



ANNUAL REVIEW

2024–2025



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Water Directorate proudly acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country across New South Wales, their rich culture and their connection to the land and water on which we rely. We pay respect to Aboriginal Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal people.

CHAIR'S REPORT

As we enter our 26th year at the Water Directorate, our role and strategic focus have never been more important. Once again, our regional communities have experienced new extremes in climate that has tested the resilience of water and sewerage services. It is often forgotten that the water and sewerage functions in a Local Water Utility are 24-hour, 365-days per year operations within all the numerous functions of local government. I want to thank all the operators, technicians, engineers and scientists that maintain essential water and sewerage services for two million people living and working across regional NSW.

Water Directorate Strategy 2030

Last December, we launched the Water Directorate's most expansive and ambitious strategy yet, Strategy 2030. We took the time to listen to all the feedback from the water managers in our member local water utilities and re-confirmed our mission, vision and strategic direction.

Our four key Strategy Focus Areas were confirmed as:

1. Address regulatory challenges and promote innovation
2. Knowledge sharing and knowledge management
3. Local water utility risk and resilience
4. Workforce development – skills, knowledge and training

If you haven't seen Strategy 2030 yet, please [take a look*](#) on our website.

Our third Water Directorate Annual Forum – Bridging the Skills Gap in our Water Workforce

In September 2024 we hosted the third Water Directorate Annual Forum, bringing together regional and remote water professionals from across NSW to meet with regulators, industry and partner water organisations.

Addressing skills shortages in water utilities in regional NSW is one of our highest priorities. We can't provide our essential services without well trained operators, engineers and scientists. Our keynote speaker Sophie Renton reminded us of the needs of different generations that will participate in our sector now and into the future. Water Research Australia shared leading research with the aim of developing a more consistent approach to water operator training. The newly formed BuildSkills Australia presented on national water sector development.

Thanks to Executive Officer Brendan Guiney, and his team Jessica Gralton, Sarah Eastman and Juliet Cobb for their work in putting the Forum together and for all their hard work over the past year. It's timely that the latest addition

to the team, Fiona Setu, is taking on the role of Manager of Regional Partnerships and Capability Development.

Collaboration and advocacy

My thanks go out once again for the continued support of the Australian Water Association. In April, the AWA in partnership with the University of Sydney hosted a roundtable with the Minister for Water, Rose Jackson MLC, and we were pleased that our Minister focussed on challenges facing Local Water Utilities regional NSW. Budgets are limited. There are no easy answers. We were grateful to be involved in a discussion that involved incentivising regional collaboration between local water utilities and developing a roadmap for digital transformation for local water utilities.

Thanks to our Executive Committee

My thanks as always for the volunteer input from our current 18 Executive Committee members, as well as Councillor Dominic King, and Shaun McBride and Anthony Luu of Local Government NSW for continuing our ongoing, close working relationship on policy and advocacy in regional water.

In March 2025 we had our regular changing of the guard through our two-yearly elections. Sincere thanks to outgoing committee members Russell Deans of Bathurst Regional Council, Derek Finnigan of Muswellbrook Shire Council, Trevor Sultana of Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Chris Witney of Snowy Monaro Regional Council and Marnie Coates of MidCoast Council. Welcome to Steve Marshall at Bega Valley Shire Council, Graham Attenborough at Eurobodalla Shire Council, Danielle Hargreaves at Central Coast Council, Michael McKenzie at Rous County Council and Katie Hardy at Singleton Shire Council. We have some work to do!

It has been a privilege to continue as Chair the Water Directorate again this year and I thank all our government and non-government collaborators along with our own local water utilities that have pulled together in the common cause of safe, secure and affordable water and sewerage services to all in New South Wales.



W. Beatty
Wayne Beatty

Chair, Water Directorate

*<https://www.waterdirectoriate.asn.au/AboutUs/StrategicPlan.aspx>

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

It's a privilege to serve as your Executive Officer at the Water Directorate, providing technical advice and advocating for our 90 Local Water Utility (LWU) members across regional NSW and collaborating with government and non-government bodies to ensure the delivery of safe, secure and affordable water and sewerage services for all regional NSW communities.

Town Water Risk Reduction Program

Phase 2 of Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment (DCCEE) and Water's Town Water Risk Reduction Program (TWRPP) concluded in June 2025 with support programs such as the Regional Leakage management program, Advanced Operational Support program, Skills and Training action plan, as well as the WHS uplift program providing excellent results. Water Directorate has held an influential role in the delivery of these programs, and the assistance provided has been very well received by participating LWUs.

