



OPERATOR



August 2007 Edition

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“ How many IDIOTS does it take to light a heater and why would they?”
Find out on page 4.

“Who is this imposter?
See the real Pat Davis step forward
on page 2”



“The aftermath of the big wet in Gippsland”
Page 5 and 6

From the EO's Desk

The three months since the May edition of Operator have just whizzed by, amid a flurry of very exciting activity for our Association.

We held our first ever event in Western Australia on 1st May when the WIOA travelling roadshow hit Perth to deliver our one day "Media Filter Optimization Workshop" to just on 70 very interested participants. Staff from Aqwest and Busselton Water have regularly attended the Victorian Conference and it was great that we could do something that they could attend in their own patch. Water Corporation was also very supportive of the Workshop and after the event purchased multiple copies of the Filter Optimization practical guide book to distribute to their staff.

Only a couple of days later, it was off to Queenstown, NZ for the Water Industry Operations Group (WIOG) conference. Myself, Kwatye Prize winner - Anthony Evans, and IWA (Vic) Prize winner Jason McGregor from Central Highlands Water representing WIOA, (along with a few other Ozzies) were treated like kings by our NZ hosts and we had a fantastic time. The conference was a huge success with over 150 delegates present. A couple of the papers were also very memorable, not only for the story they told but also how they were delivered. Ken Jones had us laughing our heads off and I reckon I heard my first ever "R" rated conference paper once Perky got going. At the Thursday dinner, the inaugural batch of NZ IDIOTS were inducted along with the presentation of a host of other awards. Our congratulations are extended to all the prize recipients and a write up about the NZ Operator of the Year - Ken Jones is included on Page 6. I can't close off this bit without thanking Dave, Les and Jackie for arranging one of the most memorable experiences of our trip - a light plane trip to Milford Sound and back. The scenery was just breathtaking and we managed to take some awesome photos.



The Shotover River in Queenstown and the WWTP on the right.

In June we held the Victorian Storage Operators Group meeting at Glenmaggie Reservoir near Maffra in Gippsland. Heavy rain the day before the meeting had raised the water level in the storage from 20% to around 40%. Little did anyone know that around a week later heavy rain followed by one off the biggest floods in history would hit the area. There is a story and some photos from John Cameron on Page 5.

In July we successfully staged our Inaugural NSW Water Industry Engineers & Operators Conference in Dubbo. We must have seriously offended the weather Gods this year. After spending three days sweltering at our conference in Rockhampton in April, we nearly froze to death due to the record cold snap experienced during conference week. The heater shop and gas bottle refill outlets loved us though!

Although a full report on the NSW Conference and all the prize winners appears later in this newsletter, I want to pass on our thanks to all the helpers from NSW and elsewhere who assisted us to run this event. We really do appreciate the support of the Dubbo City Council and the NSW Water Directorate in promoting the event and we acknowledge the fantastic contribution of our Prime Sponsors in Transpacific and Acromet Australia.

Membership numbers have taken an upward surge as a result of the NSW and WA events - a pleasing and positive result. All those who have joined since May are listed on the back page of this newsletter. As always, we ask all our existing Members to continue to promote the benefits of joining to your colleagues and water industry associates.

The second in our series of four Practical Guide books - "Practical Guide to the Operation and Optimization of Water Distribution Systems" is complete and both it and the "Filters" book are available for purchase at \$30 (+ GST). We are now working hard on the Coag/Flocc and Catchment Management books and intend to have them completed in the next couple of months.

An exciting recent development is the announcement by Federal Minister, Malcolm Turnbull that as a result of a submission from Government Skills Australia, they have been allocated just over \$1.2M to allow development of a comprehensive range of resources to compliment the units of competence contained in the Water Industry Training Package. The plan is to develop standard assessment and trainer guides along with some quality technical resources covering all the units in the Package. This is an important project and once completed, will for the first time provide some standard, high quality resources for use in all Australian States. Having all States singing from the same hymn book will ensure the transferability of Qualifications from State to State. If you get the opportunity to contribute to this project in any way, please give it your full support.

Planning for the 70th Victorian Water Industry Engineers and Operators Conference being held in Bendigo from 4-6 September is proceeding on track. The Trade Exhibition looks likely to be the biggest ever with only 20 of the 178 available booths remaining and the Platform and Poster paper program is top class. We also look forward to a dozen or so of our Kiwi mates joining us for the event. Don't forget that entry to the exhibition is free for visitors and if you can't make it as a delegate, why not come along for a day as a visitor.

