

# Terms of Reference – Water Advisory Body

**BuildSkills Australia Limited (ABN 86 668 509 822) (BuildSkills)**

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## **1 Industry Overview**

The Water comprises organisations that catch, store, purify and supply water, usually through a system of pipes (including the operation of irrigation systems to supply water to farms). The sector also includes organisations that operate sewerage systems, drainage systems and sewage treatment plants. Organisations in this sector are commonly publicly owned and operated by state, territory or local governments.

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## **2 The Role of the Water Advisory Body**

- 2.1 The Water Advisory Body ('Advisory Body') is a representative committee, established to provide industry and technical advice on the workforce and skills needs facing the Water sector ('the sector').
- 2.2 The Advisory Body is established by BuildSkills Australia Limited ('BuildSkills') to provide expert industry input, advice, feedback, and direction on a range of issues pertaining to:
- a) Current and emerging workforce challenges and priorities, skills development mechanisms, and skills and workforce mismatches facing the sector;
  - b) Relevant data sources, publications, and thought leadership that may guide the analysis and direction of BuildSkills' project activity;
  - c) The fitness-for-purpose of nationally endorsed training package products, including emerging areas of need;
  - d) Training pathways (including apprenticeships), as well as career pathways and attraction and retention issues.
- 2.3 The Advisory Body will also:
- a) Identify and facilitate access to broader stakeholder networks in the sector for consultation as part of BuildSkills' core program of work and project work;
  - b) Assist BuildSkills to identify opportunities to participate in relevant sector events or other forums that are relevant to jobs, skills and training;
  - c) Work together with other BuildSkills Advisory Bodies where appropriate, to provide comprehensive advice.

- 2.4 The Advisory Body does not hold any decision-making authority in relation to BuildSkills' operating functions. It is overseen by the Executive Director – National Industry Engagement and is ultimately responsible to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- 2.5 The CEO will periodically review the operation and effectiveness of the Advisory Body and may make changes, including but not limited to, the Advisory Body's composition, membership, or activities.
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### 3 Membership

- 3.1 The Advisory Body is made up of fourteen (14) members, representing a cross-section of stakeholder groups for the sector. The membership is established as follows:
- a) Five (5) representatives from employers in Australia engaged in providing services related to Water;
  - b) Five (5) peak body or industry association representatives;
  - c) Two (2) trade union body representatives;
  - d) One (1) representative from relevant government departments or agencies; and
  - e) One (1) independent Chair – appointed by the CEO.
- 3.2 All Advisory Body members must possess demonstratable experience in the Water sector, including knowledge of current and emerging workforce issues, skills development and/or industry needs.
- 3.3 Where a membership vacancy exists, Advisory Body members are appointed in line with the following process:
- a) **Expression of Interest ('EOI')**: Organisations meeting one of the categories in **Clause 3.1** and the relevant experience in **Clause 3.2** may submit an EOI form, which will be published on the BuildSkills website. This requires the applicant to provide details of the organisation, as well as demonstrate evidence of the suitability of the proposed representative individual against a prescribed selection criteria. The EOI form will be open for a two-week period from the date it is published.
  - b) **Suitability Review**: Once the EOI period has closed, BuildSkills' Industry Engagement team will review compliant applications against the prescribed selection criteria and make a recommendation to the CEO for approval.
  - c) **CEO Approval**: The CEO will review the recommended application/s and determine the successful applicant/s for the relevant number of vacancies. Once all vacancies have been filled, members will be notified of their appointment and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing. New members will be onboarded by the Office of the CEO.
- 3.4 Membership appointments will be current for 12 months unless changes are made in accordance with **Clause 2.5**.

