

# Key opportunities of a new National Water Initiative



## 1. Water supply security in a changing climate:

- **A national framework and metrics** to measure water security and assist governments make the best investment choices on augmenting water supplies.
- **All options on the table must be the guiding principle**, clearly spelt out within the NWI, with **a national approach to engaging local communities with facts and evidence**, not politics, for sustainable and supported local solutions. This also needs to be reflected in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, by incorporating purified recycled water as another source of water, and providing consistent national regulatory guidance and validation protocols.

## 2. Closing the First Nations water Gap:

- **All Australian communities must have access to safe clean drinking water to meet the Closing the Gap targets and Sustainable Development Goals** – SDG6 in particular.
- Further **funding of culturally affirmative programs in skills and business development for First Nations** on a path to self-empowerment.
- Promote further research and development of policy for **integrated services for First Nations communities including benefits of liveability** through better household plumbing and sanitation.

## 3. Building productive, liveable cities:

- Ensure **a national and systemic approach to implementing blue green grids and Integrated Water Management**, embed policies for valuing all water investment benefits including public health and ecosystem protection and regeneration.
- **Revolutionise the management of stormwater and drainage** for waterway health, water recycling options and public health benefits.
- **Nationally consistent principles for developer charges** will help deliver cool green cities and help defray growth costs.
- **Nutrient offsetting frameworks** will save costs in infrastructure upgrades.

## 4. Unlocking circular economy potential:

- **Create policy and regulatory settings** for the urban water industry to lead, support and facilitate renewable energy, green hydrogen, biochar for soil improvement and carbon sequestration, energy from food, garden and liquid waste and recovery of other resources from waste and water.
- **Change product stewardship policies** to avoid the issues that PFAS, microplastics and other contaminants have created for the water industry to fix.

## 5. Cost recovery and economic regulation:

- **Ensure economic regulation meets best practice principles to protect the long-term interest of customers.**
- **Set out a national framework of minimum standards for price setting and regulation** for each state and territory to enact to enable price smoothing and avoid price spikes for customers.

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## 6. A transparent and open industry, using data for improved services and good decision making:

Commitment by all levels of government and across all parts of the industry to:

- **public reporting of performance** including commitment to improving the National Performance Report, and collection of data for Closing the Gap and Sustainable Development Goals to promote transparency of the industry
- the **development of cross sector data ecosystems for diverse and high priority benefits** including water system security, identification and assistance of customers experiencing vulnerability, planning and delivery of infrastructure.

## 7. Skills and training:

- **A national taskforce** to address the skills uplift and resourcing required for the most essential of the essential services.
- **First Nations peoples to co-design training frameworks**, to empower communities with skills and improve capacity.

## 8. Research and innovation:

- **Targeted support and co-investment in urban water research.**
- A **national approach to innovation support** to enable the industry to commercialise leading practices that could compete on a global market.

## 9. Improving water efficiency:

- **Expand the Smart Approved Water Mark certification and related initiatives** to enhance the co-benefits with WELS and to further boost efficient outdoor water use providing more savings of water and money for families and businesses.

## 10. National supply chain security:

- **Safeguard a secure national supply chain for the water sector** for critical chemicals and assets to ensure public health is always maintained through functioning water and sanitation systems.