The final item to report is that we have made an arrangement with the organisers of Pipes Wagga Wagga to hold a "Distribution Systems Workshop" as part of this event in October. The joint seminar will be held on 18 October and further information will be provided to all Members shortly. Forming alliances such as this, allowing us to stage events for combined audiences, is something we will continue to pursue in the future.

With the multitude of opportunities on offer, there is no better time than now to participate in some of WIOA's events or utilize some of our resources. Hope to see you there.

Until next time,

George Wall
Executive Officer WIOA



"Ah, that's better Pat"

Profile of a Committee Member

Name
John Day

Position
District Manager
Central Water
Treatment

Employer & Location
Goulburn Valley Water,
Shepparton



What is your involvement with the water industry (brief job history)?

17 years with Norske Skog, previously Fletcher Challenge, previously Australian Newsprint Mills as a Lab Assistant, then Water and Waste Water treatment operator. Treatment Coordinator for Power and Water based out of Alice Springs, from there to District Manager Central Water for Goulburn Valley Water where I currently work.

How long have you been a WIOA member?
10 Years

What made you consider becoming a committee member?
I wanted to be George's friend.

What are your expectations as a committee member?
My goal is to push for better recognition of operations and operators and their role within the water industry.

Where do you see yourself in the coming years on the WIOA committee?
Involved in a bloody coup, to oust Peter Tolsher.

Personal:

Age 44
Spouse, kids, family, pets? . Wife Kim, Sons Izaak and Jack, Daughter Bethany.

Book you are currently reading? Scar Tissue by Anthony Kiedis
Favourite band or music style? Never grow tired of Pink Floyd's "Wish You Were Here"

Worst band or music style?..... I like nearly all music

Favourite film? Blues Brothers

Worst film? Titanic

Favourite food? Indian

Worst food? Lamb Sandwich at three in the morning

Favourite meal you can cook? Osso Bucco

Favourite town in Vic? Why?. Sorrento, I swim there every year with a group of mates in the Sorrento to Portsea swim.

Best Trait? Highly Intelligent and good looking

Worst Trait? Tend to have an over inflated opinion of myself.

Four people to invite to dinner? The lads from the Chaser on the ABC
Best advice you can offer anyone?

The water industry is one of the best things to be involved in at the moment, as long as you're willing to accept change and take the opportunities offered.

Food for Thought

The Difference between Focusing on Problems and Focusing on Solutions

Case 1

When NASA began the launch of astronauts into space, they found out that the pens wouldn't work at zero gravity (ink won't flow down to the writing surface). To solve this problem, it took them one decade and \$12 million. They developed a pen that worked at zero gravity, upside down, underwater, in practically any surface including crystal and in a temperature range from below freezing to over 300 degrees C.

And what did the Russians do...?? They used a pencil.

Case 2

One memorable case study on Japanese management was the empty soapbox, which happened in one of Japan's biggest cosmetics companies. The company received a complaint that a consumer had bought a soapbox that was empty. Immediately the company isolated the problem to the assembly line, which transported all the packaged boxes of soap to the delivery department. For some reason, one soapbox went through the assembly line empty. Management asked its engineers to solve the problem. Post-haste, the engineers worked hard to devise an X-ray machine with high-resolution monitors manned by two people to watch all the soapboxes that passed through the line to make sure they were not empty. No doubt, they worked hard and they worked fast but they spent a huge amount of cash to do so.

But when a rank-and-file employee in a small company was posed with the same problem, he did not get into complications of X-rays, etc., but instead came out with another solution. He bought a strong industrial electric fan and pointed it at the assembly line. He switched the fan on, and as each soapbox passed the fan, it simply blew the empty boxes off the line.

Moral:

Always focus on solutions & not on problems. Look for simple solutions first - Devise the simplest possible solution that solves the problem

At the end of the day, the thing that really matters is HOW ONE LOOKED INTO THE PROBLEM, mere perceptions can solve tough problems....

Contributed by Peter Griffiths, Qld

Wanted - Excavator Operator!!



NSW Conference Report

The Inaugural WIOA NSW Water Industry Engineers & Operators Conference was held in Dubbo on 18th & 19th July. The weather outside was bitterly cold for the whole week but by running a heap of big gas heaters most of the day (and into the night) we managed to take the chill out of the air.

