



WATER SERVICES
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023





The Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) is the peak industry body that connects the Australian urban water industry, representing over 100 public and privately owned water or water related organisations. Our members provide water and wastewater services to over 24 million customers in Australia and New Zealand.

2022-2023



**ABOUT
WSAA**



WSAA's activities focus on collaboration, knowledge sharing, networking and cooperation in the urban water industry through a structure of Committees and Networks. Our strength lies in the support and contribution of our members and their collegiate attitude which has led to industry-wide approaches to national water issues. It is this type of candid exchange of information, experiences and ideas which sets WSAA apart from other water industry associations.

Formed in 1995, WSAA is a non-profit organisation fostering the exchange of information between industry, government and the community, and promoting sustainable water resource management. WSAA can demonstrate success in the standardisation of industry performance monitoring and benchmarking, as well as many research outcomes of national significance. The Association retains strong links with policy makers and legislative bodies and their influencers, to monitor emerging issues of importance to the urban water industry. We are regularly consulted by decision makers when developing strategic directions for the water industry.

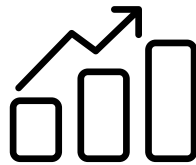
The urban water industry is committed to anchoring its services to customers' values, and to enrich communities where water services have broad economic, environmental and social values. In line with this our main activities focus on four areas:



Influencing national and state policies on the provision of urban water services and sustainable water resource management



Promoting debate on environmentally sustainable development and management of water resources and the community health requirements of public water supplies



Improving industry performance and establishing benchmarks and industry leading practices for water service processes



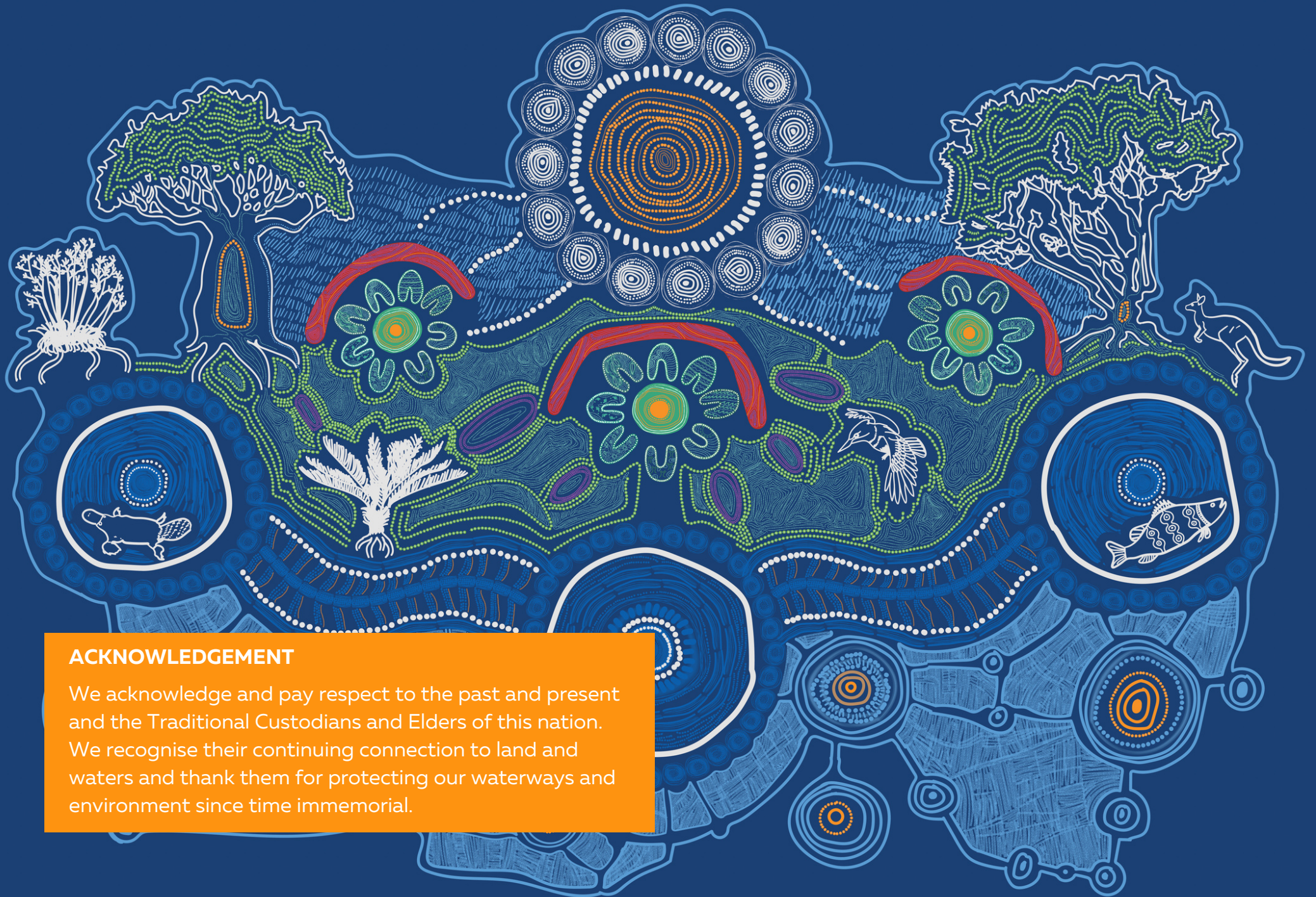
Fostering the exchange of information on education, training, research, water and wastewater management and treatment and other matters of common interest.

