

COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUPS

A SITA AUSTRALIA FACT SHEET



Background

Strong community stakeholder relationships are integral to SITA Australia's (SITA) endeavour to be a responsible corporate citizen and a sustainable business. The value of community stakeholder engagement is recognised at every level of SITA and we consider our neighbouring communities and businesses, non-government organisations and all levels of government, to be key partners.

An important aspect of SITA's business plan is our commitment to seek input from our community stakeholders, ensuring consistent environmental performance improvement. SITA will always investigate issues raised by our community stakeholders and, where possible, find solutions that balance community and customer expectations with business needs and regulatory requirements. While providing an essential public health service, SITA will always seek to improve upon sustainable waste management and resource recovery practices based around proven technologies that will help to combat climate change through a reduction in the amount of waste sent to landfill.

SITA wants to interact with community representatives in a consultative forum to monitor the operations of its waste management and organic processing facilities and provide input on a wide range of resource recovery, sustainability and corporate citizenship topics.

To achieve this in New South Wales, SITA currently operates CRGs for its Ryde, Kemps Creek and Lucas Heights facilities, and participates in third-party-operated Community Advisory Committees at its Eastern Creek and Belrose facilities.

What is a Community Reference Group?

SITA's Community Reference Groups are committees of local residents and business neighbours with whom we meet on a regular basis to discuss the operations of the facility. Most CRGs meet once every 3-4 months.

SITA's NSW CRGs meet under a standard set of Terms of Reference, a document that governs each of SITA's CRGs within New South Wales. Some CRGs are chaired by an independent facilitator.

Our meetings are normally quite relaxed and friendly – we do our best to make sure everyone has their chance to be heard, and that any tension or disagreements that might arise in the room are resolved quickly and fairly. Most groups generally also have a light supper or morning tea before or after each meeting.

Objectives of SITA's Community Reference Groups

The objectives of SITA's Community Reference Groups are to:

- facilitate community awareness of the operations, environmental performance and any short, medium and long term development of the relevant facility;
- provide community members with the opportunity to engage in dialogue with SITA regarding any issues of concern related to the facility;
- provide community members with an opportunity, wherever practicable, to provide input into SITA's decision making process regarding the facility; and
- foster understanding and cooperation between community members and SITA staff in minimising the impact of the facility on the local community.

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Role of a Community Reference Group

The role of a CRG is advisory. SITA will consider comments and suggestions made by the CRG and provide responses where warranted. The CRG will be asked to provide advice on a range of issues raised by SITA and members of the CRG. The CRG may make recommendations to SITA, including communication of a negotiated position that reflects community members' views, for SITA to consider and respond to as part of the CRG process. However, the CRG is not required to reach consensus or express unified views on matters discussed.

Membership of Community Reference Groups

CRG members will be appointed for a period of two (2) years and are responsible for seeking and presenting the views of the local community they represent concerning the operation of SITA facilities. Members are also responsible for providing input on a wide range of resource recovery, sustainability and corporate citizenship topics. Membership is based on principles of cross-sectional representation to ensure the full spectrum of concerns and interests are included and balanced from social, environmental and economic perspectives.

Participation in Community Reference Groups

Most CRGs meet three to six times every year, with the exact frequency of meetings dependent on the current and planned activity of the relevant SITA facility. Participation in a CRG is voluntary and open to:

- Any person who lives, works or has an interest in the vicinity of the relevant SITA facility; and
- Any local community group representing those with an interest in the vicinity of the relevant SITA facility.

The guiding principles for participation as a member of a CRG are to:

- Contribute to an open, encouraging, motivating environment for discussion;
- Present a responsive and active approach toward safety and environmental management of SITA facilities;
- Be willing to introduce or consider new and innovative ideas to assist SITA to develop and grow in a sustainable manner with due regard to the environment, the community and the economy; and
- Operate in a responsible, ethical and honest manner in all dealings and negotiations relevant to the CRG.

Terms of Reference

SITA's Community Reference Groups are governed by a common set of Terms of Reference – this document is the same for all of SITA's NSW CRGs. Anyone interested in becoming a member of a SITA Community Reference Group should read the Terms of Reference carefully before applying for membership.

You should have received a copy of the Terms of Reference with this Fact Sheet. If not, please contact Gareth Jones to request a copy using the contact details below.

Further Information

If you are interested in becoming a member of a SITA Community Reference Group, or would like to receive more information, please contact Gareth Jones, SITA's NSW Stakeholder Engagement Manager:

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