In all there were 116 registered delegates and just over 50 day visitors in attendance. All up there were delegates present from 41 separate Councils or Water Businesses as well as many others from private enterprise.

Booths for the trade exhibition sold out within 2 weeks of advertising them for sale and unfortunately, many companies had to be turned away. We will certainly be looking for a bigger venue in 2008. In the end we had 55 companies displaying their products and services from the 62 booths. We would like to thank all the companies involved for the time and effort put in to making the exhibition so impressive.

A big thank you from WIOA is extended to all the sponsors of the event including our Host in Dubbo City Council, the NSW Water Directorate and our Prime Partners in Transpacific Industries Group Ltd and Acromet Australia. Along with these companies, Ron and Ashley from Bergmeier Engineering, Merck, Alldos Grundfos Dosing and Disinfection, KSB Australia, WME Media, Rad-tel Systems, DMI Australia, ABS Wastewater Technology, Peerless Industrial Systems, Ciba Specialty Chemicals, Actizyme, Odour Control Systems, AWMA Water Control Solutions, CE Bartlett, Iwaki Pumps and Environmental and Process Technologies all took out some form of sponsorship for which we are extremely grateful.

The **WIOA Prize for the Best Trade Display** was jointly won by JS Melbourne Controls and Sewer Equipment Company Australia. For their efforts both won a complimentary 12 month Corporate Membership of WIOA and a half page ad in the WME Environment & Business Magazine.



"Joint Winner of the best Trade Exhibit at the NSW Conference – JS Melbourne"



"Sewer Equipment Co - Joint Winner of the best Trade Exhibit at the NSW Conference"

The technical paper sessions were very well attended and it was refreshing to listen to a number of the papers from operators talking about how they fixed day to day problems. Rocket science was put on the back burner to a large degree and I know everyone benefited from the practical information presented.



"The delegates listening intently to the papers"

Congratulations to all the people awarded prizes at the Conference including:

1st - Actizyme Prize for best Operator Paper – Chris Carlon from Wingecarribee Shire Council who spoke about the upgrade of the Mittagong sewage treatment plant. Chris will be presenting this paper again at the Victorian conference in September.



"Chris Carlon (r), winner of the Actizyme Prize for Best paper by an Operator being congratulated by Alex Maderasi from Actizyme"

2nd - Actizyme Prize – John Stevens from Hunter Water.

3rd - Actizyme Prize – Peter Outtrim from Riverina Water County Council.

The winner of the **Iwaki Australia Prize for the Best Paper Overall** was Kate Miles from the NSW Dept of Commerce for her paper on the upgrade of the Dubbo water treatment plant.



"Kate Miles (L) winner of the Iwaki Pumps Australia Prize for Best Paper Overall being congratulated by Ian Jesson"

Unfortunately, we didn't receive any poster papers from Operators this year so this award was put on hold temporarily.

Congratulations to all the winners of the Trade Competition and thanks to Tony Hourigan for organizing it. Special thanks go to all the companies that participated and for supplying fantastic prizes for the winners.



"Some of the conference Trade Competition prize winners"

We were really pleased that the NSW Water Directorate accepted our invitation to sponsor and present the **NSW Operator of the Year Award**.

In all there were six excellent nominations received (in alphabetical council name order):

- Geoff Finucane - Cootamundra Shire Council
- Roger Whale - Gilgandra Shire Council
- Pat Welsh - MidCoast Water
- Peter Lewis - Orange City Council
- Wayne Watson - Tweed Shire Council
- David Cochrane - Wingecarribee Shire Council

We congratulate the winner Pat Welsh from MidCoast Water. A summary of Pat's achievements appears on Page 7.

Overall the conference was a huge success and we look forward to 2008 being even bigger and better.

From Bushfire To Flood

Southern Rural Water (SRW) operates three high hazard storages and three diversion weirs in Gippsland. In December 2006 these sites were threatened by the Great Divide South Bushfire. During that fire a deliberately lit wildfire attacked the Cowarr Weir site and ultimately destroyed infrastructure and residential structures. Within six months and before bushfire repairs could be finalized this site and Lake Glenmaggie were again under threat, but this time it was the threat of flood.

In the week commencing June 24th 2007 the Bureau of Meteorology advised that a deepening east coast low had the potential to drop up to 200 mm of rain on Gippsland late in the week. Consequently SRW commenced preparing for another Dam Safety Emergency.

