



Water Industry Operators Association of Australia



20
22

ANNUAL REVIEW & Members Information

communicate \ encourage \ protect \ network \ engage

WIOA acknowledges the traditional custodians of the various lands on which we all live and work and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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2022 Numbers

3 Face to Face Conferences 

1.7 % Increase in Membership 

116 Registered Operators 

2,520 Conference Attendees 

4,512 WIOA Members 

Life Members



2022 Anthony Evans



2018 John Harris



2017 Peter Tolsher



2014 Russell Mack



2007 Barry Waddell



2004 George Wall



1998 Ron Bergmeier



1994 Stan Franzi



1986 Ray Holloway*
*deceased

IDIOTS Award

(Inducted as Delegates of the Inextricably Obstructed Tap Society)

2022

Neville Whittaker

2021

Robran Cock

2020

Adrian Rijnbeek

2019

Bill Collie
Darren Lord

2018

Colin Haynes
Shane Bandiera
Ryan McGowan

2017

David Sheehan
Ian Cuthbertson

2016

Marcus Boyd
Lindsay Walsh
Kathy Northcott

2015

John Granzien

2014

Peter Mosse

2013

Jill Busch
John Day

2012

Anthony Evans
Tim Sells

2011

John Paulger
Graham Thomson

2010

David Barry
Peter Tolsher

2009

Leigh Strange
John Park
Brian Davis

2008

Owen Braybrook
Ian Bicknell

2007

Peter Jackson
Cynthia Lim
Stephen Wilson

2006

Ken Herbert
Pat Davis
John Harris

2005

Mal Farnham
Neil Healey
Russell Mack

2004

Barry Waddell
Ron Bergmeier
George Wall
Richard Greenhough
Tony Hourigan



Hello Members. WIOA has had a solid 2022 year on the back of successfully staging three of our major conferences, namely Victoria, NSW and Queensland. There was still some disruption from COVID early in the year and all three events were well attended. From the attendee feedback, they were considered a resounding success. Unfortunately, the pandemic and ongoing operator restrictions meant that the South Australian conference needed to be postponed to early 2023.

It was exciting that the Membership numbers continued to increase and rose by 1.7%. They reached a record number of 4,512 members at the end of 2022, up from 4,435 at the end of 2021. This is a great sign for the association given the difficulties of the past three years and the inability to fully engage with members through the usual means with conferences and interest days still being difficult to coordinate. As we learn to manage our workforces, we hope that the hesitation of members and employers in encouraging participation at face to face events will continue to decline and 2023 will see even more opportunities for members to engage and participate in WIOA activities and training opportunities.

The Annual General Meeting was held on-line again with a solid turn out of members in attendance. Bill Collie decided not to nominate for the Committee and we thanked him for his contributions to the Association and to the Queensland Advisory Committee over a number of years. We welcomed a new Committee member in Jill Busch.

WIOA relies heavily on the assistance of volunteers, whether that is on the General Committee, on one of the State based Advisory Committees, or by helping out at one of our many events. The support of all the organisations who allow their staff to assist us in any way is greatly appreciated.

Equally, the support of all the organisations who have permitted their staff to attend and share their knowledge and experience, introduce new technologies and build their networks at one of our conferences, interest days and webinars throughout the year is also appreciated. A huge vote of thanks is extended to all of our sponsors, exhibitors and

Corporate Members whose continued support has been outstanding through a period of multiple event disruptions, postponements and cancellations.

I would like to acknowledge the great work done by the WIOA staff who have continued to deliver high quality services and events on behalf of all members through what has been a very challenging period. The pandemic has required great flexibility in how we manage and do things. Many new processes and systems have been developed, implemented and are continually under review, with all the learnings now embedded into the safety framework of the organisation. All contributors deserve a pat on the back for demonstrating WIOA's commitment to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all our staff and stakeholders, always our highest priority.

2023 is shaping up to be a great year. I certainly hope that the disruption of the past three years is now well and truly behind us, and we can look to the future with confidence and security.

Mark Samblebe
WIOA President



Managing Director Review

Going into 2022, it was hoped that the impacts of the pandemic were going to be well behind us. It became clear very early in the year that this was not going to be the case, with the onset of the Omicron outbreak that led to the postponement of the Victorian conference from February to June. Dealing with the constantly changing situation and the uncertainty of whether events could proceed was extremely stressful and frustrating for the staff, Board and all our Members and stakeholders.

Being able to stage our very large conferences relies on a small but experienced staff team. I would like to personally congratulate and thank our Chief Operations Officer, Craig Mathisen who resigned in March 2022. Craig worked with WIOA for more than 10 years and made a significant contribution to the organisation, particularly through his creativity, vision and his great talents in the graphic design and organisational management areas.

Although our staff have been mentioned already by the President and Chair, I would also like to add my personal thanks and congratulations to each of them for being so selfless, professional and committed to the organisation over the past three difficult years. The staff are WIOA's main asset and without them and their considerable knowledge and expertise as a team, we would not be able to deliver the very large events that we continue to run so successfully.

The continuous tweaking and reworking of budgets, along with planning a strategy to diversify our income streams to keep the organisation commercially viable remained a high priority. During 2021, WIOA was awarded contracts to review training in parts of both Queensland and New South Wales. These projects were both completed in 2022 with final reports provided to both Queensland Health and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. Their feedback about the outputs and the quality of the information from the work has been extremely positive.

The management, production and publication of WIOA's technical magazine WaterWorks was brought in house with the May 2022 edition the first to be managed internally by the staff. Along with the inclusion of limited adverts in Operator, these initiatives generated some additional income for WIOA whilst providing an avenue for our Corporate Members to promote their products and services.