- 3.5 Members may re-apply to have their term renewed, however members may only serve a maximum of two (2), 12 month appointments on the Advisory Body.
- 3.6 Members of an Advisory Body are also eligible to be members of a State and Territory Industry Reference Group.
- 3.7 BuildSkills will adhere to its Diversity Policy and Code of Conduct in reviewing applicants and appointing members to the Advisory Body.
- 3.8 Member responsibilities include:
- a) **Attendance at meetings:** Members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings, contributing to the quorum and active discussions.
  - b) **Providing advice and feedback:** Members will offer their expert advice and constructive feedback on strategies, policies, and initiatives relevant to the Water sector.
  - c) **Review and analysis:** Members will read reports, proposals, and other relevant documents before meetings to engage in informed discussions and decision-making.
  - d) **Stakeholder engagement:** Members will act as liaisons with their respective stakeholder groups and networks, ensuring their views and concerns are represented at meetings. Members will also facilitate access to stakeholder networks in the sector for consultations.
  - e) **Compliance with policies:** Members are expected to adhere to all relevant policies to ensure transparency and integrity in their contributions.
  - f) **Ethical conduct:** Members will uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct, and adhere to the [JSC Code of Conduct](#) at all times, fostering trust and credibility in the Advisory Body's operations.
- 3.9 Chairs of other Advisory Bodies within BuildSkills will be invited to attend an Advisory Body meeting if considered appropriate to ensure Advisory Bodies are working together.
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## 4 Meetings

- 4.1 The Advisory Body will meet four (4) times a year as a minimum (and additionally as needed to undertake its role effectively). Meetings will be held virtually for approximately two (2) hours.
- 4.2 BuildSkills may, at its discretion, seek to hold one (1) Advisory Body meeting per year as an in-person meeting. This will be at the discretion of the CEO. Costs associated with attendance at an in-person meeting (including travel and accommodation) will be the responsibility of the Advisory Body Member (not BuildSkills). Virtual attendance options will be made available for any in-person Advisory Body meetings.
- 4.3 At the beginning of each calendar year, a schedule of meetings will be established and circulated to members. Additional meetings may be called by the independent Chair of the Advisory Body after approval has been obtained from the CEO.

- 4.4 Notice of each meeting will be distributed no less than one (1) week in advance – including the time, date, agenda, meeting location (i.e. virtually or in-person) and any pre-briefing materials. The Office of the CEO will provide secretariat support to the Advisory Body, including organising meetings, contacting members, and taking minutes.
- 4.5 The Executive Director – National Industry Engagement will be required to attend all meetings of the Advisory Body.
- 4.6 Draft meeting minutes will be prepared by the secretariat, who will be a member of the Office of the CEO. A copy of the draft minutes will be provided to members for approval/request for amendment within one (1) week of the meeting occurring. Non-response will be treated as approval of the draft minutes.
- 4.7 Approved meeting minutes will be distributed to members, and also shared with other BuildSkills Advisory Body members for their consideration. This will be shared within two (2) weeks of the meeting taking place, and a copy will be published on the BuildSkills website.
- 4.8 A quorum for the Advisory Body meetings will be constituted by the presence of at least six (6) members. If a quorum is not met, the meeting cannot officially proceed.
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## **5 Authority**

- 5.1 The Advisory Body does not have the authority to make decisions or the delegated authority to direct the decisions of BuildSkills.
- 5.2 The Advisory Body may provide advice to BuildSkills in its non-decision-making capacity, which BuildSkills may or may not act on at their sole discretion.
- 5.3 The independent Chair may engage with the Executive Director – National Industry Engagement or the CEO on behalf of the Advisory Body where they deem necessary.
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## **6 Conflicts of Interest**

- 6.1 The Conflict of Interest Policy is to protect the integrity and impartiality of BuildSkills, and those advising BuildSkills, by managing potential conflicts of interest.
- 6.2 The Office of the CEO will maintain a Conflict of Interest register relevant to the Advisory Body and its members.
- 6.3 Members must promptly disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest related to matters before the Advisory Body and input this information into the Conflict of Interest Register. For more information, please refer to the Conflict of Interest Policy.
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## **7 Confidentiality**

- 7.1 The Advisory Body is required to maintain the confidentiality of all proprietary, confidential, and privileged information encountered in the course of their duties.
  - 7.2 Members must not disclose any confidential information to unauthorised persons or use such information for personal gain.
  - 7.3 Advisory Body members are required to maintain the confidentiality of all items discussed and consulted upon, ensuring these are not communicated publicly. Members are not authorised to speak on behalf of BuildSkills.
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## **8 Review**

- 8.1 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually for update, or as deemed necessary by the CEO at intervals in between.
- 8.2 These Terms of Reference are subject to approval by the CEO.