



## **WIOA President's Message 2007**

Welcome everyone, to the Inaugural WIOA NSW Water Industry Engineers & Operators Conference. This is an exciting time for the Water Industry Operators Association of Australia (WIOA) as we run our first official event in New South Wales focused at an "operations" level.

We know that some of you are Members of WIOA already but there are many of you who are not, so we would 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 the years and now takes an interest in operational issues covering 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 New Zealand as well.

One of our main aims is to increase the level of knowledge and skills of operational staff across the water industry so that they can perform their important job functions more efficiently and productively. We do this by bringing people together to share the latest information about processes and technologies at events like this, by running other special interest seminars such as our Filters or Distribution system 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. We have recently assisted to promote the industry by developing career videos in an effort to attract future young operators. We also produce our own Journal and a number of other Member focused publications. There is a sample pack showcasing the various WIOA publications in your satchel and for an annual membership fee of only \$20, we think it is great value and encourage everyone to join.

Enough of the PR stuff and back to this event. As usual we have heaps of people to thank for organising this event. The WIOA Executive Officer, George Wall and our staff plus our sponsorship coordinator Ron Bergmeier, have done a fantastic job arranging the entire event. We also have a dedicated group of volunteers from NSW and beyond who have freely given their time and effort to help run the conference. The amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to run an event such as this is amazing and to all our helpers we say a big THANK YOU!!.

We must thank our Hosts, the Dubbo City Council, and also acknowledge the assistance of the NSW Water Directorate. Both these organisations have helped us a great deal by throwing their support behind the event and by spreading the word about the importance to the industry of a conference such as this. Many awards will be presented at this conference and we look forward to meeting the recipient of the inaugural NSW Water Directorate sponsored - "NSW Operator of the Year" award.

A big thank you is extended to our Prime Conference Partners in Transpacific Industries Group and Acromet Australia, as well as all the other sponsors and exhibitors - we really do appreciate your support. As a result of the attendance and support of these companies, we are able to keep the price of attending at an affordable level for all.

To all our delegates and exhibition visitors – thank you for attending and we appreciate the efforts of some we know have traveled great distances to be here. The only advice I can give to all participants is to make the most of what this conference has to offer and network with your fellow water industry colleagues. Please take the time to listen to the papers and wherever you can, forge relationships with the trade exhibitors because you never know when you will need their knowledge or help. It is always better to deal with someone you know.

There is no question that getting operations staff together to meet one another and discuss, even solve, issues and problems is an important development tool for the systems we operate and also for our own personal growth. Adding the trade exhibitors into the mix with their depth of product and application knowledge ensures that we all have the opportunity to learn something new. Remember to take back to your workplace this new information and share it with colleagues who did not get a chance to attend.

There is a good way to meet a number of the exhibitors – enter the conference competition! The trade exhibitors have put a lot of effort into their stands and we have randomly selected 10 companies to participate in the competition. Just form a group of three and make sure you visit all of the 10 nominated sites before the exhibition closes on Thursday afternoon. If you are here on your own, don't worry - put your name down at the registration desk and we will fit you into a team – what a great way to meet new people!. You can find more details at the registration desk. Good luck to everyone!

I look forward to meeting and working with many more operational people over the next couple of years during my term as President and am excited to be able to assist WIOA develop and deliver our services Nationally.

In closing, we hope that you enjoy attending this event and make the most of the learning opportunities on offer. We also encourage you to go back to your workplace and tell your supervisor/manager about the many positives that you have obtained from attending the event. Perhaps they will be encouraged to send even more operations staff along next year. We also hope you will consider tapping into what WIOA has to offer by becoming a Member. The \$20 fee is money well spent and it is a very affordable way to keep in touch with what is happening in your industry.



**Peter Tolsher**  
**WIOA President**