CONNECT WITH WSAA



WSAA members enjoy connecting with the water industry thought leaders and decision makers in forums that allow open discussions. Staff at all levels and in all professions of WSAA members can sign up to the WSAA online community.

FOLLOW US



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and pay respect to the past and present and the Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation. We recognise their continuing connection to land and waters and thank them for protecting our waterways and environment since time immemorial.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE WSAA CHAIR

As WSAA Chair I continue to be impressed by the depth and breadth of collaboration on issues critical to our industry and I am very proud of what we achieve together.

Last year, the Board asked WSAA to amplify its advocacy efforts at a key time in the external and political landscape. We have seen the success of these efforts through increased engagement with the Commonwealth Government and greater awareness of the work of the industry more broadly. WSAA's advocacy work seeks to help shape the policy landscape with governments and other important stakeholders through targeting key issues within the national and state/territory jurisdictions. This work will continue in the coming year as the Government finalises the renewal of the National Water Initiative.

Two key advocacy publications released in 2023/2024 were the discussion paper on Renewing the National Water Initiative (NWI): Securing the future of water for people and communities and the preliminary and the report Closing the Water for People and Communities Gap: A review on the management of drinking water supplies in Indigenous remote communities around Australia.

The latter has resulted in extensive engagement with the Commonwealth Government, contributing to the announcement of \$150 million earmarked for water services in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The former outlines of what we see as key opportunities from a new NWI including an increased focus on water for communities and a definitive public statement of shared commitment between all jurisdictions.

During the year WSAA also delivered a number of other programs and publications to help lift and shape the industry into the future covering everything from helping utilities accelerate to net zero, better understanding efficiency, benchmarking across expenditure, managing wet weather overflows and research development and innovation. All of this work is only possible through the ongoing participation of your people which strengthens our Association. Thank you to the WSAA Board, staff and all members for your continued support and commitment to WSAA.

“
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”

**ROCH CHEROUX
CHAIR**



A MESSAGE FROM WSAA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the last year WSAA has continued to facilitate collaboration both between our members and with important stakeholders. We have delivered a number of significant programs including collaborative opportunities, position papers, work to understand future trends, advocacy, codes and guideline development, benchmarking, innovation platforms and partnerships with key organisations. It is encouraging to see the involvement from our members continue to increase with participation in our Committee's, Networks and other groups at an all time high. These groups are the engine room of WSAA and drive many industry leading projects and initiatives.

