. Is there something else you want to add?

Ms Wilson: I'm sorry I should have lowered my hand, but that seems to be. I may represent areas west of the M1 at the moment but we're about to sell our farm. And after that we'll probably be moving to east of the M1 so I would not like to be getting water that wasn't drinkable quality at all. And I'm looking at those areas that are complaining and thinking I don't want to live in those areas. Discoloured water is horrible whether you're washing, even in laundry, and there should be no excuse for it if pipes are supposedly, you know, washed out and serviced on a regular basis. The bad taste and the bad smell I can't even begin to wonder why that happens in a water system. And undrinkable water, the same thing.

I just can't imagine what it would be like to live with that, and I certainly wouldn't want to.

And that is probably one of the things that the Central Coast Council will be judged on by the majority of people, the quality of the water that comes into their homes for the price that they're paying for their water service.

Ms Gamble: That's a fair comment.

Ms Livingstone: Thanks Lorraine. Susan Reddy (Karl Schaerf) you've got your hand up and I think from seeing you earlier that might not be your name, but your zoom name.

Mr Schaerf: Obviously not. I did send an explanatory note before I did anything else.

Ms Livingstone: Apologies sorry I missed.

Mr Schaerf: It's Karl Schaerf, I think I'm well known to some of the participants, even in this small workshop. I'm a deeply concerned resident about many issues and I am one who in general terms, not necessarily about water supply because fortunately where I live I don't have any problems with water pressure or water quality.

I'm just deeply concerned about the proposed increase and how mere mortals such as I am, and at my age, I'm no spring chicken, can continue to, I just don't know how I will be able to afford all these proposed increases which we've being slugged with by the council in many forms including this, well it's an enormous increase over whatever period one might consider. 34%, I mean let's be honest it's more than a third of the current charges.

But the fact remains that I have other concerns. And I do find the attitude of many staff and in particular those to whom one's question might be deferred because obviously the person whom one speaks when they ring up to make a request of council, they are referred to somebody else and it is almost impossible to get the Head of that particular department, of the council to respond. There just seems to be a complete risk aversion policy that we are unaware of and I find that disgusting. I have dealt with it. I dealt with a recalcitrant council many years ago in Bathurst. But at least the Heads of the departments which were involved in those discussions I wanted to have, were prepared to speak to me. But this council seems to have an absolute risk aversion policy and I believe that that is an abomination which would be considered in part of this particular inquiry.

In total, it's not just simply confined to this water issue, water and sewage issue, it is in general, the council's arrogance and disregard for we mere mortals.

Ms Livingstone: Thanks Karl. And we've tried to capture that feedback under the customer service bills column and we've summarised it as difficult to get the right person to respond to inquiries. Hopefully that captures essentially what you said there. Any thoughts from others?

Ms Gamble: I think, and sorry for my untimely absence there. Sorry about that. It's Karl isn't it? The other thing I heard was the financial management and the significant increase in costs so well we understand that.

Ms Livingstone: Okay, Lorraine?

Ms Wilson: And I was going to add to, I'm sorry I've forgotten Susan's real name.

Ms Livingstone: It's Karl.

Ms Wilson: I, just to add to Karl, this is not just Central Coast Council, this seems to be spread amongst a lot of groups now. Who do you contact? There are faceless people out there making policy decisions and decisions that affect all their lives but there's no name attached to them and certainly no way to talk to them or ask why or interact in any way and this goes for the increased use of and reliance on messages getting out simply by the internet or websites rather than actual people. And I think that this is an ailment that is not going to help in the future and the sooner we can turn that around the better. And starting with local government would be a good place.

Ms Livingstone: Yeah okay, so that's that interaction with council and being able to have meaningful engagement with people who can engage at a level that addresses some of the issues that you want to talk to them about. Karl, did you have your hand up again or is that from earlier?

Mr Schaerf: No, no, no. I do have my hand, hand up again. Yes.

Ms Livingstone: Did you have something to add there?

Mr Schaerf: Well, not in relation to that specific question.

Ms Livingstone: Yep.

Mr Schaerf: But, in general terms, and it'll be an inanimate of the council I guarantee that because I know their attitude is much like Sydney Water and that's the use of water storage dams for recreational purposes. I don't mean for water sports as such but certainly some councils do permit water sports. And I can think of one, which I know quite a deal about. The other side of the sandstone curtain. But there are many councils who given the treatment provided to water for domestic use are near as averse to the use of water storages for recreational purposes.

