

# WATER DIRECTORATE news

## MAY 2011

This newsletter is sent to General Managers and to Water and Sewer Managers in 103 regional Councils in NSW and also to over 140 contacts in government departments and private industry across Australia.

### FINAL MONTH OF THE JOINT WATER DIRECTORATE/LGSA WATER LOSS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

At the end of May there is only one month remaining in this program. Approximately 50 projects are now complete and the total water savings to date is 4,100ML. An update on the total water saved through this program can be viewed on the 'meter' at [www.waterloss.lgsa.org.au](http://www.waterloss.lgsa.org.au).

It is critical that all participating Councils finalise their projects and paperwork to get reimbursed from the Federal Government funding before funding becomes inaccessible after June 30.

Please direct all queries to Program Manager Ian Maggs on 02 9242 4127. The Program Team and the Governance Committee have worked on this Program for almost 5 years and would greatly appreciate it if Councils with completed projects could promote the success of the Water Loss Management Program to their peers.

### WRAP UP FROM THE IPWEA (NSW DIV) ONE DAY FORUM AND EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Many thanks to the presenters and panellists who gave their time and shared their knowledge at the Water Directorate Forum which was held as part of the IPWEA One Day Forum in May. A stream of informative technical papers was presented by:

- Ian Maggs, Program Manager, Water Loss Management Program
- David Steller, Director Engineering and Works, Armidale Dumaresq Council
- Jason Ip, Operations Engineer, Riverina Water County Council

- Ari Shammay, Process Engineer, MWH
- Anthony Burnham, Manager, Water Community and Natural Resources, Water Unit, Tweed Shire Council
- Michael Mackenzie, former Administration Engineer, Richmond Valley Council
- Graham Kennett, Asset Manager, Kyogle Council

Thanks also to the Forum panellists Stewart McLeod, Dubbo City Council and David Byrne, Cooma-Monaro Council. Representing the Executive Committee, these two panellists lead a very interesting discussion about the Infrastructure Australia report *Regional Towns Water Quality and Security*; the National Water Commission findings on *Urban Water In Australia: Future Directions* and the Productivity Commission's 'Inquiry into Australia's Urban Water Sector'.

Following the One Day Forum, the Excellence Awards were held at Doltone House. The Water Directorate sponsored the *Innovation in Water Supply and Wastewater Award* at this event. The award was accepted by Graham Kennett, on behalf of Kyogle Council. Congratulations to Kyogle Council and all staff involved in the Kyogle Sewage Treatment Works Augmentation project.

This is Kyogle Council's second award in 7 months after they won the *Environmental Best Practice for Local Water Utilities Award* at the LGSA's Excellence in the Environment Awards held in November 2010.

The Water Directorate urges all member councils to nominate one of your recent projects for the *Innovation in Water Supply and Wastewater Award* and showcase your staff and your council when the call for nominations is released in November 2011.



Gary Mitchell congratulates Graham Kennett from Kyogle Shire Council as the winner of this year's, Innovation in Water and Wastewater Award, sponsored by the Water Directorate.

## **AWA OZWATER'12, SYDNEY, 8-10 MAY 2012**

Call for papers for Australia's national water conference and exhibition opens on 6 June and the final date for abstract submissions is 1 September 2011. For further information please contact Ozwater'12 Secretariat at AWA on +61 2 9436 0055 or [ozwater@awa.asn.au](mailto:ozwater@awa.asn.au).

## **NEW STATE GOVERNMENT AND WATER RESHUFFLE**

Further to last month's news item, the NSW Coalition Government has introduced the new Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services (DTIRIS). This is one of nine new Principal Departments led by Director Generals. Water management is one of the 25 functions of DTIRIS. The new department is currently being established and there are 10 key contacts including David Harriss (Water).

## **PUBLIC HEALTH ACT 2010 – DRINKING WATER MANAGEMENT PLANS AND CONSULTATION**

The *Public Health Act 2010* has been passed by the NSW Parliament and is expected to commence in 2012.

The Act will require drinking water suppliers to establish, and adhere to, a quality assurance program that complies with the Regulation (which is currently being developed).

Later this year NSW Health will undertake a period of consultation on the draft Regulation, including consultation with local councils and water utilities.

It is proposed that the Regulation require water suppliers to implement a quality assurance program (or risk-based drinking water management plan) consistent with the Framework for the Management of Drinking Water Quality in the *Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2004*.

This approach is considered best-practice to ensure safe drinking water and is consistent with the National Water Initiative National Performance Report and the NSW Office of Water's Best Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines.

Implementation of a risk-based drinking water management plan will benefit not only large regional utilities but also those that may be more vulnerable to contamination events including small and remote communities. In developing a management plan water suppliers should undertake a risk assessment from catchment to consumer, and develop critical control points to ensure unsafe water is not released into the distribution systems and that it cannot become recontaminated. Training and planning for incidents and emergencies and documentation will also be required.

NSW Health acknowledges the work already undertaken by those LWUs that have developed management plans.

NSW Health is currently preparing templates and guidance material to help LWUs develop management plans. NSW Health will work with LWUs and NOW to support the implementation of the new Regulation, which will benefit all LWUs. The Public Health Act 2010 is available at: [www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol\\_act/pha2010126](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/pha2010126)

## **PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S URBAN WATER SECTOR**

The Water Directorate's submission to the Productivity Commission's draft report can be viewed on our website [www.waterdirectorate.asn.au](http://www.waterdirectorate.asn.au) under the general news section.

Stewart McLeod, Chair of the Water Directorate, and I attended a public hearing in late May to provide information additional to our submission.

The Productivity Commission's final report will be prepared after all public hearings have been held and will be forwarded to the Government by 31 August. The Commission is the Australian Government's independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues.

The Productivity Commission's draft report identifies opportunities for efficiency gains in the structural, institutional, regulatory and other arrangements.

## **AUDIT OF LOCAL GOVT INFRASTRUCTURE**

On 31 May the NSW Premier and Minister for Local Government announced a 'Council by Council' audit of local infrastructure. The audit, which was identified as a priority for the Government's first 100 days, will seek to identify the backlog of infrastructure across the state, including water infrastructure. The audit is to be completed by early 2013.

This news item is provided courtesy of the Property Council of Australia.

## **WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY**

World Environment Day, celebrated each year on 5 June is one of the United Nations' principal vehicles to focus political attention and action and stimulate worldwide awareness of the environment. The UN has declared 2011 to be the International Year of Forests and the WED theme is 'Forests: Nature at Your Service'.

## **WATER AUSTRALIA SUMMIT, SYDNEY, 20-21 JULY 2011, DARLING HARBOUR**

As an endorsing association, Water Directorate members can send their staff to this Summit at a discount of \$895+GST. If 3 staff book from same organisation, the 4th staff person is free. Please contact Shahida Sweeney on 8923 8027 or go to [www.halledit.com.au/water2011](http://www.halledit.com.au/water2011)

## **IWES GOLD COAST 2011, 18 – 22 JULY 2011**

Nineteen courses running over 2 to 5 days are being offered in water and wastewater treatment and environmental management. Go to [www.iwes.com.au](http://www.iwes.com.au) for further program information.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING DATES**

Meeting dates for 2011 are 14 July, 8 September and 9-10 November. Members are welcome to forward issues for discussion at meetings.

Gary Mitchell  
Executive Officer  
May 2011

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