

MEDIA RELEASE

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Welcome announcement for a renewed, modern National Water Initiative and oversight through a National Water Commission

The Water Services Association of Australia, the peak body for water utilities across Australia, welcomes the announcement today by the Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese and Shadow Minister for Environment and Water Terri Butler to re-establish the National Water Commission and renew the National Water Initiative.

A number of key Federal agencies including Infrastructure Australia and the Productivity Commission have recommended a renewed and modernised National Water Initiative. Following two of the worst droughts recorded in recent history, historic rainfall and floods in some parts of Australia, it is time to update Australia's national water plan.

"We welcome the announcement to renew a national focus on water management in Australia. For almost a decade since the abolishment of the National Water Commission, there has been a vacuum in national leadership in managing Australia's most precious resource. Transparency and independence are key – in creates confidence for all Australian's that decision making and planning is paying attention to the best available science and views of stakeholders," said Mr Adam Lovell, Executive Director.

"WSAA is pleased to see a commitment to renewing the National Water Initiative, a blue print for managing water across our cities, towns, industry, agricultural, mining and remote Indigenous communities. A healthy community is a healthy economy and water underpins the health of our communities, ecosystems and prosperity of industry", said Mr Lovell.

"Water is critical to our cities and communities in contributing to liveable and healthy environments and as a key economic enabler. The water industry is uniquely exposed to pressures from climate change, and as an industry we are seeking to accelerate our response through mitigation and adaption measures as we transition to a net zero future.

"We note there are challenges, including ensuring that all options for water supply are on the table. We will continue to advocate for the consideration of all safe, climate-resilient and economically efficient sources to be discussed with communities when planning future water supplies.

"We agree that given the critical role of water in creating prosperous and liveable places, it needs to be better valued with a national focus and a renewed National Water Initiative with independent oversight. In addition, we support the prioritisation a whole-of-water-cycle management approach including establishing a national stormwater management framework", said Mr Lovell.

"We advocate for consistent and reliable water and wastewater services in remote communities. We support the call for better servicing of remote communities and the role that collaborative arrangements can play, particularly in communities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.



WATER SERVICES
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

As part of planning for future challenges and taking a longer-term approach to meeting customer needs, the urban water industry is moving towards a vision of integrated resource recovery. The industry in Australia already plays a role in the circular economy and seeks to increase awareness of its broader role in communities through contribution to resource recovery including waste to energy and blue and green infrastructure to enhance quality of life. A renewed national focus on water management would help the industry become a leading model as it transitions to circularity.

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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Media inquiries

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