We were pleased to hear the Minister announce that TWRPP will enter a third phase with a further \$15 million assigned to the program over the next three years 2025-2028. This is very welcome news and critically important to continue LWU performance uplift and reduce risk.

Contaminants of Concern

Unfortunately the impact of contaminants of concern on the water sector is increasing as we find more of these persistent chemicals, especially PFAS, in the water cycle with broader testing. We submitted to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into PFAS Contamination in Waterways and Drinking Water Supplies that source control of PFAS is the most effective approach to mitigating PFAS risk in water supplies. Regrettably, sampling in 2024 showed a number of local water utility source water sites affected by PFAS which not only threatens drinking water quality, but also water security as these compromised water sources cannot be used as planned. These concerns also extend to our wastewater systems including effluent return flows, biosolids management and water recycling. We will continue to advocate for LWUs, who did not cause this contamination. Costs must be managed under the 'polluter pays' principle. We need practical, affordable regulation of biosolids to allow LWUs to use biosolids as a resource rather than a waste product as part of the circular economy.

Thanks to Local Government NSW

At the 2024 Local Government NSW Water Management Conference in Goulburn we co-presented on Strategic Planning for Local Water Utilities, with thanks to Central NSW Joint Organisation and Port Macquarie Hastings

Council. We continue to advocate for recognition that LWU strategic planning is practical and achievable using the NSW Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. LWUs confirm that for them, strategic planning continues to be onerous and expensive and presents unnecessary burdens.

New online learning products launched

I want to thank DCCEE for their spirit of partnership through the Skills and Training Action Plan and also the Advanced Operational Support (AOS) program. Thanks to DCCEE, at the end of our reporting year we were able to host some new learning resources including:

- Water Operator Safety Card
- Work Health and Safety Awareness Module for Leaders

We will continue to promote our existing very successful AquaCard and BrownCard to ensure all workers are risk aware. We are very grateful for the support and partnership of Qldwater in their production. They are leaders in this space. There are many more learning resources now available, please jump on to our website to learn more.

The DCCEE AOS program also assisted us with building a Standard Operating Procedures library with the aim of reducing operating risk at our treatment plants, minimising errors and to serve as a resource for training new employees and retaining water utility knowledge.

Thanks to my team

I want to thank my team: Jessica, Fiona, Sarah, Juliet. Thank you all. The Water Directorate would not achieve what it does without the energy and passion you invest. You have gone the extra mile with all your hard work. The Water Directorate wouldn't be successful without you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'B Guiney'.

Brendan Guiney
Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2024–2025



Graham Attenborough*
Eurobodalla Shire
Council 2/2



Wayne Beatty
Chair
Orange City Council
Central West
Attendance 5/5



Clare Cam
Mid-Western
Council
Orana
Attendance 5/5



Graham Gordon
Griffith City Council
South West
Attendance 5/5



Katie Hardy*
Singleton Shire
Council 2/2



Danielle Hargreaves*
Central Coast
Council 1/2



Cameron Hawkins
Port Macquarie
Hastings Council
Mid North Coast
Attendance 5/5



Jason Ip
Riverina Water County
Council
South West
Attendance 5/5



Brie Jowett
Deputy Chair
Tweed Shire Council
North Coast
Attendance 5/5



Matt Kidd
Shoalhaven City
Council
Illawarra
Attendance 5/5



Bruce Logan
Tamworth Regional
Council
New England
Attendance 3/5



Gillian Marchant
Tenterfield Shire
Council
New England
Attendance 4/5



Steve Marshall*
Bega Valley Shire
Council 2/2



Michael McKenzie*
Rous County
Council 1/2



Doug Moorby
Narromine Shire
Council
Orana
Attendance 5/5



Wes Trotter
Kempsey Shire
Council
Mid North Coast
Attendance 5/5



Geoffrey Veneris
Goldenfields Water
County Council
South West
Attendance 4/5

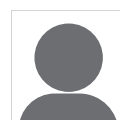
Appointed committee members



Cr Dominic King
LGNSW
Representative
Attendance 5/5



Anthony Luu
LGNSW Representative
Attendance 5/5



Shaun McBride
LGNSW Representative
Attendance 4/5

Departing Committee Members:

We express our gratitude to the following Executive Committee Members for their service to the Water Directorate: Russell Deans 3/3, Derek Finnigan 2/3, Graham Kennett**, Melanie Slimming**, Trevor Sultana 3/3, Chris Whitney 2/3, Marnie Coates 1/3, Tracey Hamer 1/3.