Over the last 12 months we have hosted hundreds of online meetings, workshops and webinars and seen over 20 per cent growth in the

number of participants on the WSAA community site. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our members, together with WSAA staff. Each year we see collaboration on new issues and innovative projects to drive the industry forward and respond better to challenges it is facing. I thank the WSAA Board for their ongoing leadership and contribution to our Association and look forward to the year ahead, including the launch of a new WSAA Strategy and priorities to steer us in the years ahead.

It is a privilege to lead such a dedicated, committed and talented group of professionals at WSAA and on behalf of the WSAA Board and members I would like to sincerely thank them for their tireless efforts to bring the industry together and create impact.

“It is encouraging to see the involvement from our members continue to increase with participation in our Committee's, Networks and other groups at an all time high. These groups are the engine room of WSAA and drive many industry leading projects and initiatives.”

**ADAM LOVELL,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD



ROCH CHEROUX
CHAIR

Roch is the Managing Director of Sydney Water. Before joining Sydney Water, Roch held roles as Chief Executive of SA Water, Chief Executive Officer of SUEZ for the South East Asia region and SUEZ-Degrémont Australia and New Zealand, Managing Director of United Utilities Asia and Pacific (TRILITY), and Chief Executive and Chairman of Tallinn Water in Estonia. Roch holds formal qualifications in Engineering and Business Management.



ADAM LOVELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Adam is the Executive Director of WSAA. Adam provides national leadership in policy positions for the Australian urban water sector on issues including industry reform, liveable cities, water quality, climate change, customer engagement and asset management. Prior to joining WSAA in 2008, Adam was at Sydney Water for 11 years in leadership roles in the Science, Technology and Research area. Adam is currently the Chair of the Global Water Research Coalition.



DAVID RYAN

David is the Chief Executive of SA Water, one of Australia's largest integrated water utilities, serving more than 1.7 million customers across urban, regional and remote areas. Prior to joining SA Water, David was Managing Director of Melbourne's City West Water, and held executive roles at bulk water company Melbourne Water in operations and capital delivery, waterway management and customer solutions.



NICOLE DAVIS

Nicole is the General Manager, Infrastructure & Operations at Redland City Council which provides facilities and services for Redlands in Queensland including the delivery of water and sewerage services. Nicole has also previously worked in executive level roles as: Director of Operations at SEQ Water Grid Manager, at Mackay Regional Council as Chief Operating Officer, Water and Waste, and has also spent time in the private sector as a consultant.



SHAUN CUMMING

Shaun is the Interim Managing Director of Barwon Water, Victoria's largest urban regional water authority which services Geelong and a region of over 8,000km² and more than 350,000 customers. With a 25 year career in the water industry, Shaun has worked across both public and private sectors. He has extensive experience in strategy, transformation, operations, construction, business development, IT and large-scale multiple party project development and has a passion for renewable energy, climate change and the environment. Shaun enjoys leading inclusive cultures that deliver creative and commercial solutions that enhance customer experience, and regenerate our environment.



DJUNA POLLARD

Djuna is the Chief Executive Officer of Power and Water Corporation which transmits and distributes electricity, and provides water and sewerage services, across the Northern Territory. Djuna is also a Director of Energy Networks Australia. Ms Pollard held a number of senior leadership positions in Power and Water Corporation over two decades before being appointed CEO in 2020.



LARA OLSEN

Lara is the Managing Director of South East Water. She has extensive experience in the utility sector, focused on customer experience and innovation. Before joining South East Water, Lara was the Global Head of Business Development and Industrial Products at Tesla Energy based in the USA and also led the Business Development and Industrial Products team for Tesla Australia. Lara was also Head of Strategy for CitiPower PowerCor and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), Project Leader with the Boston Consulting Group and co-founded Billcap.