With the amazing support of our Advisory Committee members plus our army of volunteers, we successfully staged the NSW, Victorian and Queensland conferences in April, June and August respectively. In particular, we recognise the support of our Prime Sponsors in AKS Industries, All About Lifting and Safety, Alliance Automation, Bernad Water Technologies, Hach, Ixom and Xylem as well

as event Hosts in Tamworth Regional Council, VicWater and Logan City Council & Logan Water. A huge thank you is also extended to all the other sponsors, exhibitors, delegates and visitors that attended in each State.

In conjunction with sponsor IXOM, the Best Tasting Tap Water competitions were held at a variety of events around the country throughout the year. As with the previous year, due to the inability to run some face to face events, we also staged an online "reconnects" event in October to announce the winner from South Australia and Western Australia. We congratulate every organisation who participated, including the finalists and winners from each State. The 2022 National final was held in Casino, NSW in November at the Primex Field Days.

The Advisory Committees continued to meet regularly and apart from helping at conferences, assisted us by sourcing speakers and topics for the WIOA Talks webinars with seven sessions held across the year. The second half of the year saw the recommencement of State based events with an Interest Day plus Taste Test held in Spreyton in Tasmania; the Far North Queensland Interest Day and Charity Bowls in Cairns in October; and a Networks focussed Interest Day held in Albury in November. The only other events staged were two Distribution Seminars held in Alice Springs in May for the Power and Water operations staff and some networks management training for Livingstone Shire Council in Queensland in June.

After completing the development of the Acuario data management platform in 2020, the functionality of the platform was greatly enhanced with the addition of several reporting options, mostly required for the Queensland and New South Wales training review projects. These changes have made the platform much more user friendly and we hope will be the catalyst for more organisations to seek ongoing access to the platform. How the platform works, the outputs and potential benefits was showcased at a variety of conferences, meetings and training forums during the year.

As a member service organisation, effective communication is vital. We have regularly communicated with members to share industry news and developments using our website, social media, and our suite of publications including Words, Operator and WaterWorks. Thank you to everyone who has contributed something to one of these publications.

We really felt for the participants in the 2020 Network Operator Development Program (NODP) as their course was seriously disrupted by COVID. It was finally able to be completed in February 2022. The 2022 cohort had a much more seamless program, kicking off in April and concluding in November. Their graduation ceremony will be held at the



Victorian conference in March 2023. All the advisory group members looking after NODP, and in particular Neville Whittaker, have done a fantastic job managing the program on behalf of WIOA.

Collaboration with other water industry bodies is vital to avoid duplication of effort and to allow the sharing of resources and information. Our collaboration with a range of water industry organisations has remained strong. Staff participated in the Queensland Water Directorate Skills Forum as well as their annual Forum in September. They were also involved in the Training and Resources Focus Groups as part of the NSW Town Water Risk Reduction Program.

Following another up and down year, we hope that this Annual Review will showcase our activities and the value we bring to the operational sector of the water industry. Through the efforts of our dedicated staff, along with the assistance of the Committee, Directors, Advisory Committees and our valued volunteer members, helpers and supporters, we continue to deliver an enormous amount for our members, and the industry in general.

We trust that you will enjoy reading the annual review as it contains much more detail on all our activities. Thank you to everyone who has supported or contributed to WIOA in 2022, and we look forward to making 2023 another outstanding year.

George Wall
Managing Director

After the disruptions of the last couple of years, it was pleasing to see things finally start to settle down in the latter half of 2022, allowing WIOA to return to providing services to our Members and our broader water industry stakeholders.

With three of the four conferences able to be successfully staged, the completion of the training review projects in Queensland and New South Wales, along with ramping up other engagement activities in the second half of 2022, WIOA has been able to stabilise our financial position and record a significant surplus. Having a reasonable level of cash reserves is a vital tool for the long term sustainability of the organisation. Our challenge going forward will be to continue to diversify our income streams along with gradually growing our reserves to provide financial security for the future.

As Board Chair, I would like to formally recognise and applaud the outstanding contribution that our staff made in allowing us to achieve the positive financial outcome in 2022. Following the resignation of Craig Mathisen (COO) in March, and with the Victorian conference relocated from February to June due to the Omicron outbreak, there was no guarantee that events would be able to run. It was not feasible to employ new staff in this uncertain environment.

The remaining staff in George, Ann, Sherryn and Marilyn rallied to coordinate and deliver the three conferences during the year, as well as completing a number of major projects. They worked tirelessly under great pressure and we are all in awe of their dedication and commitment to the organisation. Our sincere thanks are also extended to Wannon Water for approving the part time secondment of Anthony Evans to support the WIOA team through the busy April to September period. Having Anthony available to assist with the projects and the conferences was vital in allowing us to manage what was an immense workload.

Later in the year, the Board and staff completed a review of the staffing structure and individual roles which saw some re-defining of existing positions and the appointment of three new people. I would like to welcome Glenn Alford who started as Events Coordinator in November 2022, along with Dean Barnett as Executive Officer and Ella Wilson as Trainee Administration Officer. Both Dean and Ella will commence in January 2023. We are sure that all three will be fantastic additions to the staff team and we look forward to their future contributions to the direction and growth of WIOA.

From a Governance perspective, the Board and management continued the regular electronic meetings, not only to monitor the rolling monthly budgets forecasts, but also to keep abreast of the ever-changing situation. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Jill Busch who stepped down from the Board after five years and we welcomed Kayleen White onto the Board at the AGM.

A joint strategic meeting was held with the Board and Committee in August to set the direction for the next few years. The Board also reviewed and updated several policies and procedures, along with delivering refresher training for the Board members. To all our Board Members, along with George and staff, thank you for your commitment and guidance during the past 12 months and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you all as Chair.