*Newly elected in 2025

**Resigned, retired, or departed Committee



Fiona Setu, Manager of Regional Partnerships & Capability Development

Fiona's primary focus is to support members in the Water Directorate's strategic focus areas of workforce development and knowledge management. She has more than 15 years of extensive operational experience in the water sector, having held roles in project management, stakeholder coordination, knowledge management, and business improvement. Fiona joined the Water Directorate in May 2025 and is based in Sydney.

YEAR IN REVIEW

The Water Directorate stepped up its representation and advocacy on behalf of 90 local water utility members during 2024-25 and continued its ongoing dialogue with industry partners and regulators. Some of the highlights during the year were:

Annual Forum 2024 Skills Development



Just under 100 members, sponsors, regulators and stakeholders attended the 2024 Annual Forum.

The theme Dive into Opportunity: Bridging the Skills Gap in our Water Workforce was chosen to recognise the critical skills shortages in the water industry in NSW – with topics such as state and national activities in workforce development, workforce diversity and LWU case studies.



Town Water Risk Reduction Program phase 2 - Extension

The Water Directorate has been closely involved with TWRRP working groups and welcomes the additional \$15 million and extension until 2028. Key elements are:

- Improve access to skills and training
- Advanced Operational Support Program
- Emergency and incident response and WHS
- WaterNSW support for Dam Safety and water data sharing
- Respond to the PEC Review recommendations about funding arrangements for LWUs

Resources for local water sector

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Thanks to contributions by Local Water Utilities, a library of 190 SOPs is now available via the [Members Area of the Water Directorate website](#). Contributions of new or existing SOPs are welcomed and will help to expand the diversity and value of this resource for all.

Training modules

The Water Directorate offers free online training for Members and Associate Members, via Aqua, Brown, Green and White (safety) cards. Book via the water [training website](#).

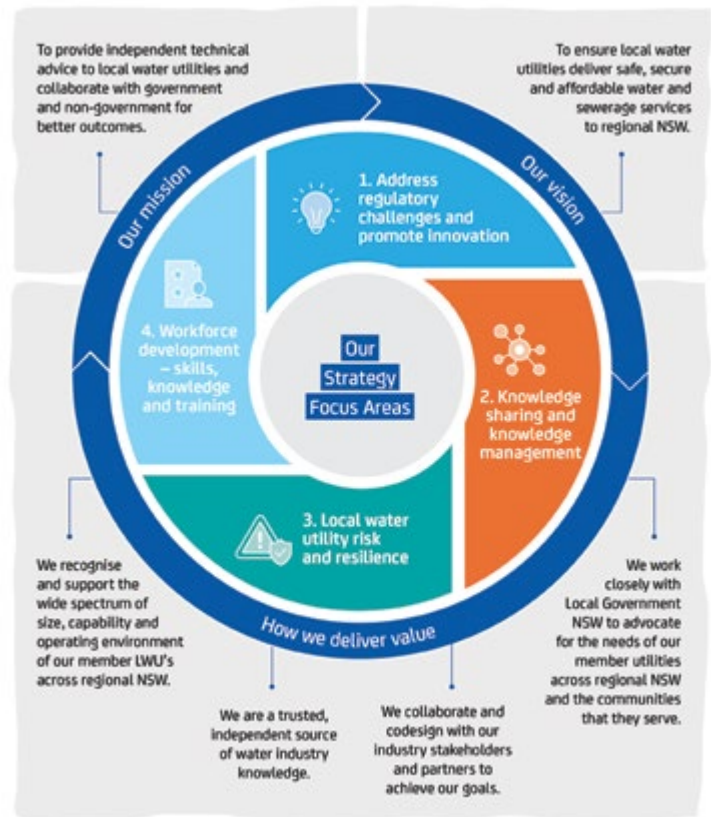


THE PATH AHEAD

Strategy 2030

Strategy 2030 is a roadmap for the Water Directorate, highlighting the key strategic focus areas that will help the organisation deliver on its mission over the coming five years, and demonstrate its commitment to delivering value to members. During the year progress in the focus areas was:

1. *Address regulatory challenges and promote innovation* – contribute to DCCEEW’s Regulatory and Assurance Framework review; work with DCCEEW on their response to PEC report; collaborate with Central JO on a Practitioners Toolkit; survey members on using the IP&R framework for strategic planning; submission to NSW Parliament’s PFAS Inquiry
2. *Knowledge sharing and knowledge management* – start work on a digital utilities strategy for LWUs; contribute to DCCEEW’s WHS awareness materials; 190 SOPs and four online training cards available via Water Directorate website; start on a Knowledge Management Framework for the LWU sector
3. *Water utility risk and resilience* – respond to Productivity and Equality Commission’s report on funding LWUs; advocate on behalf of LWU’s concerning financial risk and affordability issues; engage with DCCEEW on recycled water roadmap; promote minimum standards for operator training.
4. *Workforce development* – skills & knowledge training – support DCCEEW on workforce development plan for regional NSW; raise awareness and opportunities for Aboriginal people to work in the water industry.



Brand refresh: The Water Directorate updated its logo and branding this year, to reinforce recognition of the Water Directorate as a trusted resource and advocate for Local Water Utilities.



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Big thanks to our Associate Members for joining the organization in 2024-2025 – your support makes the Water Directorate stronger.



NSW Public Works



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

Water Directorate Incorporated Income Statement For the year ended 30 June 2025		
Income	2025	2024
Membership fees	693,972	639,449
Sales -Manuals	4,148	2,836
Investment income	27,738	10,436
Other income	15,348	8,112
Total Income	741,206	660,833
Expenditure		
Accounting and audit	9,650	9,700
Advertising and sponsorship	9,995	33,171
Amortisation and depreciation	34,495	23,206
Bank charges	3,668	542
Computer expenses	19,024	12,313
Conferences, travel and accommodation	37,067	33,490
Consultants and technical support	97,125	77,528
Employee entitlements	409,768	361,671
Executive committee expenses	7,151	5,043
Insurance	9,230	8,988
Membership fees	11,000	11,000
Printing, postage and stationery	22,778	18,637
Support service fees	26,000	28,500
Total Expenditure	696,951	623,789
Surplus for the year	44,255	37,044

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

Water Directorate Incorporated		
Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2025		
	2025	2024
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,003,751	977,480
Trade and other receivables	571,644	522,916
Prepayments	57,120	42,952
Total Current Assets	1,632,515	1,543,348
Non Current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	21,256	19,996
Accumulated depreciation	(15,859)	(11,917)
Right-of-use asset	91,661	88,375
Accumulated amortisation	(50,923)	(19,639)
Total Non Current Assets	46,135	76,815
TOTAL ASSETS	1,678,650	1,620,163
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	840,893	810,821
Short-term provisions	59,314	49,573
Lease liability	31,291	28,179
Total Current Liabilities	931,498	888,573
Non Current Liabilities		
Lease liability	10,703	39,396
Total Non Current Liabilities	10,703	39,396
TOTAL LIABILITIES	942,201	927,969
NET ASSETS	736,449	692,194
Equity		
Retained Earnings	692,194	655,150
Current year surplus	44,255	37,044
	736,449	692,194

PRIORITY ACTIONS AT A GLANCE

Submissions, visits, collaboration and advocacy

Executive Officer Brendan Guiney travelled across NSW throughout the year to keep in touch with members, stakeholders and regulators. Engagement with key players in the water sector included:

- DCCEEW Water Regulatory and Assurance Framework (RAF) review
- Western Councils reference group meetings (Productivity Commission report)
- Skills and training group meetings
- Advanced Operational Support program steering committee
- Aboriginal Communities Water and Sewerage Program steering committee
- WSAA First Nations Clean Water and Sanitation Network meetings
- Rural Water Supplies Advisory Committee meetings (NSW Health)
- NSW Public Service Industry Training Advisory Board meetings (Chair)
- Water Industry Skills and Training Network (WTAN)
- Energy and Utility Services Functional Area (EUSFA) steering committee
- WaterNSW - catchment water quality data and dam safety
- AWA Pacific Water Knowledge Exchange and Partnership Program
- Climate Resilient Water Industrial Transformation Training Centre (ITTC)
- BuildSkills Australia Water advisory group
- Institute of Public Works Engineers Australasia (NSW and ACT) - asset management
- NSW Water Sector Safety Group
- Asbestos Pipes Working Group

Joint organisations of councils

Brendan met with, reported to and heard from joint organisations across NSW about issues of concern

