

Overview

Ozwater' 10 provided an exciting atmosphere for education, networking and exposure to products and services available. This was my first Ozwater conference and I was amazed at the variety of papers presented as well as the extensive range of products and services exhibited.

Major Learning Experiences

At the conference I attended a number of presentations in a variety of topics. Each topic consisted of a number of presentations from individual company experiences to “big picture” industry practice. The topic sessions that I attended included:

- Trade waste and source control;
- Desalination;
- Small water and wastewater systems;
- Community consultation and working in the community;
- Asset management;
- Stormwater;
- Demand management;
- Water Treatment; and
- Centralised and/or decentralised water treatment.

The following two paragraphs provide a brief summary of two of the topics presented at the conference. These two topics were of particular interest to me and have the potential to be embraced at Moree Plains Shire Council.

The sessions relating to decentralised water and wastewater systems could be used in new developments. Implementing sustainable technologies in innovative rainwater harvesting and reuse systems could be achievable in the Moree Plains Shire for new developments. Reuse systems may involve the separation, treatment and reuse of greywater, brown water and yellow water. By ensuring some of these systems are used in new developments we can reduce our reliance on the installation of septic systems within our shire.

Community consultation was another key session I attended. One of the presentations in this session explored a case study in which a small town in Victoria was to be provided with a new water supply as their existing one was not secure. It was suggested that trust and communication were the most important factors in acceptance of the provision of new infrastructure in a community. The presentation suggested that by selling the idea to the community leader, showing cooperation between the local council and the water authority and providing project status and funding information through community meetings, posters and newsletters they were able to implement the scheme with little resistance from the community. In another presentation in this session it was noted that aboriginal knowledge about water resources, including surface water and groundwater, can be used in conjunction with scientific information.

Additionally, the conference provided networking opportunities in a variety of settings. Meal breaks in the Trade Exhibition provided the opportunity to talk to trade exhibitors from both Australia and overseas as well as other industry professionals. Participation in the Young Water Professionals breakfast allowed me to mix with

other young water professionals as well as observe passionate presentations by a number of speakers in relation to the development of young water professionals.

Application of knowledge

I am positive that the knowledge and current industry practice that I was exposed to during the conference can be used at Moree Plains Shire Council. I aim to disseminate the knowledge I gained to my colleagues. By being aware of current industry practice we can improve our service to the community.

Comments

I believe that Ozwater'10 was an invaluable learning experience. This opportunity was vital to my development in such a broad and challenging industry. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to be involved in such an inspiring and invaluable learning experience. Thank you!

Karen McKenzie
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