I am confident that with the knowledge gained in living and working through the past few years, the Board, Committee, and staff, together with our army of volunteers will ensure that our organisation continues to make a positive impact on our sector of the water industry well into the future. Thank you everyone.

John Harris
WIOA Limited Chair

Summary of WIOA Financial Position

INCOME and EXPENDITURE for period 1 January to 31 December 2021

INCOME (excluding GST)	2022	2021
Conference & Events income	\$ 908,296.35	\$ 312,718.37
Publications	\$ 69,379.11	\$ 37,678.12
Individual Membership	\$ 92,363.12	\$ 95,981.99
Corporate Membership	\$ 96,419.92	\$ 97,681.73
Services & Other Income	\$ 112,813.25	\$ 228,878.11
Petty Cash (opening balance)	\$ 702.00	\$ 250.15
Government Support Subsidies	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 80,300.00
Interest	\$ 3,952.53	\$ 705.06
Income in Advance	\$ 142,839.48	\$ 599,920.25
GST collected Dec quarter for ATO	\$ 0.00	\$ 15,599.76
Total Income	\$ 1,451,765.76	\$ 1,469,713.54

EXPENDITURE (excluding GST)	2022	2021
Office & Administration Expenses	\$ 269,790.74	\$ 168,178.29
Employment Expenses	\$ 541,051.09	\$ 576,640.33
Property Services	\$ 16,837.00	\$ 7,908.65
Vehicles Maintenance & Operations	\$ 16,188.14	\$ 8,659.76
Events Expenditure	\$ 636,029.02	\$ 132,498.83
NSW & Qld fee refunds	\$ 0.00	\$ 3,000.00
Closing Petty Cash Balance	\$ 102.75	\$ 702.00
Total Operating Expenditure	\$ 1,479,998.74	\$ 897,587.86

Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (28,232.98)	\$ 572,125.68
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Asset Purchases	\$ 95,312.18	\$ 1,413.83
GST to ATO on purchases	\$ 17,448.00	\$ 0.00
Total Expenditure	\$ 1,592,758.92	\$ 1,935,968.94

Net Trading Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (140,993.16)	\$ 570,693.85
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FUNDS HELD	2022	2021
Balance beginning of Year	\$ 1,034,947.15	\$ 464,253.30
Net Trading Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (140,993.16)	\$ 570,693.85
Balance at end of Year	\$ 893,953.99	\$ 1,034,947.15

Consolidated Financial Information

The consolidated financial position presented here is a summary for the information of members and water industry stakeholders. It has not been subject to a full audit, but fairly represents the position of the Association in relation to consolidated annual turnover and cash assets held in bank accounts.

The WIOA approach to all our operational activities is to provide maximum value to our members and stakeholders at the most affordable price. The annual operating budget is set with this concept in mind and developing revenue streams which are less prone to impacts of COVID is a key priority going forward.

This report looks at WIOA's financial performance only from the perspective of movements in the cash at bank.

At the end of 2022, the Association has \$578,937.34 in operating cash accounts, \$315,016.65 held in term deposits, plus fixed assets in the form of building, plant and equipment valued at \$683,300 after depreciation. It should be noted that there is a staff provisions liability (Annual Leave, RDO's and Long Service Leave) of approximately \$99,000 that is not reflected in the Consolidated Financial Information presented here. There are adequate reserves in the term deposit accounts to guarantee this sum.

After struggling through 2020 and 2021 with severe interruptions to our events program and cash flow due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was a relief and pleasing to be able to stage three of our four conferences in 2022.

Although there has been an overall reduction of \$140,993 in cash at bank at the end of the year, the WIOA financial position has improved significantly during 2022. Of the \$1M cash held at the end of 2021, almost \$600,000 was prepayments received for 2022 events. This sum was able to be transferred to the income accounts in 2022 once the respective events were staged. When considering the prepayments made in 2022 for 2023 events, an overall trading surplus in 2022 in excess of \$360,000 has been realised. This is an outstanding result when taking the significantly reduced staff numbers, the lingering impacts of the pandemic and the removal of government subsidies into consideration.

Being able to deliver three of the four Operations conferences has seen a significant increase in both income and expenditure. In reviewing 2022 income, the finalisation of the operator training review projects in Queensland and NSW provided almost \$70,000 and we received subsidy support from the Victorian State Government of \$25,000 for the Bendigo conference. With the production of WaterWorks and all advertising brought in-house, income from publications increased significantly. We have received income in advance of almost \$143,000 for 2023 events which must be considered a liability until the respective events are able to be staged. Membership and most other services were similar to 2021 levels.

Operating Expenditure on events and running the Association increased significantly compared to 2021 levels once conferences and the ability to travel resumed. The Office and Administration expenses were much higher due to travel, accommodation and



4,512 Members

Membership Statistics & Distribution

In 2022, Individual membership of the association increased by 2.1% (54 members) to a total of 2,594 members, Utility Corporate Members increased by 1 to 80 organisations and Corporate Member numbers increased by 3.7% to a total of 391.

The Associate Corporate member numbers increased by 8 (0.6%) to 1447. As Associate Corporate members receive limited benefits, there is an opportunity for them to become Individual members in the future, allowing them to access the full benefits of membership.

The overall result is that the Association's total membership at the end of 2021 is 4,512, a 1.7% increase across all categories. That membership was able to be increased in 2022 indicates that there is a growing exposure and acceptance of why the association exists and what it does.

We trust that all existing members will continue to spread the word about the benefits of membership to others in the operational side of the water industry. This will assist us to promote and grow WIOA as the leading association working for operational employees.