- 11 December 2024 - Mid-Western Regional Council - Councillor induction
- 5 February 2025 - Select Committee on PFAS Contamination in Waterways and Drinking Water Supplies Throughout New South Wales
- 12 Feb 2025 - Narramine Shire Council - Councillor induction
- 2 April 2025 - AWA NSW Ministers Roundtable - supporting local water utilities in regional NSW
- 3 June 2025 - Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education - water operator training
- 18 June 2025 - Central NSW JO - water portfolio mayors and sponsoring general managers meeting
- Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) Local Water Utilities Working Group meetings
- Central NSW JO Water Loss Management program steering committee
- Western Councils Water alliance meetings
- Central NSW JO Water Utilities Alliance meetings
- SE NSW Council water group meetings
- Northern Rivers water group meetings

Submissions to government

Nov 24 Safe Work NSW – Silica Worker Register

Nov 24 Inquiry into PFAS contamination in waterways and drinking water supplies throughout New South Wales

Awards

Central NSW JO won several awards at the LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards, including the award sponsored by the Water Directorate for [Water Management](#) for their *Regional Water Loss Management Hub Project*.

Bega Valley Shire Council also won for their post-fire Water Treatment Plant project: *Fire and Water: Addressing water quality challenges in Brogo-Bermagui*.



2024: Sam Samra Award winner Central Tablelands Water representatives: Deputy Chairperson Cr Michelle Cook, Chairperson Andrew Rawson, Cr David Somerville and interim general manager Graeme Haley. Absent was outgoing general manager Gavin Rhodes, Noel Wellham and PeterMcFarlane.



2025 Ozwater Young Water Professional Attendance Award was awarded to Ryan Thompson, Riverina Water County Council



2024 Operator of the Year sponsored by the Water Directorate and WIOA: David Cash, Richmond Valley

MEMBERS BY REGION

All 90 Local Water Utilities were members of the Water Directorate in 2024-2025.



Central West Region

Bathurst Regional Council
Blayney Shire Council
Cabonne Shire Council
Central Tablelands Water
Cowra Shire Council
Forbes Shire Council
Lachlan Shire Council
Lithgow City Council
Oberon Council
Orange City Council
Parkes Shire Council
Weddin Shire Council

Hunter Region

Central Coast Council
Hawkesbury City Council
MidCoast Council
Muswellbrook Shire Council
Singleton Shire Council
Upper Hunter Shire Council

Mid North Coast Region

Bellingen Shire Council
Coffs Harbour City Council
Kempsey Shire Council
Nambucca Valley Council
Port Macquarie-Hastings
Council

Illawarra Region

Shoalhaven City Council

New England Region

Armidale Regional Council
Glen Innes Severn Council
Gunnedah Shire Council
Gwydir Shire Council
Inverell Shire Council
Liverpool Plains Shire Council
Moree Plains Shire Council
Narrabri Shire Council
Tamworth Regional Council
Tenterfield Shire Council
Uralla Shire Council
Walcha Council

North Coast Region

Ballina Shire Council
Byron Shire Council
Clarence Valley Council
Kyogle Council
Lismore City Council
Richmond Valley Council
Rous County Council
Tweed Shire Council

Orana Region

Bogan Shire Council
Bourke Shire Council
Brewarrina Shire Council
Central Darling Council
Cobar Shire Council
Coonamble Shire Council
Dubbo Regional Council
Gilgandra Shire Council
Mid Western Regional Council
Narromine Shire Council
Walgett Shire Council
Warren Shire Council
Warrumbungle Shire Council

South East Region

Bega Valley Shire Council
Eurobodalla Shire Council
Goulburn Mulwaree Council
Queanbeyan-Palerang
Regional Council
Snowy Monaro Regional
Council
Snowy Valleys Council
Wingecarribee Shire Council
Yass Valley Council

South West Region

Albury City Council
Balranald Shire Council
Berrigan Shire Council
Bland Shire Council
Carrathool Shire Council
Coolamon Shire Council
Cootamundra - Gundagai
Regional Council
Edward River Council
Federation Council
Goldenfields Water County
Council
Greater Hume Council
Griffith City Council
Hay Shire Council
Hilltops Council
Junee Shire Council
Leeton Shire Council
Lockhart Shire Council
Murray River Council
Murrumbidgee River Council
Narrandera Shire Council
Riverina Water County Council
Temora Shire Council
Wagga Wagga City Council
Wentworth Shire Council



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