

ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Water Directorate proudly acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country across New South Wales, their rich culture and their connection to the land and water on which we rely. We pay respect to Aboriginal Elders past, present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal people.

CHAIR'S STATEMENT

During 2022-2023 the Water Directorate's Executive Committee continued to work hard to support our members to respond to the top issues concerning local water utilities. It has been my privilege to lead the committee in our collaboration with local water utilities, government and non-government organisations, to enable essential water and sewerage services to be provided to the 1.9 million people living and working across regional NSW.

Collaboration and advocacy

In the last 12 months, the Water Directorate has had a seat at the table on numerous government initiatives, programs and reforms, and continued to support water industry awards and sponsorships as part of our collaboration with peer industry associations. Our collaboration with the Australian Water Association grew through the expansion of their Regional Water Champions program, which allows water professionals working or interested in water management in regional NSW to network and learn. The program is becoming a great grassroots success story, managed mainly by young water professionals from regional NSW.

After changes to our Constitution we were pleased to accept new Associate Members into the Water Directorate. We also implemented minor changes in 2022 to align our Executive Committee regional representation with Joint Organisation boundaries.

After the state elections in March we welcomed a new Minister for Water, Rose Jackson MLC, who has hit the ground running, visiting regional communities affected by the Menindee fish deaths and listening to drinking water quality concerns in Walgett.

Our first ever Water Directorate Annual Forum

In the spirit of deepening our strategic engagement with local water utilities and promoting collaboration and networking with our regulatory agencies, I was pleased to launch our first Annual Forum in November 2022. I thank our Executive Officer, Brendan Guiney and his team, Sarah Eastman and Juliet Cobb, for their hard work in putting the 2022 Forum together and for all of their hard work over the past year.

Thanks to our Executive Committee

I want to acknowledge our hardworking Executive Committee, who contribute many hours in-kind to help solve our regional water utility issues. Following biennial committee elections in November 2022 I acknowledge departing committee members for their years of service and contribution: Chris Best of Bega Valley Shire Council, Russell Deans of Bathurst Regional Council, Jessica Dunstan of

Snowy Monaro Regional Council, Tracey Hamer of MidCoast Council and Victor Papierniak of Cobar Shire Council. I wish to thank and highlight the contribution of Russell Deans as well as Jason Ip of Riverina Water County Council and congratulate them on reaching their 10-year service milestones.

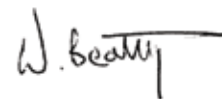
We welcomed newly elected committee members Claire Cam of Mid-Western Regional Council, Marnie Coates of MidCoast Council, Cameron Hawkins of Port Macquarie Hastings Council, Melanie Slimming of Forbes Shire Council, Trevor Sultana of Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Wes Trotter of Kempsey Shire Council, and Chris Witney of Snowy Monaro Regional Council. Welcome to you all, we are already enjoying your fresh point of view and energetic contributions.

Lastly, my thanks to Councillor Dominic King, Shaun McBride, Patrick Lee and Anthony Luu of Local Government NSW for continuing our ongoing, close working relationship on policy and advocacy in regional water.

Our 25th Year and Strategic Plan 2030

It is an absolute privilege to be Chair of the Water Directorate as we complete our 25th year at the end of 2023. We plan to celebrate with our founding committee members, staff and others that have all been part of the journey. We should all be very proud of what the Water Directorate has achieved.

In the next twelve months we also intend to finalise consultation on our new Strategic Plan 2030. The Water Directorate has sound foundations that we want to build upon through the development of online learning, the implementation of improvement programs and promoting digital water utilities.



Wayne Beatty
Chair, Water Directorate

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REVIEW

Completion of TWRRP Phase 1 and commencement of Phase 2

At the end of 2022, we were very pleased to see NSW DPE's innovative Town Water Risk Reduction Program progress from its initial consultation and planning phase, Phase 1, into implementation in Phase 2, with a significant funding commitment attached. A new Regulatory Assurance Framework is now in place, responding to representations from local water utilities over some years calling on the Department to take a more flexible, outcomes-based approach to strategic planning and works approvals. It will take some time for the regional water sector to adjust to the new framework – and we welcome any feedback you may have.

The most notable Phase 2 commitment was the *Skills and Training Action Plan*, which recognises the significant challenges local water utilities have been facing with skills shortages. Renewed attention and funding from the NSW government has seen the number of Registered Training Organisations delivering accredited water operator training double from two to four. It's welcome news after several years of declining participation in water operator training.

