

Recommendation 5 Area: Supporting Customers Experiencing Vulnerability

Heading	Increase financial support programs for customers experiencing hardship
Description	Ensure adequate funds are available to support vulnerability programs in line with the anticipated bill increases and community need. For example: by 0.2% p.a. (doubling contribution)
Reasoning	Social support agencies have noticed an increase in requests for assistance. Furthermore, with an increase in water bills we anticipate increased customer requests for support in line with general household costs.
What is success?	An increase in available funding for supporting vulnerable households. Improved partnerships with support agencies and planned measures to increase uptake by vulnerable households.

Recommendation 6 Area: Supporting Customers Experiencing Vulnerability

Heading	Increase education about CW services for Customers Experiencing Vulnerability
Description	Focus on increasing customer awareness of Coliban Waters support services for people experiencing vulnerability. Raising the profile of the program will assist more people experiencing vulnerability to access the support they require.
Reasoning	There is a concern that there is not enough awareness of the services Coliban provides to customers experiencing vulnerability. Coliban water advised us it has more funds available than are applied for suggesting it is a resource that is not widely accessed. Members of this community panel had little knowledge of the Customer Assist Program or the types of support available, Including the variety and personalised approaches to support.
What is success?	More people accessing the Customer Assist Program including service support and available funds. Increasing percentage of customer survey participants who are aware of the Customer Assist Program.

Recommendation 7 Area: Supporting Customers Experiencing Vulnerability

Heading	Voluntary Contribution Option to Support Vulnerable Customers
Description	We recommend CW provide an option on the bill so customers can voluntarily contribute extra for discrete, specifically targeted projects that support vulnerable customers. Possible projects could be people experiencing hardship because of natural disasters, COVID 19, or domestic violence. This is an opt-in option, in addition to the programs Coliban already runs.
Reasoning	<p>This would increase the available funds to support the vulnerable without necessarily increasing bills for all customers. This engenders CW cultural objectives and provides us all an opportunity to be more inclusive and connected as a community.</p> <p>People enjoy being generous.</p>
What is success?	<p>People using this contribution option.</p> <p>Increased pool of funds to resource these projects/vulnerable people.</p>

Recommendation 8 Area: Other

Heading	Expand and refocus community education programs
Description	<p>Community to be educated on how their money is spent eg: livability, vulnerable customers, infrastructure, capital works, water scarcity mitigation, community contributions (green open space, recycled water for residents etc).</p> <p>Coliban Water undertakes broader and ongoing community education on the effects of climate change, and what they are doing to combat it. E.g. 2030 Zero Emissions goal</p>
Reasoning	<p>Coliban must be able to communicate to customers how money is spent in order to justify their water rates.</p> <p>If users were better educated about the services Coliban provides then users would be more positive and informed about why rate rises need to happen. They might feel as though they are being consulted and included in the process.</p>
What is success?	<p>The community is aware of the functioning of Coliban Water and appreciates the service provided.</p> <p>The sentiment around rate rises from water users indicates an understanding of the driving factors underpinning the increase.</p>