

Manager, Research and Innovation

1. INTRODUCTION

The Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) is the industry association for major urban water utilities of Australia and New Zealand. Collectively WSAA members supply 20 million Australians and New Zealanders with water services, using assets with a written down replacement value of \$47 billion, generating a total income of \$4-5 billion per annum.

The vision for the urban water industry is '*Customer driven, enriching life*' and WSAA's three key value propositions are: collaborate, advocate, innovate.

WSAA, which was incorporated in 1995, has established itself as a dynamic, forward looking organisation sought after for its views on a wide range of industry issues. The key functions of WSAA are:

- To develop codes of practice for water and wastewater systems and appraise products on behalf of the urban water industry.
- To undertake research of strategic importance to the urban water industry.
- To undertake process benchmarking of the industry and to assist in metric benchmarking of the industry through the National Performance Report.
- To represent the urban water industry at the national level.

2. CHALLENGES FACING THE URBAN WATER INDUSTRY AND WSAA

The provision of reliable and safe drinking water is of fundamental importance to the Australian urban water industry. The 'millennium drought' (1997-2006) saw many cities in severe water shortage and diversifying their water sources with desalination, recycled water, stormwater and groundwater. This was a significant departure from traditional practices which were focused on large-scale infrastructure, typically from relatively pristine water sources that could store many years' worth of water supply. While rapid augmentation of diverse water sources was welcomed by many, it raises new challenges in understanding and protecting risks to public health, and significant financial debt. Extended water restrictions in many cities saw urban green spaces dry out and negatively impact 'liveability' and urban amenity.

The end of the drought and easing of water restrictions have yielded a new era in the water industry. Utilities are now focused on financial sustainability, business efficiency, liveability and improved customer service. Innovation is encouraged as a means to meet customer needs under constrained resources. Research is still considered an important investment for utilities as it yields new technologies, methods and approaches that solve problems, efficiencies and cost savings. However funds available for urban water research nationally are decreasing, which is encouraging our members to enhance collaboration.

Many of the challenges facing the urban water industry are the same the world wide. Due to these challenges it is imperative that the Australian urban water industry collaborate internationally so that the investment in research and development can be leveraged. It is also important to collaborate to ensure that the research effort globally is not duplicated.

WSAA is the only Australian organisation investing significantly in urban water research internationally. Investments in US urban water research brokers provide our members with access to millions of dollars of research aligned with their research priorities. WSAA members also sit on the Boards and Research Advisory Committees to influence the US research brokers to address WSAA member research priorities. WSAA delivers a number of projects each year co-funded by US research brokers and WSAA members. WSAA also has significant relationships with the Global Water Research Coalition (GWRC) and United Kingdom Water Industry Research (UKWIR).

WSAA engages Isle Utilities to deliver the Technology Advisory Group (TAG) program to members on a subscription basis. TAG presents new technologies to WSAA members, delivers their feedback to

technology developers, and offers sign up for technology trials. The process can accelerate the market uptake of “step-change” technologies by engaging the industry during the pre-commercial stages of development and also by leveraging external investment from venture capital investors. It provides members with ready access to information about a wide range of innovative technologies of relevance to their organisation.

It is in this context that the Manager, Research and Innovation must work in a very complex environment with limited resources to understand all of the key research and innovation issues as they relate to the urban water industry and harness the energy of the water utilities to derive solutions that are acceptable to key stakeholders, regulators and the community.

3. THE POSITION

The Manager, Research and Innovation reports to the Deputy Executive Director and will be expected to:

- Represent the interests of the urban water industry on a range of national committees, working groups and other specific initiatives from time to time dealing with research and innovation strategy, investments and management.
- Chair selected national or utility working groups as required.
- Manage, review, update and implement the WSAA Research Strategy in collaboration and consultation with a broad range of WSAA membership and staff
- Develop an Innovation strategy, recognizing the breadth of opportunities across the technological and business innovation spectrum
- Deliver papers on topics of strategic importance to the urban water industry, recognizing that the quality and robustness of our research unpins the strength of our advocacy.
- Coordinate, guide and facilitate the development of relevant WSAA networks.
- Provide high-level oversight over work undertaken by other staff on national research knowledge management and WSAA’s hosting of research outputs from other organisations.
- Monitor policy and research issues as they relate to research and innovation both nationally and internationally.
- Maintain strong relationships around Australia and internationally.
- Assist the WSAA team in raising the profile of WSAA and the urban water industry generally.
- In conjunction with the WSAA Board Committees, contribute to the development of strategic priorities and manage various issues that arise from these Committees.
- Manage one staff member in delivering the projects and position papers for the WSAA Board and Board Committees

4. KEY ATTRIBUTES

The Manager, Research and Innovation requires:

- Excellent knowledge of key strategic issues facing the urban water industry and the ability to continually review and prioritise issues across all areas.
- Extensive experience in developing collaborative initiatives, particularly through geographically and institutional diversity.
- A demonstrated ability to prepare concise, robust and well-argued papers on any range of issues of importance to the urban water industry in Australia.
- Demonstrated ability to develop business plans.
- A thorough understanding of relevant research and development, both nationally and internationally as it applies to the Australian urban water industry.

- A strong understanding of knowledge creation, transfer and management opportunities and issues.
- A strong understanding of innovation processes and effective commercialisation.
- A solid understanding of the technical issues and regulatory frameworks as they relate to important areas for the urban water industry such as drinking water, recycled water, environmental sustainability and wastewater.
- Strong project management skills.
- An ability to recognise issues of strategic importance to WSAA members and communicate these effectively to appropriate WSAA committees and networks.

5. PERSONAL QUALITIES

The Manager, Research and Innovation should have:

- Strong leadership qualities and have the ability to form and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders.
- Be multi-skilled and have an adaptable approach to work recognising that WSAA is a small organisation.
- Highly developed written and oral communication skills.
- Highly developed collaboration skills.
- Strong project management skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work in groups and with stakeholders and achieve cooperation as a team player.
- A high level of personal energy and initiative, to achieve agreed outcomes with a minimum of supervision.

6. QUALIFICATIONS

Tertiary qualifications in science or engineering are preferred. Other qualifications may be considered.

7. EXPERIENCE

Knowledge of the Australian water industry and the research environment is desirable but not mandatory.

8. TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

The appointment is a full time position on a standard WSAA 3 year contract. A flexible and attractive remuneration package with a performance related bonus is available for the right candidate. The position can be based in Melbourne or Sydney. Some travel around Australia will be required.