

WATER DIRECTORATE news

SEPTEMBER 2013

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.

LAST CALL FOR THE DAM FORUM, SYDNEY, 9 OCTOBER

Please take advantage of this latest opportunity to network, share information and consider projects such as checklists and guidelines for building and augmenting dams. The forum is free to financial Water Directorate member Councils and we hope to see as many representatives as possible from the 63 LWUs that own 136 prescribed dams in NSW.

Registrations close 4 October. The venue is the Adina Hotel Sydney Harbourside, 55 Shelley St adjacent to King St Wharf. The venue is the same as the Sydney Dam Safety Workshop held in September 2012. Topics and speakers are shown on the flyer mailed out with the hard copy version of this newsletter. Please note that the date is Wednesday, 9 October.

JOINT WATER LOSS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM RECOGNISED AT WORLD WATER WEEK 2013

World Water Week was held in September in Stockholm with over 200 collaborating organisations convening events and individuals presenting their findings at scientific workshops. This annual event is a focal point for world water issues and is hosted and organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute.

A publication titled *Managing Water Use in Scarce Environments, a Catalogue of Case Studies* was launched at World Water Week. It is an honour that a project jointly managed by the Water Directorate, LG NSW and the Federal Government from 2006 to 2011 is included as a case study in such a high profile international publication.

The WLMP achieved water savings of 5.5 billion L/annum, improved the capacity of NSW LWUs to undertake

water loss projects and delivered infrastructure enhancements for many Councils.

The catalogue was funded by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), an international financial institution which offers investment, advisory, and asset management services to encourage private sector development in developing countries. The IFC is based in Washington, D.C. and was established in 1956 as the private sector arm of the World Bank Group to advance economic development by investing in strictly for-profit and commercial projects which reduce poverty and promote development.

IFC's London consultant Arup Group Ltd scoured the globe for examples of measures taken to address the water scarcity problem and display them as case studies. You can download the 132 page in-depth catalogue containing 42 international case studies at www.waterscarcitysolutions.org/

NSW GOVERNMENT BOOSTS FLUORIDATION FUNDING

Media attention continued in September regarding fluoridation of water supplies on the NSW north coast. In response Health Minister Jillian Skinner announced the NSW Government will commit \$7.5 million to ensure councils are supported to build the vital infrastructure needed to fluoridate their water supplies. Mrs Skinner, released a paper on the benefits of water fluoridation, said the NSW Government will undertake a suite of measures aimed at increasing rates of water fluoridation across the state.

"The NSW Government is committing \$5 million to ensure the 15 councils who have chosen not to fluoridate are able to provide this vital service to their communities. A further \$2.5 million will

be invested for the implementation of technological advancements for smaller communities with current approval for fluoridation. The evidence about fluoridation is clear – its role in ensuring good oral health and the wider health of the community is absolutely essential. Communities across NSW benefit greatly from fluoridated water and councils play an important role in delivering this service," Mrs Skinner said.

"The NSW Liberals and Nationals came to the election with a commitment to support local councils to make local decisions. It is for this reason we are boosting our infrastructure support for councils who have avoided fluoridation, to encourage them to deliver this vital service to the community," Mrs Skinner said.

"The recent sustained efforts by NSW Health and local clinicians have encouraged increased fluoridation rates, with two North Coast councils voting to support water fluoridation. NSW Health - led by the Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant - in partnership with local clinicians has been very successful in convincing the community of the benefits of fluoridation. This educative approach has been integral to fighting misinformation, and as a result, NSW Health will now be undertaking annual audits of all councils to ensure their commitment to fluoridation is unwavering. No council which has commenced fluoridation of their water supplies will be able to renege on their decision without the permission of the NSW Director-General of Health," Mrs Skinner said.

Mrs Skinner said the NSW Government will not support Labor's private member's bill - Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Amendment Bill 2013.

"It is estimated 96 per cent of the NSW population currently has access to public fluoridated water and recent outcomes have shown that with education and information local councils are able to make informed decisions about fluoridation. Access to fluoridated water is fundamental to good oral health and I am heartened to see councils who have been unsupportive of fluoridation reversing their views. NSW Health will continue to support local communities and councils with information on water fluoridation and local public health units will continue to engage councils questioning the health benefits of fluoride," Mrs Skinner said.

The Water fluoridation in NSW paper can be found at the following link: www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/water/Documents/water-fluoridation-nsw.pdf

Media Release courtesy of Minister for Health, Minister for Medical Research.

GREAT ATTENDANCE AT THE WATER DIRECTORATE FORUM AT THE LG NSW WATER MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

The Water Directorate enjoyed the opportunity to participate in the conference by facilitating the interactive Water Forum again and to network and socialise with colleagues. It was very pleasing to see 70 participants at the Water Forum.

Thanks for supporting the session and thanks also to the forum panellists, Stewart McLeod from Dubbo City Council, Wayne Beatty from Orange City Council and David McKellar from Mid Coast Water. Summary notes from the forum are on the Water Directorate's website under News.

Congratulations to the LG NSW team and both Gosford City Council and Wyong Shire Council for conducting another successful conference. Presentations from the conference are available on the LG NSW's conference website.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (GENERAL) AMENDMENT (COUNCIL SEWERAGE SYSTEMS) REGULATION 2013 PROHIBITS DISCHARGE OF ROOF WATER TO A SEWER

This amendment under the *Local Government Act* commenced on 9 August 2013. Clause 137A of

the Regulation clarifies substances prohibited from being discharged to the sewerage system to include roof, rain, surface, seepage or ground water unless the discharger has received section 68 approval for the discharge from the Council. This now restores the prohibition of discharging roof water to a sewer which was inadvertently removed by the Local Government Regulation 2005.

While this is welcome news, the irony is that it has taken 6 years to fix an oversight that was first recognised in 2007. We thank Palerang Council for bringing this matter to the Water Directorate's attention and we thank the former DWE now NOW for working with DLG to reinstate the prohibition of discharge of roof water to a sewer.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF THE 2013 GREEN GLOBE AWARDS

As demonstrated by the high calibre of finalists and winners, the Green Globe Awards truly celebrate leadership, innovation and environmental excellence in NSW.

Congratulations to Riverina Water County Council for winning the Water Award for its highly regarded Urban Nature Strip Lawn Replacement Rebate Scheme.

MEMBERSHIP FEES DUE

Membership fees are due for 2013/14 and invoices were sent out in July. Thanks to the 90 member councils that have rejoined so far. We look forward again to providing newsletters, water advice, technical publications, submissions, awards, discussion forums, workshops and networking opportunities in 2013/14.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee has met four times in 2013 and the remaining meeting dates are 6 and 7 November to hold the Annual Planning Meeting, AGM and Executive Committee Meeting. We welcome your project suggestions for discussion at the Planning Meeting. Please forward your suggestions to gmitchell@waterdiretorate.asn.au

Gary Mitchell
Executive Officer
September 2013

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