PAT DONOVAN

Pat is the CEO of Water Corporation, Western Australia's principal supplier of water, wastewater, drainage and bulk irrigation services. Pat is leading the Corporation's transition to a new operating model to achieve their vision to deliver greater value to their customers, community and owner by ensuring operations are safe for all, lowest total cost and lowest environmental impact. Prior to joining Water Corporation, Pat was President of ATCO Gas, Chief Operating Officer at ATCO Gas Australia, Executive Director at ATCO Australia and Chief Operating Officer at WA Gas Networks.



NEIL BRENNAN

Neil is Chief Executive Officer of Seqwater which is the bulk water supply authority across South East Queensland. Neil had a 40 year career in the Victorian water industry, before joining Seqwater in 2018. Neil was Managing Director of Western Water, Interim Managing Director of Goulburn Murray Water, Managing Director at Central Highlands Water and held various Ministerial appointments to industry committees.



JON LAMONTE

Jon is the Chief Executive at Watercare Services Limited. Most recently, Jon was CEO of Sydney Metro, leading the procurement, construction and delivery of Australia's first fully-automated metro rail network. Prior to this, Jon was CEO of Transport for Greater Manchester since 2013. Jon has also served in the Royal Air Force and was CEO of Tubelines in London, looking after three of London's underground lines during the 2012 Olympics.

Other Board Members



TRACEY SLATTER
(NOV 2021 - JUNE 2023)

Tracey is the Managing Director of Barwon Water and Barwon Asset Solutions which provides water, sewerage and recycled water services in Victoria's south west. She is also a Board Director of the Institute of Public Administration Australia (Victoria), and Zero Emissions Water, and the Deputy Chair of the Barwon Regional Partnership.

HIGHLIGHTS AT A GLANCE

WSAA continues to optimise the mix between virtual and face to face meetings and has been expanding the offering of webinar's and workshops on topical issues for greater collaboration and knowledge sharing. We continue to advocate for and support our members and the wider industry. In the past year, WSAA has delivered a number of significant programs including collaborative opportunities, position papers, understanding future trends, advocacy, guideline development, benchmarking, innovation platforms and partnerships with key organisations. Below are some highlights.



HIGHLIGHTS AT A GLANCE



500+
ONLINE & IN-
PERSON MEETINGS,
WORKSHOPS &
WEBINARS



20%
GROWTH IN THE
NUMBER OF
PARTICIPANTS ON
THE WSA
COMMUNITY SITE



380,000+
VISITORS TO THE
WSA WEBSITE &
PORTAL



3,000+
VIEWS OF THE
WATER SUPPLY
CODE OF
AUSTRALIA
VERSION 3.1.



4,000
VIEWS OF THE
CLOSING THE
WATER FOR
PEOPLE AND
COMMUNITIES GAP
REPORT

FOSTERING THE TRANSITION TO A LOW CARBON FUTURE AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Accelerating to Net Zero Guide

This guide supports industry initiatives in achieving net-zero emissions, providing a valuable resource for water service providers committed to sustainability and climate action.



CLIMATE CHANGE
ACCELERATING TO NET ZERO
MAY 2023



Establishment of Circular Economy Network

By utilising the industry action plan, this network drives and demonstrates progress towards circularity, fostering stakeholder collaboration and innovation.

Engagement with Ministerial Advisory Group for Circular Economy

The submission of an industry advocacy publication has underscored the importance of leveraging the urban water industry for a whole-of-economy transition to circularity, highlighting government policies, regulations, and initiatives.

Advocacy for Biosolids to Biochar Methodology

A submission to the Clean Energy Regulator has advocated for a methodology to quantify the benefits of converting biosolids to biochar within the Emissions Reduction Fund, promoting sustainable waste management practices.

