

## MARCH 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 March edition of the newsletter. Issues we have been working through this month on behalf of our members include:

- Drought updates
- Mutual aid for local water utilities
- Water industry training
- Reform of water industry frameworks and regulations
- Bushfire and risk to drinking water quality

We will keep you up to date on progress in future editions.

### DROUGHT UPDATE

The number of towns with high risk of failure of water supply has reduced to 28 in March, as towns that have significant coastal rainfall, or inland river flows have had reduced risk. Many inland small towns continue to cart water by truck.

It is important to keep your DPIE [Regional Manager](#) up to date on your situation to access any assistance you need.

### NETWORK OF PROJECTS SHORE UP REGIONAL SUPPLIES

A good summary on our current water security situation across NSW can be found in [The Land](#) as part of an interview with Regional Town Water Supply Coordinator James McTavish,

with supporting information courtesy of Minister Melinda Pavey's office and DPIE staff.

### WATCHING WATER QUALITY

The BOM has issued advice for significant rain over inland NSW from the north west to the south east between 3-6 March due to moisture from the remnants of ex-tropical cyclone Esther. Some storms may be severe.

Local water utilities should be vigilant for spikes in turbidity and other water quality challenges.

LWUs who have concerns about meeting drinking water quality requirements should contact their local [Public Health Unit](#) to seek advice and additional support.

Hunter H2O has put together a fact sheet addressing [water quality issues operators and managers should watch for](#).

Significant rainfall is still sorely needed. BOM advises that 90% of NSW continues to have serious and severe rainfall deficiencies. BOM's longer term predictions are available in the [Climate and Water Outlook for March to May 2020, issued 27 February 2020](#).

### OPERATOR ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Whether our member utilities have been dealing with bushfires, floods or water quality

issues, help is available from other utilities using the [Water Sector Mutual Aid Guidelines](#).

If you need additional resources, please [email me](#) and we will connect you. Fatigue management and mental health are both important aspects of your safety at work.

### PARKES SHIRE WINS AWARD

The winners of AWA's [NSW Water Awards](#) were announced at the Heads of Water Gala Dinner on 28 February.

We were pleased to see Parkes Shire Council win the **Program Innovation Award** for the [Parkes Recycled Water Scheme](#). Congratulations to the team at Parkes!



### CONSULTATION ON DRAFT WATER RESOURCE PLANS

Stakeholder Advisory Panels for the eight regulated river valleys and the Barwon-Darling will be convened with public forums scheduled as follows:

- Murray Lower Darling – Deniliquin: 18 March
- Murrumbidgee – Griffith: 19 March

- Barwon Darling – Bourke: 24 March
- Namoi – Narrabri: 30 March
- Namoi – Tamworth: 31 March
- Gwydir – Moree: 1 April
- Border Rivers – Goondiwindi: 2 April
- Lachlan – Parkes: 7 April
- Macquarie – Dubbo: 8 April

The related Water Sharing Plans, which serve as the basis for the Water Resource Plans, are available [here](#).

### AUDIT OF WATER MANAGEMENT PLANS

The NSW Natural Resources Commission plans to commence [audits of Water Sharing Plans](#) and Floodplain Management Plans. The Commission invites feedback **by 22 March** on the preliminary audit scopes on plans due to expire in the next 18 months.

### INFRASTRUCTURE AUSTRALIA 2020 PRIORITIES

Infrastructure Australia recently released its [2020 Infrastructure Priority List](#). Water has a renewed focus with two high priorities announced: a [National Water Strategy](#), and [Town and city water security](#). This is encouraging news for potential Commonwealth funding.

### WATER INDUSTRY TRAINING WORKSHOP

The Water Directorate together with the NSW Public Sector Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB) hosted a workshop on 25 February to explore strategic directions in water industry training in NSW. One of the actions arising is to survey our industry to determine the demand for vocational training that results in a Cert II or Cert III qualification.

**NOMINATE YOUR YWP TO ATTEND OZWATER '20**  
[Nominations are now open for our Ozwater Conference Award 2020](#), in partnership with AWA. The winner will be sponsored to attend Ozwater'20 in Adelaide on 4-7 May 2020. Nominations close **13 April 2020**.

**OZWATER '20 DISCOUNTS**  
AWA has offered discounted full registration for Local Government attendees for [Ozwater '20](#), in Adelaide. Further details available by [emailing me](#).

**NEW DAM SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN FORCE**  
Dams Safety NSW are publishing guidelines to help declared dam owners comply with the requirements of the legislation and will be seeking feedback on the draft guidelines prior to publication. The [Dams Safety NSW website](#) lists the schedule for release of the guidelines.

It is important to note that if you do not have existing O&M plans or emergency plans – declared dam owners have until **1 May 2020** to establish these plans.

**YOUNG WATER PROFESSIONALS – WATER RESILIENCE CHALLENGE**  
Young Water Professionals gathered in regional NSW to learn new skills in collaborative working and design thinking. They discussed what resilient water utilities look like with potable reuse of water in the mix of options. The three-day workshop was supported by a number of experts in collaboration and sponsored by GHD. Our YWP's put together an inspiring [YouTube video](#) to present their learnings.

**CONSULTATION DRAFT AUSTRALIAN GUIDELINES FOR WATER RECYCLING**  
A consultation draft of the *Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Managing Health and Environmental Risks (Phase 1)* has been issued incorporating proposed revisions to public health components of the guidelines. You can obtain a copy by [emailing me](#). Consultation is open until **31 March 2020**.

- IN THE NEWS**
- [NSW under fire for 'ad hoc', non-transparent water management](#) – MDBA chief calls on NSW to complete water resource plans.
  - ['Do not drink': The NSW town with no tap water for four months](#)

- DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**
- **AWA/IWA Australia-NZ YWP conference**, Brisbane 12-13 March
  - **WIOA NSW Operators Conference**, Tamworth, 1-2 April
  - **Ozwater '20** Adelaide, 5-7 May
  - **Qldwater Small/remote communities workshop**, Goondiwindi, 13-14 May
  - **LGNSW Water Management Conference 2020**, Narrabri, 15-17 July

- EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING DATES**
- Thursday 12 March
  - Thursday 21 May
  - Thursday 9 July
  - Thursday 10 September
  - Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 November

Brendan Guiney  
Executive Officer  
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