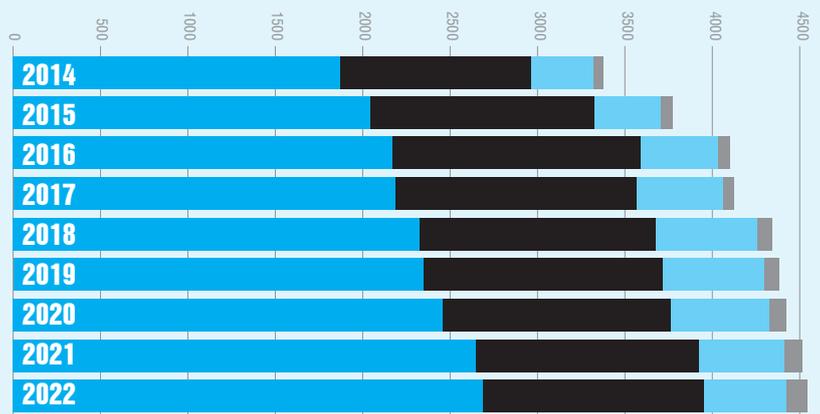
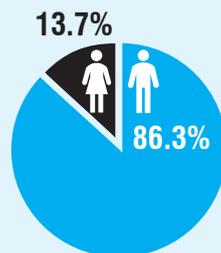
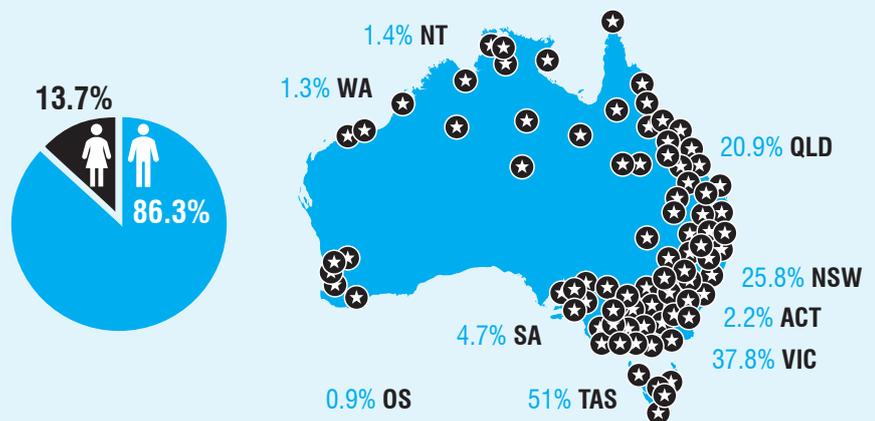
expenses in undertaking the conferences plus training projects, although there were very few other face to face events staged. Property Services and Vehicle costs increased as staff moved back to the office, more travel was undertaken and fuel prices rose considerably.

The FTE staff numbers were reduced from 7.5 at the end of 2019 to 3.5 plus a part time seconded person from the end of March 2022, following the departure of the COO. With the Victorian conference transferred from February to June due to COVID, the uncertainty relating to being able to stage events meant it was not feasible to employ replacement staff until later in the year. We appreciated the support of Wannon Water who provided a part time staff member on secondment from the end of April until September. There were modest wage rises and a reorganisation of duties for the existing administrative staff and a number of new staff appointments were made late in the year. We are excited that we will have a full staff team ready for the start of the 2023 year.

A total of \$95,312 was spent on asset purchases including vehicles, computers and office equipment upgrades.

The need for adequate cash reserves is particularly important when considering how reliant the Association is on income from conferences and events. In these volatile financial times, cash reserves commensurate with the growth of the organisation and our risk profile are required to ensure our long term viability. We will need to continue to grow our reserves over time to ensure we have operational stability.

Despite the challenges of the last three years, the Association is in a positive financial position and has adequate funds to continue to provide member services at appropriate levels. Presuming that conferences and events can be staged successfully in 2023, our financial position will consolidate even further and will enable WIOA to develop and deliver an expanded range of operationally focussed events and services throughout 2023.



Utility Corporate Members



Employers of operational staff who provide water and wastewater services to our communities.

Corporate Members



Suppliers of goods and/or services to the water industry.

Associate Members



Employees of Corporate members supplying goods and/or services to the water industry.

Individual Members



Individuals working in the water or allied industries.



WIOA Incorporated General Committee

The Association has a General Committee comprising both elected and appointed Members. The primary role of the Committee is to represent all members by determining and then communicating their views and needs to the rest of the Committee and to the Board of WIOA Ltd.

At the WIOA Incorporated Annual General Meeting held online on Thursday 21 April 2022, Mark Samblebe from MBS Water was elected President, Sally Shepherd from Thermo Fisher Scientific was elected Vice President and George Wall was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

Ryan McGowan from Goulburn Valley Water, Heidi Josipovic from Albury City Council, Grant Waite from North East Water and Elise O’Keefe from Goulburn Valley Water were re-elected. Jillian Busch Albury City Council was also elected for the first time.

The efforts and contributions of outgoing Committee members in Bill Collie from Urban Utilities and Colin Haynes from Unity Water was formally acknowledged with Bill and Colin both indicating they would continue to support WIOA through participation in the WIOA Queensland Advisory Committee.

The Chairs of each of the five State based Advisory Committees are automatically appointed to the General Committee. Anthony Evans, Victoria; Alan Butler, NSW; George Bellizia, Queensland; Stephen Westgate, Tasmania; and Robran Cock, South Australia were all announced as Committee members.