There is more to do of course. Water Directorate is keen to see regional water training centres developed '*in region, and on Country*'. We have also been working with Water Research Australia on their Technical Competency Benchmarking project that will align training to roles, responsibilities and risks that are managed by water operators and identify minimum competency requirements for frontline water operators. We also urgently need more experienced operators and engineers to become trainers and assessors to bring the next generation of water operators into our industry.

Online, on-demand learning

It's in the same vein that I express my thanks again this year to the team at Qldwater as they have hosted and developed a new multi-tenancy online learning platform for the use of both our directorates. We now have NSW versions of online water industry induction products, AquaCard and BrownCard, available for use free of charge for staff of NSW Water Directorate members and for a modest charge for contractors and other non-members. The development of online and on-demand learning provides a sound foundation for Water Directorate to promote knowledge sharing and continuing professional development.

Looking forward

Australia has bounced quickly from three successive wet La Nina years into what looks like a very dry El Nino summer ahead. Water Directorate is working closely with our regulating agencies to promote advanced water recycling proposals for improved water security and climate resilience as well as strategic planning for other alternative water sources including stormwater and groundwater. Whether an event involves drought, flood or fire, we will promote an all-hazards approach to water resilience.

Other significant water industry challenges include managing contaminants of concern such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, PFAS, in our drinking water, recycled water and biosolids. Implementation of potentially very stringent workplace exposure standards for exposure of our workforce to hydrogen sulphide and chlorine gas is also a concern.

Thank you

My thanks go to our Business Manager Jessica Galton who joined me in the Forster office in April and has already been invaluable to our team at the Water Directorate coordinating our business operations, including the many meetings, submissions and projects we have underway on behalf of our members.

Special thanks also to David Kirby General Manager of Brewarrina Shire Council, who hosted Orana Water Utilities Alliance Chair Doug Moorby and I in Brewarrina in February. David took the time to personally share important stories about his people. We were shown how to catch fish in the traditional way at the Brewarrina Fish Traps which, at 40,000 years old, are probably the oldest human-made structures on Earth.

And finally, congratulations to Greg Mashiah of Clarence Valley Council who was inducted as an AWA Legend of Water at the end of 2022!



Brendan Guiney
Executive Officer



Jessica Galton

In April 2023 the Water Directorate welcomed Jessica Galton as Business Manager which coincided with the opening of the Water Directorate's Forster office. Jessica has a strong background in property and local government working with MidCoast Water and MidCoast Council. Jess supports the Water Directorate's business and operational processes.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2022–2023



Wayne Beatty
Orange City Council
Central West
Attendance 5/5



Chris Best*
Bega Valley Shire
Council
South East
Attendance 0/5



Russell Deans*
Bathurst Regional
Council
Central West
Attendance 3/3



Derek Finnigan
Muswellbrook Shire
Council
Hunter
Attendance 2/5



Graham Gordon
Griffith City Council
South West
Attendance 5/5



Tracey Hamer*
MidCoast Council
Hunter
Attendance 3/3



Jason Ip
Riverina Water County
Council
South West
Attendance 4/5



Brie Jowett
Tweed Shire Council
North Coast
Attendance 5/5



Graham Kennett
Kyogle Council
North Coast
Attendance 5/5



Matt Kidd
Shoalhaven City
Council
Illawarra
Attendance 5/5



Bruce Logan
Tamworth Regional
Council
New England
Attendance 1/5



Gillian Marchant
Tenterfield Shire
Council
New England
Attendance 3/5



Doug Moorby
Narromine Shire
Council
Orana
Attendance 4/5



Victor Papierniak*
Cobar Shire Council
Orana
Attendance 0/2

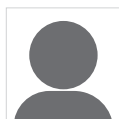


Geoffrey Veneris
Goldenfields Water
County Council
South West
Attendance 5/5

Appointed committee members



Cr Dominic King
LGNSW
Representative



Sean McBride
LGNSW
Representative



Patrick Lee*
LGNSW
Representative

*Resigned or retired
during the year

New members elected 2023-2024

The Water Directorate Executive Committee is appointed by election every two years. A record number of candidates stood for election for the 2023-2024 term, resulting in seven new members who were welcomed aboard at the first committee meeting in 2023.



Clare Cam
Mid-Western Council
Orana
Attendance 2



Marnie Coates
MidCoast Council
Hunter
Attendance 1



Cameron Hawkins
Port Macquarie
Hastings Council
Mid North Coast
Attendance 1



Melanie Slimming
Forbes Shire Council
Central West
Attendance 2



Trevor Sultana
Goulburn
Mulwaree Council
South East
Attendance 2



Wes Trotter
Kempsey Shire
Council
Mid North Coast
Attendance 2



Chris Witney
Snowy Monaro
Regional Council
South East
Attendance 2

SKILLS, COLLABORATION, RESILIENCE

Supporting Local Water Utilities 2022-2023



◀ COLLABORATION ▶

The Water Directorate initiated an Annual Forum in 2022 to provide the opportunity for LWU staff, regulators and stakeholders to collaborate and learn from one another.



