

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## WSAA welcomes ‘all options on the table’ focus in Greater Sydney Water Strategy

The Water Services Association of Australia, the peak body for water utilities across Australia, welcomes the release of the [Greater Sydney Water Strategy](#).

It is pleasing to see the Strategy includes a diverse portfolio of water supply options for the future. In the face of climate change and population growth, Australian cities and regions need to continue diversifying their water supplies to provide water security.

“Despite seeing a lot of rain lately, many of our major cities are facing serious water supply gaps in the future. Communities are heeding the call to use water wisely, but new water supplies will still be needed as our cities grow”, said Mr Adam Lovell, Executive Director.

“We welcome the release of a Strategy for Sydney that includes future options that don’t depend on rainfall, and can still supply during drought, such as desalination and purified recycled water for drinking, already used in over 35 cities around the world, including Perth”, said Mr Lovell.

“It is important that all safe, climate-resilient and economically efficient sources are considered and discussed with communities. All water supply options offer pros and cons, there are no silver bullets in water”, said Mr Lovell.

“The most important step is to continue the conversation with the community – it takes time for everyone to learn about the options being considered. In the case of purified recycled water for drinking, experience globally and in Western Australia, has shown that any potential community questions can be addressed through effective education and engagement.

“The conversation isn’t new - many policy voices have been calling for ‘all options on the table’ approaches to water for some time: Infrastructure Australia, and the Commonwealth Productivity Commission; it’s been in the National Water Initiative since 2008, and the 2020-21 review recommended an ‘all options’ approach, including purified recycled water, be built into the new National Water Initiative.

“Building a demonstration plant is a great step – as recommended by the NSW Productivity Commission in their [White Paper](#). It lets the community see the process and understand how the water is purified, before any decisions need to be made about the future water supply.

“And the community have already indicated they are open to it, as the Strategy says:

- Recycled water uses including stormwater reuse and purified recycled water for drinking are overwhelmingly supported in the feedback received.
- After the severe 2017-2020 drought, there is more of an understanding and acceptance in the community of the need for much earlier planning for additional supply options including desalination and recycled water.



“Climate-resilient options like purified recycled water, ensure we use the water we have before taking more from the environment. Water is such a precious resource, it makes sense to use it more than once”, said Mr Lovell.

“When you look at the cities that have adopted it, they all had a genuine and transparent discussion with their community over time about how all water supply options work and their relative benefits, not relying on one-off surveys with no context. All water supply options can make a contribution to a secure water supply”, said Mr Lovell.

“We support water utilities and governments engaging openly and transparently to understand customer and community values and expectations, and to enable customers and community to be informed and make choices.

“Water is vital in transforming our cities and regions into cooler, greener and more liveable places through harnessing the full water cycle, including stormwater and recycled water. WSAA is pleased to see the Greater Sydney Water Strategy seek to ensure greater use of stormwater and recycled water for cooling and greening and to support recreational activities”, said Mr Lovell.

For more information and resources on all options on the table see our toolkit on purified recycled water for drinking [here](#).

WSAA is the peak body representing the urban water industry in Australia. Its members provide water and wastewater services to over 24 million customers in Australia and New Zealand, including many of Australia’s largest industrial and commercial enterprises.

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