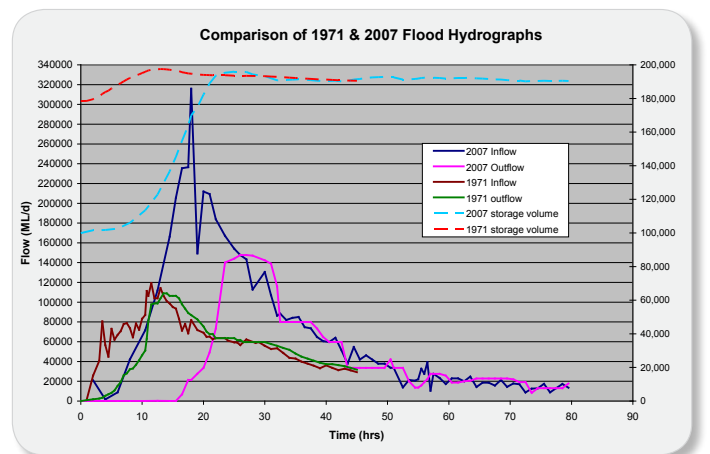
Cowarr Weir diverts water from the Thomson River downstream from Thomson Dam and Lake Glenmaggie impounds the waters of the Macalister River.

On the morning of the 27th heavy rain commenced within the catchments of the Thomson and Macalister Rivers and by late in the day it was evident that major flooding was imminent at both sites.

Lake Glenmaggie flood

The previous highest recorded flood on the Macalister River was in 1971 and recorded a maximum computed inflow of 120GL with a maximum release of 115 GL from Lake Glenmaggie.

The flood of June 2007 yielded a maximum computed inflow of 315 GL and a maximum release of 146 GL. The accompanying hydrographs compare the two flood events.



The flood of 2007 quickly escalated from minor through to major and at its height, all 14 gates at Lake Glenmaggie were fully opened (rated discharge capacity of 204GL) but the storage continued to surcharge above Full Supply Level.

The damage upstream was severe with much public and private infrastructure destroyed. Several caravan parks and a school camp were destroyed and a tractor and in excess of 20 caravans are yet to be found. Erosion was extreme and the entire river course was reshaped completely. The amount of debris created was huge and Lake Glenmaggie became the natural receptacle for it all. Later in excess of 250 truck loads of debris (including caravan fridges and other human detritus) were removed from the dam and many heaps of debris created around the foreshore for burning.

At one stage a large poplar passed under an open floodgate, roots first, and became lodged on the sill. This required a delicate chainsaw operation from the works boat to dislodge it after the main flood had passed



“Lake Glenmaggie showing debris accumulated after 2007 flood event”

Downstream road bridges and roads were badly damaged, two towns and considerable areas of farmland were flooded. Minor SRW infrastructure was also damaged and the hydro-power station located below the weir wall was destroyed. It will take approximately 8 weeks before it is again operational.

Cowwarr Weir flood.

The Cowwarr Weir flood was not the highest on record but at a peak computed inflow of 75Gl it was still significant.

The debris carried in the stream was significant with much of it either accumulating at the weir or damaging infrastructure as it passed. The protective log boom was demolished, banks eroded and deposition of gravel in the pool was excessive. Consequently rapid action was required in order to restore and stabilize the banks and reinstate the log boom before the commencement of the irrigation season on August 15th. It was also necessary to dewater the pool, remove the excess gravel (estimated at 4-5,000 cubic meters) and reshape the bed and banks.

The repair bill for that site is estimated at \$500K-750K.



“The dewatered pool at Cowwarr undergoing rehabilitation works”

New Zealand Operator Of The Year Award 2007

Ken Jones from Rotorua District Council (RDC) was presented with the Inaugural NZ Operator of the Year at the WIOG conference held in Queenstown in May. Part of the Prize is an all expenses paid trip to the WIOA Victorian conference.



Ken Jones (L) with WIOG Chair Stu Craib

Ken first worked for the RDC in 1996 as an instrument technician for a contracting firm servicing the plant. From that time on, Ken became a vital link in the running of the automated and highly monitored Wastewater Plant and eventually was employed by the RDC as an Operations Technician.