COLLABORATION

Executive Officer Brendan Guiney is a key link between LWUs and stakeholders. This sees him criss-crossing the state, checking in with members and Joint Organisations, and representing LWU perspectives at meetings and events with partner organisations and government regulators.



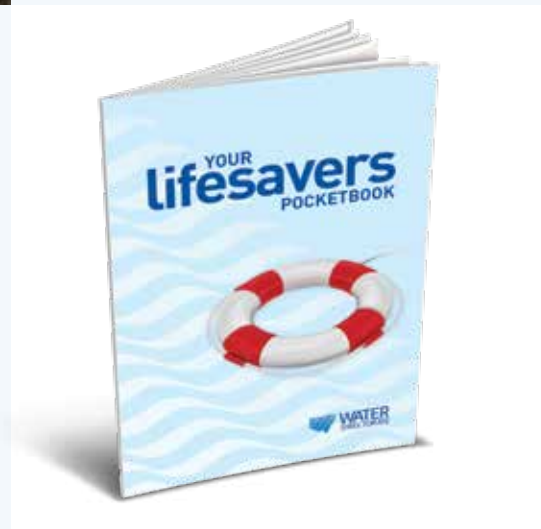
◀ COLLABORATION

Another area of collaboration during the year was the Town Water Risk Reduction Program - identifying long-term solutions to key water and sewerage service challenges/risks facing regional communities. Water Directorate Executive Committee worked closely with DPE Water in the second phase of the program, via working groups and regional/online consultation.



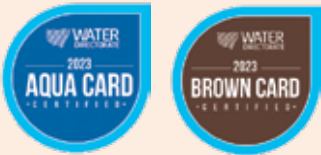
COLLABORATION ▶

During the year the Water Directorate partnered with DPE Water to deliver a pocket-sized work health and safety Lifesavers Pocketbook, written for workers and contractors in the water treatment sector. The pocketbook is being distributed to LWUs via DPE regional staff.



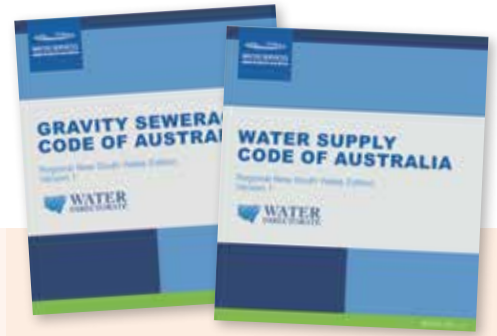
SKILLS

The Water Directorate partnered with Queensland Water Directorate to deliver Aqua Card and Brown Card online courses, designed to offer critical safety information to contractors working with water and sewage assets. ▼



SKILLS

Addressing our skills shortages is the top priority for the water sector in regional NSW, as many LWUs contend with not only a shortage of trained staff, but a lack of availability of accredited training and trainers/assessors. The cost of delivering training in regional NSW is also a significant hurdle. The Water Directorate advocated for DPE Water to develop a Skills and training action plan to deliver much needed training for water operators. Pictured here are participants at an accredited course: Monitor and Operate Ozone Processes, delivered by Murray Thompson, of Murray Thompson Water Services/ Fusion Training Solutions. ▼



SKILLS ▲

A major project was commenced to develop 18 training modules in the WSAA Codes for water supply and sewerage, based on the current classroom based training hosted by Beca Hunter H2O and WSAA. The training will be online and on demand through our newly commissioned eLearning platform, Moodle, co-hosted with Qldwater.

RESILIENCE

The Water Directorate is advocating on behalf of LWUs with Country Mayors to improve the way major projects are assessed for funding and properly funded for the whole life of assets. The role of the NSW Government is critical in strategic planning and properly reserving water for critical human needs, as well as monitoring water quality.