President
Mark Samblebe
MBS Water



Vice President
Sally Shepherd
Thermo Fisher Scientific



Secretary/Treasurer
George Wall
WIOA



Queensland
Colin Haynes
Unitywater



Queensland
George Bellizia
Veolia



NSW
Alan Butler
Port Macquarie Hastings/
Walcha Councils



South Australia
Robran Cock
Ametqua/
Inside Infrastructure



Tasmania
Stephen Westgate
TasWater



Victoria
Anthony Evans
Wannon Water



Jillian Busch
Albury City Council



Bill Collie
Urban Utilities



Heidi Josipovic
Albury City Council



Ryan McGowan
Goulburn Valley Water



Elise O’Keefe
Goulburn Valley Water



Grant Waite
North East Water

WIOA Limited Board of Directors

The operations of WIOA is governed by a Board of Directors who oversee the business functions including governance, policy and procedures, managing risk and the organisation's finances. The General Committee and the Board work together to confirm and deliver on the strategic direction of the Association.

The Annual General Meeting of WIOA Limited was conducted on Wednesday 20 April 2022.

John Harris was elected as Chair of the Board for a second term and Mark Samblebe was elected as the Deputy Chair.

Retiring Director Jillian Bush expressed her thanks and gratitude to the WIOA Board for the support and opportunities provided during her term on the Board. Jill's outstanding contribution to the association was acknowledged by all. Jill was replaced on the Board by Kayleen White.

Staff

Day to day operations of the Association is managed by the WIOA staff team, led by Managing Director George Wall.

After more than 10 years in the Chief Operations Officer role, Craig Mathisen resigned in March 2022. Craig made a fantastic contribution over this period and brought far more to the role than the original PD requested. His skills in graphic design, marketing, web development, IT management and strategic thinking assisted the Association to deliver what was a period of enormous achievement and growth.

With the Victorian conference postponed, the uncertainty relating to being able to stage events meant it was not feasible to employ replacement staff until later in the year.

The existing staff members really stepped up in these difficult circumstances and did an outstanding job on behalf of all members. The contribution of Ann, Sherryn and Marilyn along with Anthony Evans who was seconded from Wannan Water part time from the end of April until September was exceptional and we thank them for their perseverance and commitment to the organisation.

A number of new staff appointments were made later in the year with Glenn Alford coming into the Event Coordinator position in November, and Dean Barnett and Ella Wilson commencing in early 2023 as Executive Officer and Trainee Business Administration Officer respectively. We look forward to working with our new staff team in 2023.



Chair
John Harris



Deputy Chair
Mark Samblebe



Managing Director
George Wall



Executive Officer
Dean Barnett



Chief Operations Officer (until March 2022)
Craig Mathisen



Managing Director
George Wall



Director
Ron Bergmeier



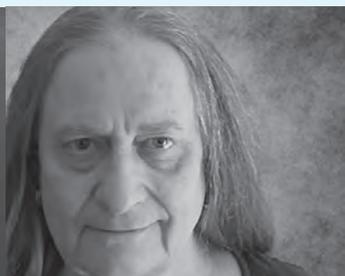
Events Coordinator
Glenn Alford



Digital Design Coordinator
Sherryn Wall



Administration Coordinator
Ann Austin



Director
Kayleen White



Director
Heidi Josipovic



Administration
Marilyn Wall



Administration Trainee
Ella Wilson

Life Membership

Anthony Evans



At the 2022 Victorian Conference in Bendigo, WIOA presented our highest individual award to Anthony Evans. In receiving the award, Anthony became the ninth Life Member in the Association's 49 year history. A brief outline of Anthony's involvement with AWWOA, WIOA and the Water Industry follows.

Anthony commenced employment in the water industry in 1984 with the Warrnambool Shire to look after the Koroit and later the Purnim water supplies. When South West Water was created in 1994, he continued on as a contractor. In 1998 he joined South West Water's water quality team and trained up to run both the Warrnambool WTP & WWTP. He has seen numerous mergers and amalgamations from the Council through to Wannon Water.

Anthony's involvement with AWWOA, WIOA and the Water Industry.

1998	Joined WIOA as a member
2003-2006	Elected to the Committee. Has now completed 20 consecutive years of service to WIOA as a Committee Member between 2003 and 2022 including 3 years as a Board Member
2007 & 2008	Elected as Vice President
2009 & 2010	Elected as President
2010-2012	Board Member WIOA Ltd
2011-2016	Elected as a Committee member after finishing his term as President
2017-2022	Inaugural and ongoing Chair of the WIOA Victorian Advisory Committee
2022	Assisted WIOA in a seconded staff position for six months with the support of Wannon Water

Anthony's Achievements & Awards

2002	Awarded the Hepburn and Actizyme Prizes for Best Paper at the Geelong conference. Paper on biosolids management using the Deskin Quick Dry Filter Bed
2006	Kwatye Award – Project to review water losses from within water treatment plants
2012	Inducted as an IDIOTS member

Other Service

- 2002 & 2005 Authored articles in WIOA's WaterWorks magazine
- 2003-2013 Papers room manager at the Victorian conference
- 2009, 2010, 2015 & 2018 Represented WIOA and assisted with staging and managing the operators tour group to NZ

- 2014-2019 Bus driver and chaperone for the Kiwi contingent on their tour of Australian plants.
- Regular and very professional MC at the Awards Dinner at the Victorian conference
- Encouraged many of his colleagues to contribute papers and posters for the conference
- Anthony was one of the main drivers for Wannon Water joining the Operator Certification pilot in 2012. Anthony has been instrumental in Wannon Water's continued participation in registration, mainly through staging refresher courses for the registered operators.
- He was appointed to the Water Industry Reference Committee managed by Australian Industry Standards as one of two water industry experts in February 2020.
- In his time as a Board and Committee member, Anthony rarely misses attending a meeting. His input is always constructive, well thought out and valuable and he is never afraid of speaking up. His comments are always focused on ways to provide the best outcomes for our members and WIOA in general.
- Anthony has a fun loving personality with a quick wit and a wicked sense of humour. He is always fun to be around and has the knack of being able to diffuse difficult or tense situations with a few well chosen words or a joke.
- Anthony has been a regular attendee and assisted with the organisation of WIOA events including the Weekend and other Seminars, Interest Days, plant tours and even social occasions like the Golf Day. With the support of his employer, he has attended several interstate events and has helped significantly with the expansion of WIOA nationally.
- Through his enthusiasm, long term commitment, energy, personal qualities and friendly nurturing nature, Anthony epitomises the values our organisation aims to display.