This past year, Ken has excelled beyond the call of duty. While doing a superb job on routine operator tasks, Ken has worked on the following projects: -

- Upgrading of the sludge dewatering filter belt tracking system from mechanical to pneumatic. This modification resulted in less belt damage and gave us the confidence to automate the entire operation
- Automation of the sludge dewatering facility. This was a major undertaking; this area of the plant now operates unmanned from a 3:00am start up to a 7:30am finish. The modification frees up approximately 6 man hours per day and power consumption for the facility is now within the low tariff period.
- An initiative to waste scum from the reactor as opposed to RAS was given to Consultants to evaluate and quote on design. The designed modifications were and installed and completed under the leadership of Ken for 20% of the cost estimated by consultants.
- Automatic pump station washing system designed and installed at a problematic station.
- Automatic sampling system designed and installed for the Trades Waste Officer at two difficult industrial sites.
- Operated maintained and improved an experimental Alum dosing facility that was installed by our regional council (Environment Bay of Plenty) last year for the improvement of the Rotorua Lakes water quality.
- Designed and installed improvements to the Pista Grit operating system that were so good the suppliers requested authorization to use them on new units being produced in the States.
- Carried out operational improvements to our Composting operation.

Kens prior achievements have been just as impressive, amongst the highlights he was sent to American Samoa to assist with the design and implementation of new operational practices on their sewage pumping station network.

Ken has an insatiable appetite for work, the most difficult thing for his manager is to keep his work load to a manageable level. His work output is nothing but phenomenal, completing difficult tasks in a timeframe incomprehensible to mere mortals like the rest of us.

Ken has previously been awarded RDC's "Engineer of the Year", being personally selected by the District Engineer.

Thanks to Dave Neru for sharing this information and congratulations to Ken – we agree you are a very deserving winner.

Underwater Leak repair – Grafton

The Problem:

Grafton City Council was losing large amounts of water from an open storage basin.



"The Grafton Storage basin"

The down stream gully had constant flow even in dry times, which appeared to originate from the basin. A diver inspection revealed several large splits in the bitumen floor seal that would account for 10 to 15 litres per second of flow.



"The hole in the floor"

The Solution:

The long-term water flow would have scoured out a significant section of the basin sub-structure, so it was decided to carry out a two-part repair operation. A copper injection tube was inserted into the split seal area, followed by caulking sisal to stem the water flow.



"The hole in the floor repaired"



The bitumen mixed sisal has been used for caulking timber boats and offered flexibility combined with easy application. NMP 1590 Pourable epoxy was applied over the surrounding area to provide a permanent protective covering to the sisal. A high-density polyurethane grout was then injected under the floor using the copper tube, to provide support to the scoured out sub-floor area.

The Result:

The project had an unusual outcome – The client was completely happy with the resulting stoppage of leakage. The adjoining landowner was talking of litigation for the loss of his 'natural spring'. The property had apparently been purchased with the added feature of a 'permanent spring' that never dries up (until Aqualift and NMP came on the scene!!)

Article contributed by: **David Barry from Aqualift Potable Diving**

WATER DIRECTORATE "NSW OPERATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD 2007" - Pat Welsh

WIOA approached the NSW Water Directorate with a proposal for them to present the NSW Operator of the Year Award on an annual basis. The Water Directorate saw this as a positive way to reward operations staff operators of water or wastewater treatment facilities to recognise excellent performance, initiative and all round attention to detail and accepted the offer.

Nomination forms were sent to all NSW Councils and Water Authority CEO's requesting nominations of "operations staff" to be considered for the Award.

The criteria for the determination of the winner is as follows:

- Nominees should be employed in New South Wales and should have direct responsibility for operational decisions at community water and wastewater treatment plants/ or industrial water or wastewater plants.
- The following features were taken into account in considering applications:
 - Continuing education/training achievement;
 - Overall plant or system management and condition;
 - Demonstrated attention to Occupational Health and Safety and other regulatory responsibilities;
 - Initiative and innovation, demonstrating improved treatment and efficiency.

Pat's Achievements:- Pat is a Process Co-ordinator, has 29 years of employment and is a Level 1A Operator. Pat is responsible for 8 STPs ranging from 800 to 25,000EP. Pat is also responsible for the major pumping stations in his area including 2 vacuum pumping stations.

Pat manages 4 process operators and has been involved in 2 major plant upgrades from concept to commissioning during the past 2 years.