And I'll put my hand up straight away, if you saw the mug that I was drinking from a moment ago you would see upon it a fly. I am a passionate freshwater fisher and I believe that there ought, and maybe not within the remit of this inquiry, and it probably wasn't even considered, but at a previous discussion since I moved to this part of the council in the former Wyong Shire Council Chambers, I did attempt to raise the issue and was almost thrown out. But daring have done so.

But I believe that there is room and I just wonder though, if some of these water storages might not already be being used either legally or illegally, in fact because they're not openly permitted but are they being used by others, who shall we say are in the know. I'm wearing my stripes as a passionate freshwater fisher and probably not speaking to anybody amongst those in this particular discussion group, you know a great deal about it, but I've got well over, well almost 60 years involvement in freshwater fishing issues.

Ms Gamble: So, Karl, can you just, if you don't mind us, describe the particular storages or waterways that you might be talking about here.

Mr Schaerf: Well, we know for a fact that Sydney Water's paranoid about opening up their water storage facilities even that treatment or the area where they store water, in the western suburbs.

Ms Gamble: So, Prospect Dam?

Mr Schaerf: Yeah, Prospect yeah. There was a proposal to open it to limited forms of fishing.

Ms Gamble: Right.

Mr Schaerf: And, but I consider Mangrove Creek Dam would be ideal, and also likely Mardi utilised for recreational purposes.

Ms Gamble: Okay so they're the watercourses within the Central Coast area.

Mr Schaerf: Oh yes, and perhaps even because I have heard and I've not attempted to do so, but I have heard that there have been people who go into the headwaters of Mangrove Creek Dam and fish. Now whether that is just rumour or wishful thinking, I don't know, but I'm prepared to put my hand up and say that, as an inclusive society we ought to be thinking of other or additional uses to which these very expensive facilities, well, they've cost a fortune to build so why, what not other uses other than just water storage to be considered.

Taking into account the necessary steps to prevent damage to the environment and pollution, that can be managed. And I believe it's managed and has been that I'm aware of for about 40 years and many, and longer than, water storages in the United States.

Ms Gamble: Yeah and so Karl, would this be another example of where you have a topic of conversation to hold with the council and you're not satisfied that you're having the right sort of conversation with the right sort of people to explore this issue properly.

Mr Schaerf: No, not necessarily. Just in general, I believe that people ought to be aware that these facilities could be well, I won't say exploited, because I don't believe in exploitation of any natural resource but could be utilised to the benefit of society. I mean to me it is a semi-passive not over, well not unduly stressful or over-exertive form of recreational activity to undertake certain forms of recreational fishing. And I would exclude bait fishing for obvious reasons, but certainly I believe the day issues which the council could well do to consider. But I think I know the answers already, however I'm prepared to hear them today. Okay, thank you very much Karl.

Ms Livingstone: Thanks Karl, I'm conscious we've only got half an hour and we've used more than half our time already I just wondered whether others were comfortable using that annotate function that we talked about earlier, where you go to the view options at the top of your screen, select annotate, select stamp and you can select a tick or a star or a heart. And you can let us know which of these issues on the slide are of, are most important to you. It might be all too complicated to work out how to do that. But it's just an opportunity for everyone who hasn't spoken, to just give us a sense of a particular issue that they think is important. Is that clear or clear as mud. We won't spend too much time on it but it's just one way of making sure we hear from everyone.

4.3 What are 2 performance measures that are important for you for each topic/indicator area?

Ms Livingstone: Okay, we'll move on to the second slide. That doesn't mean that we're losing any of these topics. I can see Lorraine and Ruth have their hand up, but it just might help us dive a little bit deeper into the performance measures that are important.

Lorraine, you've had your hand up for a while. What we're aiming to do by the end of our discussion is try and select what 2 of these measures you think are most important for each of these topics. But I think discussion helps us get there. Lorraine, did you have a comment?

Ms Wilson: Oh no, I only had a comment to make about the suitability of Mangrove Creek dam for recreational purposes, it's an aside.

Ms Livingstone: Okay and Ruth?

Ms Punch: Oh yes.

Ms Livingstone: We can hear you now.

Ms Punch: Right yeah, I had to go into the computer and do a bit of fiddling.

My problem is, for an example, my neighbour and I have horrific problems from water flowing which is supposed to be inter-allotment drainage from the 3 houses higher up and the original drainage plan shows it bending at right angles and then eventually going down to the lake area. But it doesn't it just flows through my property every rainstorm and then it flows into his and floods his pools. It runs under my house, I've contacted council and they tell me it's not their problem and I can't be the only one that has this sort of problem where perhaps in faulty or blocked inter, inter-allotment drainage is affecting house property. And the neighbours where the water is actually coming from, they say, "Well, we don't have a problem", so they don't want to spend any money, but my neighbour and I have to and as I said this can't be the only place. And does this come under stormwater or where is this? As far as I can find, it's nobody's problem.