Global Collaboration on GHG Emissions Management

Active leadership and participation in the international community of practice with the Global Water Research Coalition have fostered knowledge sharing and best practices for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Advocacy for Urban Water Services in Hydrogen Industry Growth

Active participation in national discussions and webinars has ensured that water sources are recognised in the guarantee of origin scheme for hydrogen production with the Clean Energy Regulator.

Exploration of Nutrient Trading Regimes

Investigating innovative methods and showcasing international case studies of successful nutrient offsetting programs

Showcasing International Best Practices

Coordination and presentation of global case studies on resilience and climate change response have provided valuable insights and learnings for industry stakeholders

UNDERSTANDING DRIVERS OF CUSTOMER TRUST AND VALUE



Updated the **affordability analysis** based on new data to track affordability measures and implications for customer affordability based on analysis of cost benchmarking and forwards capital spend data.



Finalised the **Understanding Efficiency** Report which explains in plain English the concepts of economic efficiency and how they apply to the water sector, includes detailed case studies.



Released the "Get to know your Haters" customer insights report (based on data from the Customer Perceptions survey).



Developed and agreed on consistent **KPIs for debt and customer vulnerability** that will be measured and tracked across the sector from July 2023.



Completed a **review of Water Literacy research** for the water sector. This has informed the development of water literacy strategy and measurement for water businesses.



A series of **monthly case study presentations and discussions to share leading practices with WSAA and Energy Charter members** on customer and community engagement.

PROMOTING HEALTH, LIVEABILITY AND WELLBEING



Development of a National Water Sector Contaminants of Emerging Concern Working Group, a coordinated effort to proactively address future health and environmental challenges related to contaminants in various water sector products and services.

Coordinated the **Industry Participation in PFAS NEMP 3 Draft Submission** and engagement with Heads of EPA providing valuable input through consultations and contributed to the development of a comprehensive response to the PFAS NEMP 3 draft, strengthening the industry's stance on PFAS management.

Completed the **Flushing Metals Study Assessment** and submission to the National Water Quality Advisory Committee, critical information which will be instrumental in devising strategies to improve water quality for consumers.

Amendment to AS/NZ 4020 for Inclusion of NDMA Testing to address concerns about the impact of elastomeric materials on rising NDMA concentrations in water supply disinfected using monochloramine.

WSAA-Supported Project on Effect-Based Monitoring and Water Safety Planning: Delivered by the GWRC, this project has resulted in the publication of informative fact sheets for both policy makers and industry professionals. By providing accessible and actionable guidance on water safety planning, this initiative can significantly improve the sector's ability to safeguard public health and maintain sustainable water resources.

DRIVING PROGRESS ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS INCLUDING A FOCUS ON UPLIFT OF REGIONAL, REMOTE AND INDIGENOUS WATER SERVICES

Formed **ESG working group**, through a cross-WSAA collaboration, to support and facilitate improvements in reporting, transparency, and responsiveness to emerging trends related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Held a series of sharing and case study sessions with the Energy Charter on how to drive improvement engagement with Aboriginal communities and Traditional Owners and incorporated the learnings into a toolkit for the Energy and Water sector.

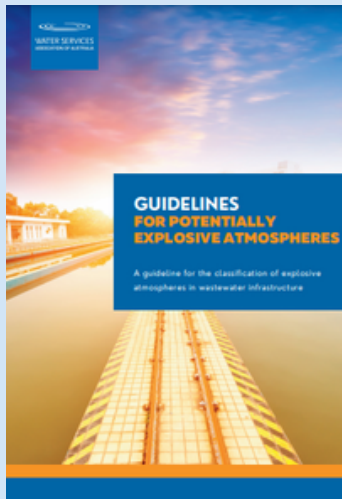
- Released the preliminary and **Final Report: Closing the Water for People and Communities Gap**: A review on the management of drinking water supplies in Indigenous remote communities around Australia
- Released **Making Waves**, a five episode podcast series which highlights the importance of water for First Nations people
- Developed and released WSAA's first **Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)**.