Some examples of Pat's commitment to continual improvement at the sites he is responsible for are:

- the installation of nutrient analysers.
- the multi-skilling of staff
- the alarming of plants
- changes to the SCADA programs such as DO control
- reduced chemical and electrical costs by \$30,000 per year
- constant identification and rectification of problems
- conducting school visits to the site and raising community awareness
- has been the major point of liaison between MidCoast Water and farmers regarding the Coopernook 100% effluent reuse scheme and with new Taree and Wingham effluent reuse schemes.

A good summary is: "Pat has exceptional people skills and this is reflected in the pride his staff take in their plants and the way in which both the community and regulators he deals with regard him."



Pat Welsh (R) being congratulated by the Chairman of NSW Water Directorate Stewart McLeod

Gippsland Water Factory – Concrete Works Under Way

The multi-million dollar Gippsland Water Factory will treat up to 35ML of Gippsland's domestic and industrial wastewater daily and provide around 8ML of high-quality recycled water per day for use by local industry.

Major concrete works are underway on the key structure of the membrane bio reactor. The membrane bio reactor (MBR) is a membrane filtration system that will use ground-breaking technology to provide an important step in the treatment of Gippsland's domestic and industrial wastewater at the Maryvale site.

Dubbed the 'donut' because of its round shape, the MBR is the critical structure to complete at the water factory and is targeted to be finished mid 2008. Pre-cast six metre high wall panels are currently being built in NSW and the first of 97 are due to arrive on-site on 13 August 2007. The panels will be delivered on the back of trucks at a rate of eight a day. A 180 tonne crane will be used to lift the wall segments into place, with the first scheduled to be erected on the 13th, the same day as the third concrete base pour.

Alliance project manager Jeff Schwisow said the MBR would provide a vital stage of wastewater treatment at the plant. "Once the wastewater has been biologically treated, it will go into the MBR where the water will be separated from sludge when it is pumped through a series of membranes that act as filters." "Each membrane is like a straw dotted with thousands of tiny holes so only the water and small particles, not the larger organics and bugs, can get through."

Linked to the MBR both in terms of location and function is the cone shaped 'Vortex Centre'. "The Vortex Centre will be a place where the community can come to learn more about water conservation and sustainable water management," Mr Schwisow said. "It will showcase to visitors the technology and treatment processes used at the Gippsland Water Factory."

More than 200 people currently work on the Gippsland Water Factory in the Traralgon office, site construction at Maryvale, pipeline construction, and design engineering in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

About 40 people are working in construction but this number will steadily increase to about 250 at Maryvale and on the pipeline in early 2008 when tradespeople are employed to install mechanical, electrical and instrumentation works and complete building.

For further information please visit the Gippsland Water Factory's website at www.gippslandwaterfactory.com.au or telephone 1800 066 401.



"The first quarter of the membrane bio reactor base at the Gippsland Water Factory being poured in late July"

New Members

Welcome to the following people and companies who have recently joined our Association as a Member or Corporate Supporter.

New Individual Members include

Sjoerd Simba, Rob Namestnik, Noel Bromfield, Benjamin John Van Zeyl, Jeremy Lister, Andrew McDonough, John Clemens, Damian Lawson, Kendall Niblett, Peter Noonan, Craig Roscarel, Peter Stapelton, Paul Steele, David Toohey, Leslie Gilbert, John Hinchliffe, Gary Smith, Paulus desAnge, Scott Murnane, Catherine O'Brien, Jake Ward, Damien Lavelle, Tanya King, Graham McKeon, Lloyd Terlich, Mick Spellacy, Brian Cole, Ross Clark, Robert Banning, Pat Welsh, Garry Hawkins, Michael Standen, David Miller, Larry Gee, Chris Carlon, Michael Murphy, John Mihalyka, Ken Buckby, Mark Bonnefin, Geoff Finucane, Stephen McKay, Lee Frank, Len Kennedy.

New Corporate Members include

Rad-Tel Systems, City Water Technology, Avdata Australia, Sitest, Australian Valve & Filter Industries, Enviro Check Enterprises, CSE-Uniserve, Camp-lin Dive Services, Underground Pump Supplies, Austeck, KRE Engineering Services, Mack Valves, ABS Wastewater Technology, ADS Environmental Services, Water Corporation (WA), B.F Group, Virotec Global Solutions, Pumpserv Pty Ltd, Sewer Equipment Company, Burnie City Council.

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Next Edition

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