



## **WIOA President's Message 2008**

Welcome everyone, to the 33rd Annual Queensland Water Industry Operations Workshop.

This is the third year the Water Industry Operators Association of Australia (WIOA) has worked with WITA, AWA and our numerous trade supporters to deliver a workshop in Qld that is focused entirely at an operational level. The 2006 and 2007 events were a huge success and we look forward to 2008 being even bigger and better. The trade expo this year has a record number of sites – 122 and we aim to continue to grow this Workshop so that it is accepted as a must attend annual event for all operational people employed in the Queensland water industry.

Before talking about this event, I wanted to fill you all in a bit more on WIOA and what it is all about as we know that many of you are Members already, but a significant number of you are not. WIOA started out in Victoria in 1973, and was originally a wastewater employees self help group. Its first function was to try to establish some sort of training program for wastewater operators. Since then, the Association has grown and expanded and now has an interest in operational issues across the entire water industry, not just wastewater. After trying unsuccessfully for many years to establish branches outside Victoria, in 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 a number from New Zealand as well.

One of our main aims is to increase the level of knowledge and skills of operational staff across all segments of the water industry so that they can perform their important job functions more efficiently, safely 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 Media Filters, Distribution system 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. In 2007 we assisted to promote the industry by developing career videos in an effort to attract young people into the industry in the future. 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 we encourage everyone to join.

Enough of the PR stuff and back to this Workshop. As usual we have heaps of people to thank for organising the event. The WIOA staff, headed up by Executive Officer George Wall, along with our sponsorship coordinator Ron Bergmeier, have done a fantastic job arranging the event.

We also have a dedicated group of volunteers from Queensland 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 as large as this is amazing, and to all our helpers we say a big THANK YOU!!.

We must thank our Hosts, Gold Coast Water and the Gold Coast City Council, and also acknowledge the assistance of WITA, AWA and the Qld Department of Natural Resources and Water. All 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 Workshop such as this. Many awards will be presented at this workshop and we look forward to meeting the next AWA Qld “Leon Henry Memorial, Operator of the Year” along with all the other Prize Winners.

A big thank you is extended to our Prime Workshop Partners in Rad-Tel Systems, ITT Water & Wastewater and Acromet Australia along with the host of other sponsors and exhibitors - we really do appreciate your support. As a result of the generosity and support of these companies, we are able to keep the price of attending this event at an affordable level for all.

To all our delegates, exhibition visitors and paper presenters – thank you for your efforts and for attending and we appreciate the commitment of a number who we know have traveled great distances to be here. 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, no matter what State we are in. 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.

To all participants – my advice 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 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 some 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 remainder of my term as WIOA President and I am excited to be able to assist the Association to 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 abreast of what is happening in the operational side of your industry.



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