ACHIEVEMENTS

WSAA MEMBERS

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES



National Research Development and Innovation Strategy, developed in collaboration with key stakeholders including Water Research Australia. Building on the research roadmap to provide the structure for delivery of a national RD&I ecosystem.

Development of the **Guidelines for Potentially Explosive Atmospheres**.

Development of the **WSAA IoT Guideline**, a national leading practice guide for the implementation of Internet of Things Technology. Developed in collaboration with the Internet of Things Alliance Australia.

Delivered benchmarking projects including **Totex 2022 Benchmarking** for the Australian water industry, **UK Cost Benchmarking 2022** for the UK water industry, **2022 Health and Safety and People and Productivity Benchmarking Project**

Collaboration with BIM4Water in the UK to update and enhance the international digital asset classification system Uniclass. Forming the basis for the sector fully harnessing digital advances including digital twins and Better Information Management (BIM).

Enhancing digital capability by production of a Cyber Security Primer for Executives and Boards along with a Data Playbook to assist managers and practitioners.

Delivered the **Demonstrating Efficiency project** which provides plain English guidance on how demonstrate efficiency, including evidence and methodology, to regulators and stakeholders under different scenarios.

Completed the **Financial Stocktake** analysis which benchmarks and tracks the financial metrics of water businesses.

Delivery of projects and workshops to facilitate collaboration to improve industry attraction and retention of talent including: **Stage 1 of the Industry Employee Value Proposition project and Industry War for Talent Workshops**

Delivery of the **W-Lab technology program**, including trials of 6 technologies at utilities

Established a **partnership with Water Industry Operators Association (WIOA)** to undertake a Skills Exchange Program for Water Operators.

Worked with the **Pride in Water Network** to lead a major water industry contingent in the Melbourne Midsumma Pride March.

Welcomed **six Young Utility Leaders** to work alongside our Board Committees and undertake Peter Cullen Trust leadership training.



ACHIEVEMENTS

WSAA MEMBERS

NATIONAL ADVOCACY SUPPORTING INDUSTRY OUTCOMES



Extensive engagement with the Commonwealth Government contributing to the announcement of **\$150 million earmarked for water services in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.**

Engagement with the **National Water Grid Authority** on the revision of their success metrics for their expanded funding framework (which now includes regional / remote / First Nations)

Ongoing engagement with the Federal Government on the renewal of the **National Water Initiative** – both state-based senior representatives and Commonwealth drafting teams

Ongoing engagement with the Federal Government on **chemical and critical supply chains**

Collaboration with state governments on **water literacy**, water industry resources and with customer-facing communications.

Submissions to State and Australian Government

reviews/inquiries to ensure the voice of members was heard including to State water strategy and water security reviews. Key submissions include:

- Submission to the Draft PFAS NEMP 3.0
- Feedback on the Financial Counsellors Investment
- Submission to the Security of Critical Infrastructure Risk Management Program Rules
- Submission to Northern Territory Government: Improving economic regulation of water and sewerage services

Joint submission with WaterRA to the Department of Industry, Science, and Resources

review of Australia's science and research priorities and National Science Statement. Submission covered key aspects of the Urban Water Industry Research Priorities Agenda.



WSAA MEMBERS

UTILITY MEMBERS

ACT

Icon Water

TAS

TasWater

NSW

Byron Shire Council
Central Coast Council
Central NSW Joint Organisation (10 Councils)
Dubbo City Council
Eurobodalla Shire Council
Goldenfields Water
Hunter Water
Kempsey Shire Council
Lismore City Council
MidCoast Water
ORANA (11 Councils)
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
Riverina Water
Rous County Council
Shoalhaven Water
Sydney Water
Tweed Shire Council
WaterNSW
Queanbeyan Regional Council

