



**Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group  
Meeting No 11 – 12 May 2022**

**Communique**

The Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group (AWEAG) held its eleventh meeting on Wednesday 12 May 2022 at the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation office in Joondalup. The Director General, Ms Michelle Andrews, chaired the meeting.

The main items presented and discussed include the following:

**Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Strategic Plan 2022 – 2024**

Ms Andrews advised that work was underway to finalise the Strategic Plan. The group provided advice and guidance on a description for Country that will set the context for the Plan.

**Water Reform Bill Progress Update**

Dr Daniel Nevin provided an update on the progress of the drafting progress of the Water Reform Bill.

**AWEAG Review**

Dr Nygarie Goyal presented the key changes to the Terms of Reference previously discussed by the group. Members endorsed the updated Terms of Reference.

**Nominations and election of Co-Chair/Expression of Interest (EOI) process**

Members endorsed the appointment of Mr Jason Barrow as Co-Chair for the next 12 months.

The Department sought feedback from members on the proposed Expression of Interest process for advertising for AWEAG members for the next two years (with the option of reapplying for a second term). Members discussed a transition period and the most efficient way of ensuring appropriate handover.

To widen the scope and reach communities State-wide, the Department is proposing to advertise for new members in Aboriginal newspapers and on Aboriginal radio stations.

**Community Paid Participation Policy Update**

Mr Iqbal Samnakay provided an update on the development of a policy to remunerate AWEAG members. The policy will provide a framework for the department to recognise the expertise and specialist contribution made by people with lived experience through payment for participation. The Department will undertake internal and external consultation prior to the policy being finalised. Members have a month to provide feedback on the policy.

**Water Corporation Essential and Municipal Services Upgrade (EMSUP) Program**

Mr Paul Volk and Mr Anthony Bell from the Water Corporation provided an update on the upgrade of water and sewerage services in Aboriginal communities.



Water Corporation has a budget of approximately \$78 million for seven large communities and several town-based communities. Town-based communities are predominately in the Northwest.

The EMSUP program has been running for almost two years and has two components: community and infrastructure. The purpose of the infrastructure component is to upgrade and maintain assets. The community component focuses on outcomes such as such as community improvement initiatives, increased employment and training of community members, contract and procurement (contractors to be Aboriginal-owned or proportion of Aboriginal ownership/involvement) and education (water efficiency).

Members asked questions about the program, and it was agreed that Water Corporation would be invited back to the next meeting of the AWEAG.