

Guiding Principles for the Technical Review of Environmental Investigations: Eyre Peninsula Desalination Plant

April 2022

These guiding principles establish the functions of the independent technical reviewers (as present on the Independent Marine Science Review Panel) and address potential issues relating to conduct and confidentiality requirements.

Representation

Panel members are selected and appointed to reflect the environmental areas and issues to be addressed as part of the investigation work. Areas of expertise cover marine ecology, modelling, outfall dynamics and ecotoxicology, project management and environmental impact assessment.

Membership

Membership of the panel comprises:

- A Chairperson
- Five other credentialed members (additional members may be subsequently nominated by SA Water if the need arises for assistance in specific elements of the investigation process).

All panel members will have a high level of experience within their field and be recognised leaders. The Panel members are as follows:

Role/Advice Area	Panel Member	Organisation
Chair	Dr Don Plowman	-
Ecology	Professor Sean Connell	School of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Sciences Adelaide University
Ecotoxicology	Dr Anu Kumar	CSIRO
Environmental Engineer	Dr Ian Wallis	Consulting Environment Engineers
Marine Ecology and Fisheries	Professor Alistair Hobday	CSIRO
Oceanographer	Dr John Luick	Austides Consulting
SA Water Representative - Senior Environmental Impact Assessment Officer	Dr Hazel Vandeleur	SA Water

Scope and function

The role of each panel member is to provide independent technical feedback and advice to ensure the objectives of the environmental assessment process are achieved, by:

- Advising on the adequacy of environmental investigations and assessments, in terms of their nature, extent and scope, and ensuring that all areas of major environmental concern are addressed.

- Advise on the robustness of investigation and assessment methodology regarding the scientifically and technically rigorous.
- Providing an expert review of investigation outcomes and advising whether the technical interpretation of outcomes can be supported by data presented.
- Providing feedback on assessment reports and documents (including design considerations) that have the potential to impact on the marine environment.
- Advising on actions to overcome any identified gaps in knowledge following the investigations including further investigation requirements.
- Providing an aggregation of expertise and information to ensure timely delivery of an appropriate environmental impact assessment.
- Providing a summary of the outcomes and recommendations from each meeting in the form of a meeting statement.
- Where appropriate, and through the Chair, provide response to marine queries raised by stakeholders and community groups (including the Site Selection Committee) as required.

SA Water will be represented on the panel through an Executive Officer who will coordinate and facilitate administration of the panel including arranging meeting times, preparing agendas, taking and distributing minutes and coordinating the drafting of any media releases.

Panel Reporting

A final report that addresses all investigations and other issues relevant to the scope and function of the Panel review will be required.

Interim reports should be prepared at key milestones and to documenting panel comments and recommendations. These interim reports will be shared with other groups by SA Water at SA Water's discretion (for example, the Independent Site Selection Committee and / or Government Agencies).

Panel Chair

The Chair will oversee meetings, co-ordinate a panel response and act as a spokesperson on behalf of the panel members.

The Chair will be required to coordinate the preparation of a final Panel review report which will detail the findings, operation, and outcomes of the panel.

Upon request from SA Water, the Chair may be required to attend meetings and make presentations to stakeholders including regulators, media, and the public.

Conduct

Panel members agree to operate according to these Guiding Principles and within the terms of their contracts. Provision of feedback and advice will be both verbal and in written form. In undertaking

their role, experts may be required to operate both on an individual basis and in the context of a group.

Group meetings are intended to provide a forum for the technical experts to meet collectively and discuss the proposal and associated environmental investigations and assessments. The group will meet on at least 6 occasions within the 12-month period.

Expert advice will be sought at key milestones in the environmental investigation process (e.g. assessing investigation briefs/proposals, draft investigation reports, etc).

Meeting schedule

The proposed format is monthly 4-hour meetings (with 6hrs reading time prior to the meeting) for the first 3 months (May, June and July meetings) and bimonthly thereafter.

Video conferencing is proposed for the foreseeable future to reduce the potential for Covid related impacts. The ongoing Covid situation and requirements will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Term of Operation

The initial term of the panel will be for 12 months during the environmental characterisation investigations and Development Approval preparation stages.

Following this initial term, there may be a need to extend the operation of the panel subject to the progression of environmental assessment processes.

Confidentiality

Panel members shall be bound by the provisions of the terms and conditions of their contracts with regards to confidential information.

Panel members are free to discuss information presented to them with other panel members, but are not free to disclose information outside the group where it is not already in the public domain. In this respect material or information presented to the Panel as part of the project or associated investigations is to remain confidential until such time as SA Water advises that any or all will be made available in the public domain.

Representation to the media or public

All matters relating to media, including media contact or requests from the media to seek the views/opinions of the Panel will be directed to the Executive Officer and Community and Stakeholder Engagement team.

All media responses, either proactive or reactive will be prepared by the Community and Stakeholder Engagement team in consultation with the Chair.

The spokesperson for views/opinions of the panel in relation to the project will be the Chair.

Representations to the media, public or other stakeholders regarding the project should be directed through the Chair. Any representations made outside this should only occur with the Chair and SA Water's prior approval and be in compliance with the provisions for confidentiality within their contracts.

Conflict of Interest

Panel members will advise SA Water through the Chair where they think a potential conflict of interest may arise with respect to their position on the panel and any requests for the member to discuss the project.

Conflict Resolution

It is acknowledged that parties may at times differ in their views and may agree to disagree. While every attempt will be made to reach a common ground agreement, this may not always be possible. In such cases, individual member views will be documented subject to the approval of the relevant member(s).

Where issues of conflict arise members of the Panel will look to resolve such issues with the person concerned in the first instance. If the issue is unable to be resolved, the issue shall be brought to a meeting of the Panel for discussion and resolution. If the issue warrants immediate resolution, a Panel member can call a special meeting of the Panel in consultation with the Chair in order for the issue to be addressed.

Documentation

Minutes and agendas of meetings and the Panel's Final Report will be considered internal working documents until finalised and signed off by all Panel Members. This includes technical documents tabled at meetings that are in draft or working format.

Draft minutes will be prepared by SA Water Executive Officer and approved internally prior to be forwarded to the Chair for circulation to the Panel. Minutes will be approved as an item at the subsequent Panel meeting.

A meeting summary will be prepared by the Panel following each Panel meeting. The summary will document the key recommendations and outcomes of the meeting as well as any major observations or comments. Once approved by all Panel members this will be a publicly available document.