NT

Power and Water Corporation

SA

Mt Barker Water
SA Water

VIC

Barwon Water
Central Highlands Water
Coliban Water
East Gippsland Water
Gippsland Water
Goulburn Murray Water
Goulburn Valley Water
Greater Western Water
GWM Water
Lower Murray Water
Melbourne Water
North East Water
South East Water
South Gippsland Water
Southern Rural Water
Wannon Water
Westernport Water
Yarra Valley Water

NEW ZEALAND

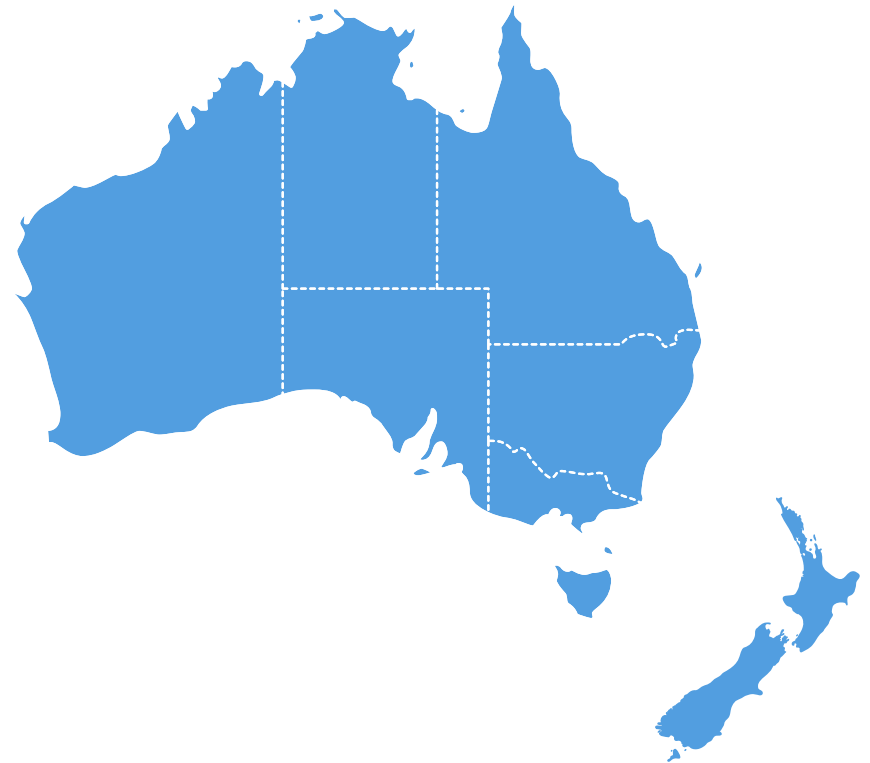
Wai Tāmaki ki Te Hiku
Watercare Services
Wellington Water

WA

Aqwest
Busselton Water
Water Corporation

QLD

Banana Regional Council
Cairns Water
City of Gold Coast
City of Townsville
Gladstone Area Board
Gladstone Regional Council
Gympie Regional Council
Ipswich Council
Isaac Regional Council
Logan City Council
Mackay Regional Council
Redland City Council
Rockhampton Regional Council
Seqwater
Southern Downs Regional Council
Sunwater
Toowoomba Regional Council
Unitywater
Urban Utilities
Western Downs Regional Council
Whitsunday Regional Council
Wide Bay Water



CONSULTANTS

Aecom
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Aurecon
Beca Hunter H2O
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Jacobs
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PRIVATE UTILITY

Suez
Trility
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CONTACT US

Melbourne Office

Wurundjeri Country Level 8, Suite 8.02,
401 Docklands Drive Docklands VIC 3008
Telephone 03 8605 7600

Sydney Office

Gadigal Country, Level 6, 75 Elizabeth
Street, Sydney NSW, 2000
GPO Box 915 Sydney NSW 2001

info@wsaa.asn.au

www.wsaa.asn.au