Ms Livingstone: Yeah okay, so it might come under the asset management area. But it seems a broader issue about accountability and how to identify where responsibility lies.

Ms Punch: That's right. We just can't find out how to solve the problem unless we take into our own hands spending thousands to try and fix it. But we'd have to go into neighbours' property to do it.

Ms Livingstone: Yeah.

Ms Wilson: It also comes under asset management.

Ms Punch: Ok.

Ms Livingstone: Okay, so looking at these, this slide, we've got some possible indicators under each of those broad topic areas and the 2 that we've probably talked most about are financial management and customer service bills. I'll make that 3, and asset management. If you look at the indicators in the grey boxes listed under those. If information was reported about those, do you think that would be useful to you?

Or what would better reflect the issues that you've got concerns about. Karl, you've got your hand up. You're on mute Karl.

Mr Schaerf: Sorry, Sue just reminded me. Sorry my apologies. It is an issue as far as I'm concerned, the bills which we receive. And I currently, despite getting my rates bill which I thought would include, from the same body, electronically, I get a hard copy.

However, comparing this and let's be honest, we're talking about a provision of a utility water and sewage no less than electricity or gas. Many of those providers have a simple bar chart which indicates the current consumption of whatever utility the bill is for, by comparison with both those nearby and in some cases, you know I think you'd be aware of it, indicates by comparison with households of varying numbers and by comparison with previous readings.

Why cannot these bills, we receive now have just a simple bar chart? It surely would not cost any great amount or additional problem given the computerisation of the bills, to include a simple bar chart indicating what your consumption was by comparison with others, or your previous bills simply.

Ms Livingstone: Okay, so that's some information that you'd like to receive personally.

Mr Schaerf: By my word I would, absolutely. And I know of a council which does it again I refer to a council which I'm not greatly fond of, but Bathurst Regional. And it manages to indicate on their, on its bills as do other providers of service such as we're discussing today.

Ms Livingstone: Thanks, Sandra did you have some thoughts on that?

Ms Gamble: Yeah, just a just a very small thought and that is, I think that Sydney Water gives, this is my own personal experience, a bar chart that shows you comparison with your bill in the previous period, year before, and I'm sure there are other things that they can put on there.

I think they actually do that to comply with their licence conditions and this is possibly an interesting situation where Central Coast doesn't have a licence and so some of these things that customers want aren't necessarily canvassed in the same way. But we're certainly interested in making sure that councils are much more in tune with their customers in the future.

Ms Livingstone: Yeah thanks Sandra. So, any other thoughts on these indicators? And Jess has offered to put stamps on them for us if it's a bit tricky for us to navigate doing that ourselves so we can highlight the ones that people are most interested to see. Lorraine?

Ms Wilson: Yes, the financial management comes into this as well. In particular, particularly where stormwater relates to west of the M1 and I'm sorry for harping on this but it's the only part of this whole debate that actually impacts on us at the moment.

So, the cost of what is provided for us up here from our council rates and water rates is often questioned by local residents and the stormwater rates will be part of that.

Ms Livingstone: Yeah okay, thank you.

4.4 How would you like performance information to be provided?

Ms Livingstone: Now we will have a rude shock at the end of the 30 minutes, and we'll be suddenly taken back to the other room, so I just want to get to the last slide. And Karl, you've started talking about it which talks to the way that you'd like to receive information so if council works and develops up these areas to report back to you on with relevant indicators, what are the ways that you'd like to receive that information?

So they could for example, as Karl said, put some information on your bills and Karl suggested one thing that would be for him is to understand his usage better, but there could be performance information in their annual report, there could be flyers in your letterbox, information on webpages, discussion at council meetings, do people have preferences for how they receive information about Central Coast Water's performance? Karl you have your hand up?

Mr Schaerf: I do, look I'm not trying to take over the discussion it just concerns me though that we're already confronted with the likelihood of a very savage increase in rates and general rates as well as water and sewage.

I don't want anything which is going to increase the cost particularly in the form of printed material these days, apart from environmental considerations. But I still would like to have made available more information as you've suggested that it could include performance figures, whether they met or failed to meet whatever the performance figures which might have been set prior to the period which is being reported upon.

Ms Livingstone: Yep, okay. I can see that we've got just less than 30 seconds now before we will be moved back into the main room. Are there any final points people want to make, and I'll apologise in advance if we have an abrupt end to our discussion.

