

Diggers Rest Class A recycled water: Engagement report, July 2021

Introduction

In June 2021, Western Water held a community consultation session with Class A pending customers from Diggers Rest.

These customers live in new estates with homes connected to the Class A recycled water supply. However, the supply is not yet available.

The engagement intent was to establish open discussions with the community, apologise for the lack of communication, understand issues, concerns and opportunities and, where possible, hear how the community would like to engage with Greater Western Water.

Meeting purpose and participation

The community meeting was held on Tuesday June 8, 6-8.30pm. The purpose was to:

- Understand the issues and concerns for Diggers Rest residents on the Class A recycled water project
- Consider the communities requirements around the provision of Class A recycled water and establish a way forward.

Western Water representatives attended the session including Chief Operations Officer, Graham Holt.

More than 30 people registered for the session. On the night, 20 people participated.

Summary of community feedback

- Participants wanted an update from Western Water and to know what the options are going forward.
- They wanted clear direction if Class A was going ahead or not.
- Participants in general wanted to be given the option to connect to Class A recycled water.
- However, some community members were not prepared to pay for the service.
- There is confusion on the service fees and usage fees associated with Class A recycled water and a number of participants suggested that they did not understand why they would need to pay more.
- Concerns were raised about communication between Western Water and the

Diggers Rest community and that multiple methods to contact residents is needed.

- Some participants raised the issue of wanting compensation, particularly if Class A recycled water does not proceed
- Participants were asked if they wanted to continue to work with Western Water/Greater Western Water to look at future options. 70% replied yes while another 30% felt they needed to think about it.
- Participants want to:
 - be kept up to date with transparent information
 - understand the options going forward including the timeframes and the fee structure and to have the opportunity to put their views forward
 - have a range of options to receive the information and to be involved in group discussions, including online and face to face options.
 - have alternate times for meetings so that people working or caring for families can attend.

Recommendations

- Keep regular, transparent and up to date communication with the participants and the community members that could not attend.
- The next round of communication should include:
 - Summary of each community session and a response to the questions captured
 - Next steps including how this issue continues under Greater Western Water and when the community will find out more information.
- Engage the new Greater Western Board to determine what options will be made available to each of the communities. Determine exactly what will be negotiable and what the communities can have input into.
- Involve the community so they can work with Greater Western Water on the options and the outcome.