RESILIENCE

The Water Directorate is advocating on behalf of local water utilities to make sure DPE Water's Safe and Secure Water Program is working effectively to deliver funding to address regional water safety and security. Our briefing note to DPE raised lessons learned from the previous drought and what preparation is underway for upcoming water shortages during the La Nina summer of 2023-2024. ▼



◀ RESILIENCE

Local Water Utilities' flood, drought and bushfire preparedness is critical. The Water Directorate is working with EUSFA to ensure water is recognised as an essential service to be prioritised in an emergency. Pictured is the new Brogo-Bermagui water treatment plant that was re-built after floods in 2021.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

Income	2023	2022
Membership fees	599,503	581,622
Sales -Manuals	5,055	2,236
Investment Income	5,750	512
Sundry Income	0	0
Total Income	610,308	584,370
Expenditure		
Accounting and audit	8,730	8,410
Advertising sponsorship	21,707	22,078
Bank Charges	589	276
Computer expenses	7,848	6,340
Conferences, travel and accommodation	11,249	12,706
Consultants and technical support	46,276	101,079
Depreciation	2,068	854
Executive committee expenses	6,023	1,711
Insurance	6,804	6,324
Membership	13,350	11,604
Printing, postage and stationery	8,573	8,507
Support service fees	42,912	36,975
Salary	330,334	296,476
Total Expenditure	506,463	513,340
Surplus for the year	103,845	71,030

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
Current Assets		
Cash at on hand and at Bank	959,712	848,628
Trade and other receivables	455,545	382,238
Prepayments	21,639	31,983
Total Current Assets	1,436,896	1,262,849
Non Current Assets		
Fixed Assets		
COMPUTERS	18,340	10,961
ACCUM DEPRECIATION	8,350	7,071
	9,990	3,890
TOTAL ASSETS	1,446,886	1,266,739
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	756,670	693,184
Short-term Provisions	35,066	22,250
Total Current Liabilities	791,736	715,434
Total Liabilities	791,736	715,434
Net Assets	655,150	551,305
Equity		
Retained Earnings	551,305	480,275
Surplus YTD	103,845	71,030
	655,150	551,305

2022–2023 PRIORITY ACTIONS AT A GLANCE

INQUIRIES & SUBMISSIONS

- Town Water Risk Reduction Program Phase 1
 - Regulatory assurance framework
 - Skills and training
 - Collaboration pilots
 - Facilitating state government support
 - Investigating alternative funding models
- Town Water Risk Reduction Program Phase 2
 - Skills and training action plan
 - Advanced operational support program
 - Incident and emergency management
 - Work health and safety improvement
 - Dam safety program (WaterNSW assisting)
- NSW Water Efficiency Program
- NSW Regional Leakage Reduction Program
- NSW Recycle Water Roadmap
- NSW Groundwater Strategy
- 12 Regional Water Strategies across NSW
- Aboriginal Communities Water and Sewerage Program
- Water Industry Competition regulation
- Safe and Secure Water Program (Water Infrastructure NSW)
- Dam Safety NSW
- NSW Energy and Utilities Services Functional Area (EUSFA)
- Health Based Targets (NSW Health)

EVENTS

- Water Directorate Annual Water Forum, November 2022
- Water Directorate session at LGNSW Water Management Conference Parkes June 2023



Winner of the Ozwater Conference Award, Ryan Thurein, pictured with Brendan Guiney and Corrine Cheeseman, CEO of Australian Water Association. Ryan is a Graduate Water & Sewer Design Engineer at Port Macquarie Hastings Council.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

During the first year the Water Directorate initiated a new membership category: Associate Membership. Benefits include access to technical resources and advice, as well as networking opportunities with local water utilities. The following partners were the first to join us:

Associate Member:

Water Industry Partner



Associate Member:

Individual

Carmel Krogh

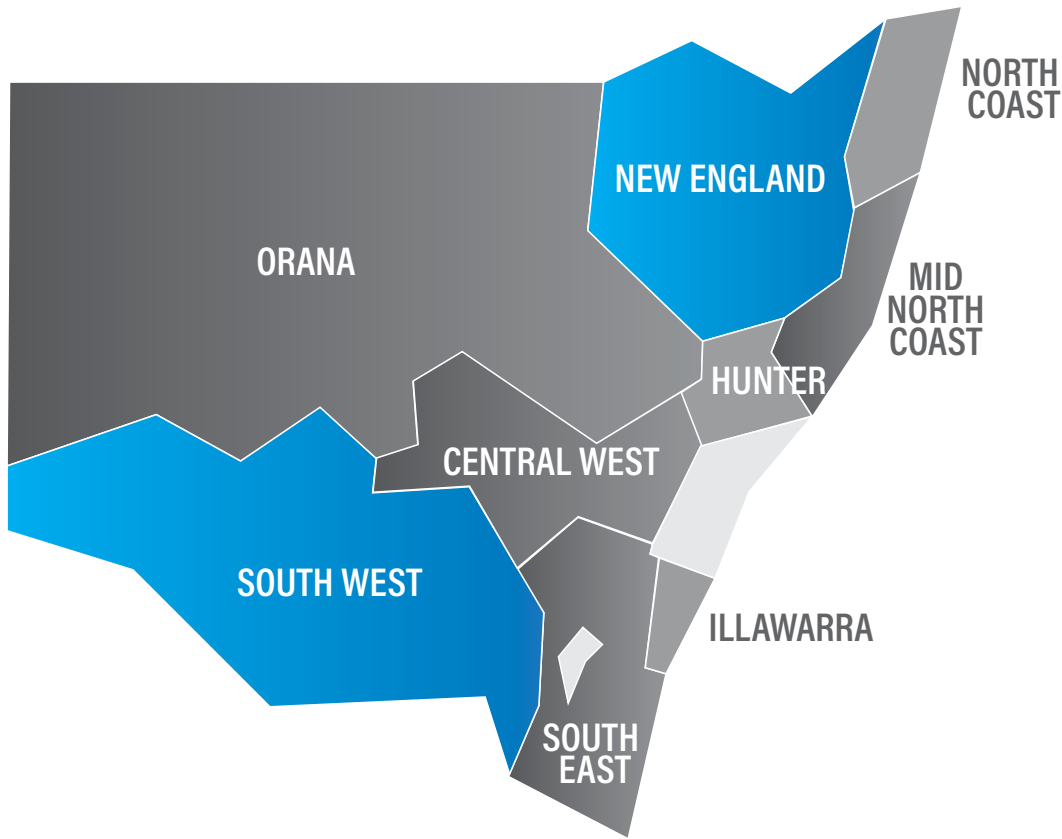
AWARDS SPONSORED

- LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards
- WIOA Operator of the Year Award
- Ozwater Conference Attendance Award
- Sam Samra Award



Shoalhaven City Council was awarded the Sam Samra Award 2023. SCC piloted a program that demonstrated how council undertakes strategic planning by mapping processes and systems against the Regulatory Assurance Framework. Matt Kidd, Water Asset Planning and Development Manager, reports that helped to identify gaps and where SCC needs to focus to improve its planning practices.

MEMBERS BY REGION



Central West Region

Bathurst Regional Council
Blayney Shire Council
Cabonne Shire Council
Central Tablelands Water
Cowra Shire Council
Forbes Shire Council
Lachlan Shire Council
Lithgow City Council
Oberon Council
Orange City Council
Parkes Shire Council
Weddin Shire Council

Hunter Region

Hawkesbury City Council
MidCoast Council
Muswellbrook Shire Council
Singleton Shire Council
Upper Hunter Shire Council

Mid North Coast Region

Bellingen Shire Council
Coffs Harbour City Council
Kempsey Shire Council
Nambucca Valley Council
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

Illawarra Region

Shoalhaven City Council

New England Region

Armidale Regional Council
Glen Innes Severn Council
Gunnedah Shire Council
Gwydir Shire Council
Inverell Shire Council
Liverpool Plains Shire Council
Moree Plains Shire Council
Narrabri Shire Council
Tamworth Regional Council
Tenterfield Shire Council
Uralla Shire Council
Walcha Council

North Coast Region

Ballina Shire Council
Byron Shire Council
Clarence Valley Council
Kyogle Council
Lismore City Council
Richmond Valley Council
Rous County Council
Tweed Shire Council

Orana Region

Bogan Shire Council
Bourke Shire Council
Brewarrina Shire Council
Central Darling Council
Cobar Shire Council
Coonamble Shire Council
Dubbo Regional Council
Gulgandra Shire Council
Mid Western Regional Council
Narromine Shire Council
Walgett Shire Council
Warren Shire Council
Warrumbungle Shire Council

South East Region

Bega Valley Shire Council
Eurobodalla Shire Council
Goulburn Mulwaree Council
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional
Council
Snowy Monaro Regional Council
Snowy Valleys Council
Wingecarribee Shire Council
Yass Valley Council

South West Region

Albury City Council
Balranald Shire Council
Berrigan Shire Council
Carrathool Shire Council
Cootamundra - Gundagai
Regional Council
Edward River Council
Federation Council
Goldenfields Water County Council
Greater Hume Council
Griffith City Council
Hay Shire Council
Hilltops Council
Junee Shire Council
Leeton Shire Council
Lockhart Shire Council
Murray River Council
Murrumbidgee River Council
Narrandera Shire Council
Riverina Water County Council
Temora Shire Council
Wagga Wagga City Council
Wentworth Shire Council



DIVERSE
NETWORKS



TECHNICAL
GUIDANCE



STRATEGIC
PLANNING



ADVOCACY

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