No, okay well we're under 10 seconds. Thanks again Lorraine for agreeing to report back to us. We'll join the main group and hear from the other groups as well.

Oh, we actually have another 55 seconds, but we can leave the breakout room.

5 Facilitated workshop summary and closing

5.1 Summary of breakout sessions

Ms Livingstone: I think I could have made use of another minute there. I got that wrong but anyway it's we're giving you thinking time Lorraine for your summary.

Ms Wilson: I have a sheet of things here, but I was hoping Jess would send up those remarks that she was putting on that, she was writing down.

Ms Livingstone: I'm sure she'll be able to chip in and help.

Ms Wilson: Doesn't matter.

Ms Donnelly: I know that was a good discussion because we were cramming points in in the discussion I was in, and I think there's probably a few areas where people got cut off, but we are going to try and not keep you here too much longer, back to you Alan. I think you're on mute.

Mr Cartwright: My apologies. I think in our group Marilyn very kindly with a bit of elbow up behind her back by me, have volunteered to sort of just give us a quick high-level report back about you know how vigorously we agreed or disagreed etcetera. Marilyn, where are you, over to you.

Ms Vale: Oh, thank you. Okay we all seem to feel for Davistown and Saratoga residents who are complaining that nothing much has changed in 20 years. Everyone wants more transparency, they want to know particularly or exactly where is the money going, and is it going where the community wants it to go.

We want good clear information because one of the points was that because of the diversity of the Central Coast, we don't have one uniform performance network, so there are areas that works well, and there are areas where it doesn't work well, and we want to know more about the hot spots and where we should be spending our money. I think that summarises it.

Mr Cartwright: Thanks, Marilyn and I'm going to throw to the next person who I don't know who that is, because I was in a breakout room but I'm going to throw to whoever it is that's reporting back from the other groups.

Mr Chapman: So, from team 2 that'll be me. Look just sort of follow up from what Marilyn said, our group also was quite interested in the locational issues and where in systems there may be problems and where money is being spent.

So that was not just about water quality, but also about broader more general service levels that may be affecting certain postcodes and/or wards and/or suburbs or areas you know more generally or repeatedly. So, I guess you're looking at chronic problems, and where the issues are occurring, where the money's being spent to service, to maybe work on some of those issues. A few other things. The breakdown about reporting about the number and type of employees in the water and wastewater and stormwater services. And, yeah that was I guess the gist of it.

Mr Cartwright: Well thanks very much Scott, and who is up for another one.

Ms Livingstone: We've got Lorraine from group 3, thanks Lorraine.

Mr Cartwright: Thanks Lorraine.

Ms Wilson: Okay, our group, we're very, very concerned about how difficult it is to communicate with council to air the complaints. The complaints are not seen to be addressed in a timely or satisfactory manner, and it's very difficult to get the right person to respond to enquiries.

The service reliability, poor water quality and poor stormwater drainage, discoloured water, bad taste, bad smell and undrinkable water. Now this isn't west of the M1, we have pretty good water west of the M1, but east, not so good in some areas.

Financial management. There was concern about price increases of course and affordability, and also accountability, whether where is the money being spent and is it being wisely spent, or to the best advantage.

Asset management. Again, poor stormwater drainage. Appropriate service of water pipes and that goes back to the water quality probably. Appropriate use of water storage and this was out of left field by one of our members, who suggested that Mangrove Creek Dam could be used for recreational facilities. That was a suggestion from left field, he admitted to that. I live about 5 kilometres from that dam, and I have to say I'm not sure it's suitable but anyway.

Mr Cartwright: Thank you. Thanks very much for that. So, look, you can all start to see coming up onto the screen just some other sort of the additional information grabs that came out of those groups. I'm mindful there's one group yet to arrive on the screen, that's probably more to do with the technicalities beside behind the scene.

So, look, one other final thing we've probably, I might move on to the poll. I am mindful of time, for everyone everyone's time today. I might just see if we can move on to the poll, and thanks to everyone that sort of participated in those groups, and for those presenters, to give us that information back.

The poll really is about, we've got a poll coming. There we are, oh, hang on, here we go yes. So, there's a short poll there that you can now see on the screen. So, I'll just give people a moment for people to complete that.

Ms Cope: One of the points made in our group which I think is probably useful one to note in that was recognising that you don't want a system of performance reporting that substantially increases cost and therefore needs to be paid for by residents. So, in interpreting preferences where, we'll keep that in mind.

Ms Donnelly: Yeah, that was made in our group as well Deborah.

Ms Livingstone: Yeah, and ours.

Ms Wilson: And sorry, we also suggested it to come out on rate notices, and that option is not anywhere on that list.

