



WIOA President's Message 2011

Welcome everyone, to the 5th Annual WIOA NSW Water Industry Engineers & Operators Conference. The Water Industry Operators Association of Australia (WIOA) is pleased to organise this annual event. Each year George and I pack up the trailer and car and head off across two states to set up what we hope is a bigger and better event. I have had the privilege of attending all of the WIOA NSW conferences starting in Dubbo in 2006. One constant has been the support of the Water Directorate, NSW and in particular, Stewart McLeod and Gary Mitchell. Without their support and that of other like minded associations and businesses, WIOA would not have the opportunity to expand across the whole of Australia as it has.

WIOA has enjoyed very significant growth nationally over the past couple of years. The benefits on offer through involvement with WIOA have been embraced by operators in all states, and NSW is no exception. Our membership base continues to grow significantly each year, particularly during and after these events. We know that many of you are Members of WIOA already, but a significant number of you are not. Keep in mind the draw for the Plasma Television valued in excess of \$1,000 will be undertaken at the Thursday Conference Dinner. If you want a chance to win it, either pay up your fees or join as a member right now.

For those people new to this event and WIOA, we'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the Association and what we are all about. WIOA started out in Victoria in 1973, and was originally set up as a wastewater employees self help group. The Association has grown and expanded over time, mostly at the request for more from our Members. We now cover operational issues across the entire water industry, not just wastewater. After trying unsuccessfully for many years to establish branches outside Victoria, from 2000 we dropped the Victorian name and have expanded to become a truly National organisation. We now have Members from every Australian State and Territory and many from New Zealand as well. Last year saw the introduction of the Tasmanian operator's interest group that was formed after reform of the Tasmanian council based water and wastewater operations into three new Water Corporations. There have also been similar focus groups kick off in NSW with the Riverina and Murray operators group, Mid Coast and Northern Coast groups holding networking events to share in ideas and best practice operations.

One of WIOA's aims is to increase the level of knowledge and skills of operational staff across the whole water industry so that they can perform their important job functions more efficiently and productively. We bring people together to share the latest information about processes and technologies at events like this, by running other special interest seminars such as our Media Filters; Distribution system; Chemical Dosing; Disinfection or PAC workshops, by producing useful operational resources such as our "Practical Guide" series, by placing information onto our website for all operators to access and by being proactively involved in the development and implementation of the Water Training Package and its associated resource material. We have produced career videos in an effort to attract young people into the industry in the future and we also produce our own Journal and a number of other Member focused publications. There are a number of examples of the various WIOA publications in your satchel and for an annual membership fee of only \$25, we think it is great value and again encourage everyone to join.

Applications for the brand new PASS Award (Problem Accepted Solution Supplied) closed at the end of February and we will have the pleasure of announcing the inaugural winner at the “Meet the Trade” dinner here in Newcastle. Keep in mind that applications for the annual Kwatye (Water) Prize are now open to WIOA Members. If you have an innovative idea, would like to attend an event here or overseas or further your study in the water industry, send us a proposal. More information is on our website by visiting www.wioa.org.au/awards/kwatye.htm.

Once again this year we have been confronted with some natural disasters such as the flooding in large parts of Qld, NSW and Victoria. Violent storms and cyclones seem to be the norm rather than the exception now. No doubt operators in these areas will have faced very trying conditions in the day to day running of their systems in providing the services that the community just expects will always be available. I also have no doubt that the same operators have been able to meet the challenge with practical solutions to continue to provide these services. These events are devastating at the time, but most likely will pose a whole range of new challenges further down track. As operators, we need to look at limiting further environmental impact by adopting cleaner, safer operating principles in the day to day running of our plants.

Staging a conference as big as this would not be possible without a lot of hard work and organisation by our wonderful WIOA staff including EO George Wall, Operations Manager Cynthia Lim along with Marilyn & Sherryn in our office. WIOA is also lucky to have a fantastic group of volunteers on our Committee. Some of them are here in Newcastle, along with a dedicated group of “HELPERS” from NSW and beyond, all working hard behind the scenes. To all these people we extend a very big THANK YOU.

I would also like to send out a large vote of thanks to our joint hosts this year, Hunter Water Corporation and Hunter Water Australia and as mentioned the continued support of the Water Directorate, NSW. We look forward to the announcement of the 5th winner of the “Water Directorate, NSW Operator of the Year”. WIOA really appreciates the wonderful support of our Prime Conference Partners in Tebsin Group (formerly Rad-tel Systems), ITT Water & Wastewater, Acromet Australia and Peerless Epigen along with a host of other sponsors and exhibitors. It is always very important to us that you continue to support or exhibitors as they are showing their support to the water industry, and not just a supplier looking for a sale when other industries go quiet.

It is also very important to thank the councils, water businesses and suppliers who support their staff by giving them the opportunity to attend this event. We need your help to take back the message that this was a great event for your organisation, and they should be encouraged to send even more people again next year. Take the time to thank presenters of the papers and posters as they have probably sat in the audience at a past event and thought “I can do a paper on....”. For those of you that are thinking about it, please come and talk to myself, George or Cynthia as we would be pleased to help you through what is not as threatening a process as you might think! It is the paper authors and presenters that make this event as successful as it is.

As a boy, lad and now distinguished gentleman who grew up in NSW, I am extremely proud to be the new president of WIOA. I come to this event spotting many familiar faces who continue to support the event. I look forward to catching up with everyone over the next few days, to listen, learn and collect suggestions on how we can make this event the biggest and best that we run.



John Day – WIOA President