Advisory Committees

State based WIOA Advisory Committees are vital to provide members the opportunity to actively participate in the direction of WIOA in their state and to become more engaged with their association.

Advisory Committees in NSW, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria work on options to determine and deliver appropriate services to WIOA Members. The events conducted by the Advisory Committees provide a great networking opportunity for members and allow attendees to meet other operators and increase their knowledge and skills.

Advisory Committees focus on issues and actions relating to the provision of services, events, training and opportunities to recognise achievements in the operational sector of the water industry. They assist the Association to undertake a range of functions such as:

- Identifying the types, range and scope of services and events considered appropriate for water industry operational staff
- Assisting with the organisation, promotion and staging of events
- Providing information for inclusion in WIOA publications
- Encourage participation and knowledge sharing with water industry related personnel employed in the private sector.
- Informing WIOA of training issues or needs specific to operational staff.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 significantly disrupted activities in each State in 2022 with only a few face to face opportunities able to be completed in Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales later in the year. In light of the restricted activities, the existing Advisory Committee members were offered the opportunity to stay on for another year.

Each of the Advisory Committee's is led by a Chairperson and comprises up to 11 Members. The Chairs in each State are:

- NSW - Alan Butler, Walcha Shire Council
- Queensland – George Bellizia, Veolia
- South Australia - Robran Cock, Ametqua/Inside Infrastructure
- Tasmania - Stephen Westgate, TasWater
- Victoria - Anthony Evans, Wannon Water

Our thanks are extended to Colin Haynes from Unity Water who stepped down as Queensland Advisory Committee Chair in 2022 after undertaking the role for the past seven years.

WIOA Talks

With many of the water and wastewater facilities still under COVID access restrictions with little or no entry for visitors for the first half of the year, all the Advisory Committees decided to postpone any face to face events. In place of the normal interest days, each Advisory Committee assisted with the organisation and hosting of at least one of the free WIOA Talks webinars.

In 2022, seven webinars were delivered providing members the opportunity for collaboration with other water industry organisations across Australia. The material presented was sourced from industry experts, many of whom are WIOA members, in order to share the latest information with all Members. Commencing in March, the webinars ran for around one hour each and share practical information on a range of operational topics.

2022 WIOA Talks

- 20 January** Best Tasting Tap Water in Australia
- 23 March** The Best Job in the World
- 18 May** Towards Zero Carbon
- 15 June** Wearables & VR Technology
- 6 July** Indigenous Water initiatives as part of NAIDOC Week
- 31 August** Process Control Charts & SCADA Review
- 19 October** WIOA Reconnects



NSW

Alan Butler
Port Macquarie Hastings/
Walcha Councils



Tasmania

Stephen Westgate
TasWater



Queensland

George Bellizia
Veolia



South Australia

Robran Cock
Ametqua/
Inside Infrastructure



Victoria

Anthony Evans
Wannon Water





One of the Association's primary purposes is to collect and disseminate knowledge and information for the betterment of Members and industry stakeholders. To achieve an appropriate outcome, we have actively pursued opportunities to participate in activities for, and on behalf of, our members.

We have consistently advocated for the introduction of operational risk improvement strategies such as operator registration. We have represented member views and made a positive contribution to a range of industry Committees and working groups. We have developed and implemented a suite of technical training resource materials and seminars to fill identified skill and knowledge gaps, and we have developed collaborative affiliations with numerous water industry organisations.

Advocacy

WIOA maintains a strong advocacy role on issues relating to the operational side of the water industry. We take an active approach in promoting industry awareness and understanding of water and wastewater operational issues as they relate to management of public health and the environment.

Representation

Due to the diverse nature and skills of our staff and members, we receive many requests to provide expertise to a wide range of projects on behalf of the industry. WIOA staff or members participate on several state and national committees, present at conferences, seminars and workshops, provide information and advice to a range of industry stakeholders and support and inform research and policy development wherever appropriate.

Darren Sharman from Goulburn Valley Water represents WIOA on the Standards Australia Committee on Service Activities - Water Supply and Wastewater Systems (WS-041). The main project being undertaken by this group at present relates to creation of a Standard for flushable products.

WIOA staff or members have represented the Association on the following committees:

- Australian Industry Standards - Water Industry Reference Committee.
- Australian Industry Standards - Technical Advisory Committee for the review of the National Water Training Package
- Water Industry Operator Registration Taskforce - Member
- Registration Body for Water Treatment Operators nationally
- Registration Body for Wastewater and Recycled Water Treatment Operators nationally
- Australian Standards Committee WS - 039 for Sludge recovery, recycling, treatment and disposal
- Australian Standards Committee WS - 041 for Service Activities - Water Supply and Wastewater Systems
- Institute of Water Administration (Victoria) Board

Australian Industry Standards Water Industry Reference Committee

Australian Industry Standards (AIS) is a government funded Skills Service organisation that develops skills standards across a range of Australian industries.

Working under the direction of the Water Industry Reference Committee (IRC) that represents the water sector, Australian Industry Standards provides industry engagement, quality assurance, and project management to produce and maintain the National Water Training Package (NWP) and other support services. The Water Training Package provides the only nationally recognised Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications for occupations in the water industry.

Industry References Committees (IRCs):

- Provide a forum for industry engagement.
- Direct the review, development and implementation of training package content relevant to the industry sectors they cover.
- Act as a conduit for industry feedback to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) and governments on industry trends.

