

JUNE 2020

This newsletter is sent to General Managers and to Water and Sewer Managers in 89 regional Councils in NSW and also to 80 contacts in government departments and private industry across Australia.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S UPDATE

Welcome to the June 2020 edition of our newsletter. Issues we have been working through in the past month on behalf of our members include:

- COVID-19 response for local water utilities
- Drought updates
- Water industry training
- Reform of water industry frameworks and regulations
- Our communications strategy
- Digital water utilities strategy

Water Directorate is going 'virtual'. Effective from 1 July we will no longer have an office in North Sydney. I will work remotely, travelling through regional NSW to work with our member utilities. This change represents a significant saving that we will invest back into our technical support activities.

Membership renewals are due for the next 2020-2021 financial year. We are freezing fees at last year's levels, and you will have the flexibility to pay either before or after 1 July to suit your circumstances. As always, we thank you, our members, for your continued support of the Water Directorate.

CORONAVIRUS COVID-19

As we start to see our communities carefully ease their

way out of isolation, all levels of government in Australia are planning for economic recovery through economic stimulus. Water Directorate has worked closely with WSAA, AWA and Qldwater on two submissions:

- AWA's [Recommendations for Employment and Economic Activities in Water](#)
- WSAA's [Urban water's contribution to the COVID-19 recovery](#)

We are very grateful for the assistance of AWA and WSAA, and their spirit of collaboration in highlighting the needs of regional NSW.

We are staying in touch with the Energy and Utilities Functional Area (EUSFA) on the day-to-day movements related to COVID. We are also grateful to receive international updates courtesy of [Isle Utilities](#). Relevant info has been summarised in our [COVID blog](#) on our website.

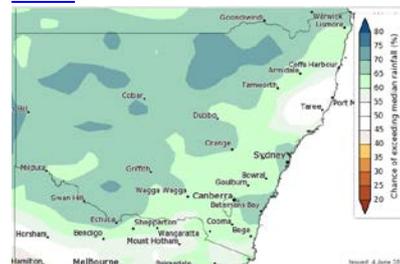
DROUGHT UPDATE

The number of towns with high risk of failure of water supply remains at seven in June, as we look forward to some more rain promised for western NSW.

Although rain in recent months has meant that water storages in NSW are generally higher than they were 12 months ago, several seasons of above average rainfall would be required to replenish storages

fully. Conditions remain favourable for above average rainfall in the next 3 months.

BOM's [Climate and Water Outlook for June to August 2020, issued 4 June 2020 is available here.](#)



Chance of exceeding the median rainfall for July to September 2020 in NSW.

Source: <http://www.bom.gov.au/>

WaterNSW also provides Regional NSW drought reports on its website, available [here](#).

BUILDING BETTER REGIONS FUNDING ROUND 4

It was pleasing to see NSW local water utilities receive Commonwealth grants under the Building Better Regions Fund. Of the \$200M available in Round 4:

- Tenterfield Shire Council received \$2.645M towards the Tenterfield Water Treatment Plant replacement
- Goulburn Mulwaree Council received \$4.4M towards the Goulburn Water Reuse Scheme.
- Mid-Coast Council received \$1.47M towards its Stage 2A expansion of the Nabcac Aquifer Water Supply.

DPIE WATER STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Water Directorate Executive Committee was pleased to receive another update from DPIE's Executive Director Regional Water Strategies, Rachel Connell on 21 May. If you would like to see some more information on Regional Water Strategies [click here](#) to find out some more on what is happening with your catchment.



Stakeholder engagement is continuing on the MDB Northern Basin First Flush event, and the Snowy Water Licence review, further info available [here](#).

SAFE AND SECURE WATER PROGRAM



In April, DPIE issued its risk prioritisation advice to NSW Local Water Utilities. DPIE has indicated that only projects with the highest risk score will be eligible for funding with the remaining \$260 million in the program.

DPIE have provided a [Questions and Answers](#) sheet for more information on the risk prioritisation process. If you have concerns about the risk rankings for your systems, we urge you to lodge a query or request for change with DPIE [here](#).

DAMS EMERGENCY PLANS GUIDANCE

Most declared dam owners would be familiar with dam emergency plans, through the previous requirement to have a Dam Safety Emergency Plan (DSEP) in accordance with Guidance Sheet DSC2G.

Dams Safety NSW is now seeking comments on their new draft emergency plans guideline, with responses required by **30 June 2020**. You can view the draft emergency plans guideline [here](#).

Dam owners who have existing DSEPs do not need to revise or amend their plans during this review process.

WSAA WATER USE EFFICIENCY SURVEY

WSAA is conducting an end-use study survey to build a better understanding of indoor water use across Australia. The survey has been emailed to engineer contacts and is available [here](#)

IN THE NEWS

- [Sleep ins show water data](#)
- [Ancient lake in the Lower Murray provides insight](#)
- [Australia among global 'hot spots' as droughts worsen in warming world](#)
- [Fresh models give dry view](#)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **LGNSW Water Forum (virtual event)**, online, 16 July, [link here](#). Proudly sponsored by Water Directorate, guest speaker Minister for Water, The Hon Melinda Pavey MP.
- **Australian Smart Water Utilities 2020**, Melbourne, 25-26 August, [link here](#)
- **LGNSW Water Management Conference 2020**, Narrabri, 6-8 October, [link here](#)

- **AWA NSW State Conference**, Tamworth, 13-14 August, [link here](#)
- **IPWEA NSW Annual Conference and Excellence Awards**, Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley, 4-6 November, [link here](#)

IPWEA ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2020

IPWEA's call for nominations closes on **Friday 19 June 2020**. Water Directorate is proud sponsor of Category 3 – Innovation in Water Supply and Wastewater. We encourage all members considering nominating their project to do so without delay! More info available [here](#)

STRATEGIC ISSUES IN WATER INDUSTRY TRAINING

Do you have concerns with the provision of training for your water operators?

The NSW Public Sector Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB) will be conducting online workshops for local government and water industry workforce development in June and July 2020 in regional NSW.

If you would like to participate please contact: Paul Humphreys – Executive Officer, NSW PS ITAB, nswitab@aistnds.org.au

Watch out for a discussion piece on our [blog page](#) soon, and a future training needs survey.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING DATES 2020

- Thursday 9 July (by Zoom)
- Thursday 10 September
- Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 November

Brendan Guiney
Executive Officer
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