Ms Donnelly: Okay well we'll make a note of that too as a suggestion Lorraine, thanks for that.

Mr Cartwright: Thank you. Yeah, now I'm just going to throw to the experts behind the scenes to check have we got the poll results yet, or who knows that does?

Ms Wilson: Oh yes, it is sorry.

Mr Cartwright: Has everyone done their poll? Joyce, are we good to go?

Ms Donnelly: I think Joyce might be having a few difficulties in that she's, and I'm not sure if we've got everyone's responses yet.

Mr Cartwright: Yeah, and people have thrown in the chat that they can't submit. Yeah, people are saying into the poll and maybe the polls have fallen over. What do we think should we persevere or leave it?

Ms Donnelly: While, I might make a few closing remarks while the team, see what we can do, and if not, I'm sure we'll find the we'll have the responses and take them into account, even if we can't report them back.

Mr Cartwright: And Carmel, I'm going to hand back to you, but Susan Reddy has her hand up.

Ms Donnelly: Oh, here we go it's up.

Mr Cartwright: Oh, there we are. There we go thank you Joyce amazing.

Ms Towers: We might need to acknowledge that not everyone got to vote.

Ms Cope: Well yeah, so if people would like us to send them the questions in email later, let us know and we can then put your response, make sure that it goes in, and it's reflected in the numbers.

Mr Cartwright: Beautiful, thanks very much. Alright, so I might hand back to you Carmel.

5.2 Closing remarks

Ms Donnelly: Thank you, look my closing remarks are really very much about how much we appreciate your input, so thank you very much to everyone who's participated and particularly also to the people who've presented. Whether it's in the session this morning, or have been reporting back from the groups, we really do appreciate it. We will consider everything.

I do want to acknowledge that there were some comments made before we started this morning which I will look into, and we will also respond to in writing and we will look at the chat and any of the questions that we haven't been able to answer we'll give responses in writing as well. Before I go on, I just noticed that Susan has her hand up, although it doesn't look like Susan, did you want to just jump in before I wrap this up.

Mr Schaerf: I do I simply want and obviously I'm not Susan. I simply wanted to know if we can, we will have the opportunity just to briefly say as I am now taking the opportunity to thank you, and the way in which you've conducted this. It is in stark contrast to the meetings and the attempts by citizens to participate in council discussions in this part of the world.

It is in stark contrast regardless of the fact that I didn't hear all of the initial discussion, but I can understand the frustration of that resident what she was expressing nevertheless, I believe that in general we the participants are happy with your performance, that is IPART but I certainly am anyway, and maybe I'm speaking out of turn, but I believe that many, if not all of us are not happy with the performance of Central Coast Council, it's as simple as that.

Ms Donnelly: Okay.

Mr Schaerf: We appreciate the opportunity you've provided us, but the opportunities provided by Central Coast Council are extremely limited and are generally somewhat overbearing, but I think we all can understand how that's come about, and I don't accept the suggestion that this whole situation on the Central Coast is the responsibility of all members of the elected council, of people who we've voted for to represent us.

Ms Donnelly: Well thank you very much for your comments. I will say that I know they were in those opening comments was very strong concern, which I understand about someone trying to be in touch with us, and that not having worked and we've apologised unreservedly and we'll have a look at what went wrong there.

But I also will say that we're very keen to keep improving the way that we consult and engage and so it won't surprise you that there will at the end of this be another quick poll for you to give us some anonymous feedback, so that we can keep learning and improving.

We will put a copy of this public hearing, a video up on our website and a link to that and we'll also put a transcript up.

We are very keen to have people put submissions in, you know and you can find out how to do that on our website and it's quite easy, and or just have your say in a survey, that is available there up until the 14th of April. There's contact details for our people inside the reports that we've published as part of this draft decision, and also on our website and you're most welcome to get in touch with us at IPART about that.

And in closing let me say you know our next steps are to work on the Final Report we will consider everything that we've heard today, and we really do appreciate your participation so thank you very much, and I know that we've run out of time, so I should probably stop there and let you get on with your day. I do hope you have a good day.

Ms Cope: Just 2 seconds Carmel. I just wanted to note if there are people that for whatever reason find making a written submission difficult, you can phone us and say you'd like to make a verbal submission, and somebody will then take down what you would like your submission to be.

Mr Cartwright: Cool, thank you. Alright, hey thank you everybody, please enjoy the rest of your afternoon and for thank you for giving us the slight amount of extra time that we needed to get through this second part of the day, and travel safely wherever you're heading to, thank you everybody.

Ms Donnelly: Thank you.