WIOA Managing Director George Wall continued in the role of Chair with WIOA Committee Member and current WIOA Victorian Advisory Committee Chair Anthony Evans from Wannon Water also on the IRC as an industry expert.

WIOA's involvement in this high-level committee ensures that the issues of operational employees and the ever-evolving nature of technology and process development are appropriately considered as the training package evolves.

During 2022, the Federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations announced that the current system utilising Skills Service Organisations to manage the various Industry Reference Committees would be replaced by the formation of several new Industry Clusters. The water sector has now been removed from the management of Australian Industry Standards and at the end of 2022 was still awaiting formal notification of the arrangements going into 2023.

Water Industry Operator Registration Taskforce

The Water Industry Operator Registration Taskforce (WIORT) which comprises CEO-level representation from the water industry and related education and government sectors, including WIOA, continued in the role of national Certification Framework owner. The CEO from **qldwater** is the current Chair and **qldwater** provides the secretariat services for WIORT.

Affiliations and Collaboration

WIOA maintains affiliations with other stakeholders and peak bodies that service the Australian water sector.

These affiliations have been established and maintained in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and resources.

WIOA has worked in a collegiate and collaborative manner with a range of water industry organisations on a number of operationally focussed projects and initiatives in 2022. The various stakeholders include:

- Australian Industry Standards, Water Industry Reference Committee (IRC)
- Australian Water Association (AWA)
- Backflow Prevention Association of Australia (BPAA)
- Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)
- Choose Tap Coalition
- Institute of Water Administration (Vic)
- Intelligent Water Network (IWN)
- Local Government Shires Associations (LGSA)
- NSW Water Directorate
- NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
- Public Utilities Board - Singapore
- Pump Industry Association
- Queensland Health
- Queensland Water Directorate (**qldwater**)
- Various Regions of Councils (ROC)
- Standards Australia
- University of Melbourne
- Various Government Departments
- responsible for water or wastewater regulation
- Victorian Water Industry Association (VicWater)
- Water Industry Operations Group (New Zealand)
- Water Industry Operator Registration Taskforce (WIORT)
- Water New Zealand
- Water Research Australia (WaterRA)
- Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA)



Diversity & Inclusion Group

WIOA embraces diversity and inclusion and consider it is integral to our culture, our values and the way we do business.

The WIOA Diversity and Inclusion Group provides advice, support and assists WIOA to ensure we have an inclusive culture that embraces diversity, celebrates differences, and encourages participation.

The members of the group from across Australia conducted meetings online in 2022 to discuss initiatives that WIOA could implement. The group conducted a WIOA Talks webinar on the topic of “The best job in the world” in March that was well attended. The session discussed how and why people joined the water industry and the sorts of initiatives that could attract more young people.

Another WIOA Talks session in July coinciding with NAIDOC Week, looked at ways that water utilities around the country are working collaboratively with representatives of our indigenous communities to provide more opportunities to manage water assets.

Like many things, activities were also hindered by the pandemic in 2022. We look forward to working with the Group in 2023 to drive even more positive outcomes for WIOA.



Conferences

Water Industry Operations Conferences & Exhibitions

In 2022, WIOA conducted three operationally focused conferences in NSW, Queensland and Victoria. Unfortunately, the South Australian conference was postponed to March 2023 due to the ongoing impacts of COVID and restrictions on staff activities. A total of 2,520 attendees from within Australia and from overseas participated in the technical sessions or the exhibitions.

WIOA conferences and exhibitions provide a forum for water industry operational employees to come together and discuss issues, share experiences, learn about the latest product and technology developments, and network with their peers.

WIOA conferences aim to:

- Distribute the latest operational, technical and research information through platform and poster presentations.
- Update the knowledge and skills of operational staff through interaction with fellow water industry employees.
- Provide the opportunity to view and discuss the latest advances in technical equipment, products and services with suppliers and industry consultants.

WIOA endeavours to develop our members and the wider water industry by providing a relaxed forum for operations staff to present technical papers to their peers. In doing so, confidence is raised, new skills are learnt and the opportunity to discuss real operational issues with their peers can result in the formation of valuable networks. Award winning presenters from WIOA state conferences and New Zealand, are invited to deliver their papers again at other conferences to share knowledge.

The conferences also have the largest state-based water industry exhibitions held annually in regional areas, which provide the opportunity to discover and research new technology, equipment, services and ideas.

2022 Conference Attendances

	Location	Month	Sites	Attendees
NSW	Tamworth	April	110	505
Victoria	Bendigo	June	172	1220
Qld	Logan	August	112	795
				2,520



Best Exhibition Sites

At each event, a panel of judges appointed by WIOA inspects and rates each exhibition site. They are looking for presentation and innovation, the use of interactive displays, the incorporation of novel ideas into the product display and the engagement of their staff with the delegates and visitors. The exhibitor that best meets all these criteria wins the Ron Bergmeier Award for the Best Exhibition Site. Each winner receives an advertisement in Utility magazine valued at more than \$2,000 and a complimentary WIOA corporate membership.

2022 Best Exhibition Site Winners

- NSW – Thermo Fisher Scientific
- Victoria – Remtron
- Queensland – Control Components

Conference Sponsors

WIOA is able to provide quality events at affordable prices through the generosity of many of our corporate members taking up a wide range of sponsorship opportunities. WIOA appreciates the financial support provided by our sponsors, hosts and supporters, and thank all who have assisted us to stage our events throughout 2022.

