



NSW Water Directorate Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024

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Produced by
Centre for Local Government, University of Technology, Sydney



WATER
DIRECTORATE

Mission

To provide independent technical advice to local water utilities to ensure they deliver high quality water supply and sewerage services to regional communities in NSW

Vision

To work collaboratively with government and non-government organisations to support, advocate for and enable the needs of local water utilities in NSW

Broad objectives for regional water sector in NSW

- A clear, overarching long-term strategy for the regional water sector in NSW
- Address staff shortages and lack of skills (especially in smaller LWUs in the west of the State)
- Ensure consistent ongoing system of performance measurement and reporting
- Provide strong technical and industry advocacy based on the policy position/s of LGNSW
- Improve collaboration / partnerships between industry bodies and government organisations
- Improve funding / resources for the sector

Water Directorate key roles

- Develop technical publications and best practice standards / guidelines
- Provide technical advice and assistance to LWUs on water and waste water treatment and reticulation in order to ensure consistent service delivery
- Provide a platform for networking / information-sharing / collaboration across regional / rural LWUs
- Advocate for improvements and better outcomes for LWUs to State and Federal governments as the peak body

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
Engage in a formal partnership with another water/ infrastructure body or bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into a formal relationship with another water / infrastructure body or bodies whose objectives and activities align with the Water Directorate's strategic objectives and non-negotiables to improve economies of scope and scale. • Partner with a body or bodies that can offer substantive assistance with areas in which the Water Directorate needs to increase its capacity – notably advocacy, networking and capacity-building/training – in order to position the Water Directorate as the relevant peak body.
Support LGNSW to advocate for the regional water sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boost advocacy capabilities of the Water Directorate through a formal partnership (see above). • Engage with and support the LGNSW Local Water Utilities Policy Advisory Group and regional water alliances to boost advocacy capacity of regional water sector. • Establish close relationships with regulatory bodies so that the Water Directorate has a 'seat at the table' when government decision-making occurs. • In collaboration with LGNSW, engage in government enquiries and reviews at an early stage so that the regional water sector is appropriately represented in government discussions. • Assist in the production of information to help keep elected councillors informed of the nature and importance of the industry
Focus on capacity building for all LWUs, with a focus on smaller councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options for facilitating training for engineering, maintenance and technical staff at LWUs. Partner with key industry and regulatory bodies to ensure that the provision of training aligns with regulatory standards and expectations. • Partner with LGNSW to support councils to address staff and skills shortages in water departments. • Consider developing a series of on-line training modules to assist LWUs in the use and implementation of Water Directorate resources and publications. • Provide guidance and influence in relation to the development and review of best practice for the industry. • Participate in and contribute to industry training, networks and standards.



STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
Re-think governance arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the makeup of the Executive Committee to ensure it is representative of a range of different types of councils, including smaller and western councils. • Consider changing representation from the IPWEA NSW boundaries to Joint Organisation boundaries. • Consider structure of Executive Committee to improve engagement. • Review the potential for associate memberships as part of industry partnerships and MOUs. • Consider the inclusion of or level of consultation with alternative water and sewer providers in non-metropolitan NSW (eg Essential Water). • Review the nature of fees based on any changed governance arrangements. • Consult with Water Directorate members in relation to any proposals for changes in the governance model of the makeup of fees.
Increase collaboration across the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that any review of the governance arrangements provides for increased collaboration across the sector. • Engage with regional water alliances and take an active role in sharing learnings between the alliances. • Engage with the Queensland Water Directorate for advice on advocacy activities, capacity building and working with regional water alliances. • Develop formal partnerships and/or MOUs with key industry partners (as set out above). • Establish and maintain close relationships with regulatory bodies (as set out above).
Improve reporting and benchmarking, both of the Water Directorate and of LWUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider creating a working group within the Executive Committee responsible for benchmarking and reporting. • Explore options for facilitating training on reporting for LWUs. • Assist LWUs with the development of resources to facilitate data collection and report generation to meet regulatory and performance reporting requirements. • Work with Department of Industry, Water and the other regulatory bodies to develop a consistent and relevant reporting framework.
Explore options to raise the profile of the Water Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a formal communications strategy which aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve awareness of Water Directorate services and resources to its members - promote the Water Directorate as the key industry body for matters affecting LWUs in non-metropolitan NSW - promote LWUs as desirable workplaces to young operators and engineers (for capacity building purposes, see above) - modernise the communications through utilisation of social media platform/s • Focus on networking in partnership with other industry bodies. • Increase utilisation of the Water Directorate brand.
Explore options for increasing revenue base, dependent on services provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase member fees - open up membership to a broader range of entities/people, and - apply for substantial government funding from Department of Industry or other relevant agency.





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