Prime Sponsors



Host & Supporters



Sponsors



Media Partners





Conference Awards



Award Sponsors

New South Wales Conference Awards



Best Paper Overall
Lucy Parsons
Atom



Best Paper by an Operator
Shawn Charlton
Albury City Council



Best Poster by an Operator
Zach Eyers
Albury City Council



Best Exhibition Site
Thermo Fisher

Queensland Conference Awards



Best Paper Overall
Shaun Johnstone
North Burnett Regional Council



Best Paper by an Operator
Tim Merrett
North Burnett Regional Council



Best Poster by an Operator
Brian Savage & Paul Campbell-Cowie
Logan Water



Best Exhibition Site
Control Components

Victorian Conference Awards



Best Paper Overall
Tasha Eagle
Fosroc



Best Paper by an Operator
John de Boer
Melbourn Water



Best Poster by an Operator
Steven Kugele
Central Highlands Water



Best Exhibition Site
Remtron



One Day Technical Seminars

WIOA has developed a series of Technical Seminars, many of which expand on the information contained in the Practical Guide books. The seminars are a collection of “operationally” focused workshops that are offered right around the country, based on demand. Each Seminar features a program that is relevant and targeted specifically at water industry operations and/or maintenance staff from all parts of the Australian water industry.

The most popular seminar is the One Day Interactive Seminar on Water Quality Awareness and Distribution System Management. The seminar content covers a variety of water quality issues related to the management and operation of distribution systems. It places particular emphasis on the importance of keeping pathogens out of the distribution network and helps identify where and how pathogens can enter a system. Several case studies where issues have occurred which have impacted public health are discussed and explained.

One Day Seminar Series include:

- Water Quality Awareness and Distribution System Management
- Media Filter Assessment and Optimisation
- Optimising Chemical Dosing, Coagulation, Flocculation and Clarification
- Membrane Operations, Maintenance and Troubleshooting
- Operation & Validation of UV Disinfection Systems for Water, Wastewater & Recycled Water
- Optimisation of Water Treatment Processes for Algae and Organics Control
- Water Quality Risk Management and HBTs

Some of the seminars can be customised to fit either a full day or a half day format, or to incorporate site-based, local or region-specific aspects of the topics covered.

\$12,400 WIOA 2022 Charity donations

WIOA has supported a range of charitable organisations and causes since 1999 from fundraising activities and events.

Due to the ongoing COVID impacts, the only specific charity fundraising event able to be staged was the Far North Queensland (FNQ) Charity Bowls & interest Day which was held in Cairns in October 2022. There were charity raffles held at each of the NSW, Victorian and Queensland Conferences and through these events along with a number of award prizes, WIOA was able to donate \$12,400 to charity in 2022. This brought the total sum donated to charity on behalf of members to \$162,175.

Donation	Charity Recipient
\$1,000.00	Narromine Cancer Support Group
\$1,500.00	Dolly Parton Imagination Library
\$2,000.00	Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS) Mens Shed
\$1,000.00	Royal Childrens Hospital
\$2,500.00	WaterAid
\$1,000.00	WaterAid
\$1,000.00	D.A.D.S – Dads Against Discrimination Support
\$2,400.00	Cassowary Coast Paws & Claws

Far North Queensland Interest Day & Charity Bowls

A total of 52 water and wastewater staff from Far North Queensland (FNQ) Councils and Corporate members attended the FNQ Interest Day followed by the optional TRILITY sponsored Barefoot Bowls afternoon in Cairns on Friday 7 October 2022. Technical information presentations were held in the morning with an optional charity bowls afternoon that had 36 participants and was a great opportunity to meet and network with each other.

The Keynote address was delivered by Tim Merrett from North Burnett Regional Council, and covered the cleaning of scale from inside the supply pipes in the treated water reservoir. Several presentations by the local councils and organisations followed:

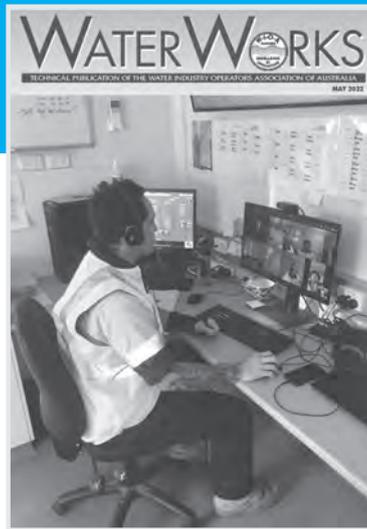
- John Bishop from Cairns Regional Council - Freshwater Creek WTP alum dose adjustment project
- Morris Hammill from Mareeba SC - refurbishment of the Granite Creek SPS
- Lachlan McCulloch from Queensland Health - the WASH program running in the indigenous Councils.
- Craig Hanran from Cook SC - issues that flooding has had on the raw water and treatment steps employed
- Peter White from Douglas Shire Council - finding a membrane that works
- Mark Gwynne from Cairns RC - sewer pump station monitoring, reporting and other issues.
- Jess Dean from **qldwater** provided an update on the Operator Programs supported by the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP) elsewhere in the State.

After lunch and some networking with colleagues and suppliers, we headed out for the running of the FNQ Water Main Tapping competition. Brian Boldiston from Cairns Regional Council was the head judge and MC and provided a turn-by-turn description of the competition. Reece Civil & Viadux supplied all the tools and equipment and were onsite to ensure everything was used correctly. The winners in 2022 were the Cairns Regional Council team of Jay Singleton and David Moran..

The final part of the day was the Charity Bowls afternoon. With the outstanding support of Corporate Members in TRILITY, Cairns RC, Water Treatment Services, McBerns, Reece Civil, Hach, Professional Pump Services, Amiad, Coogee, Aquatec Maxcon, ProMinent, Endress + Hauser, Royce Water Technologies, Remtron, qldwater and Xylem, a total of \$2,400 was raised for charity.

The winners of the Tradies cup was the team representing Hach of Anand Raj, Shane Bandiera from Cassowary Coast RC and Jay Singleton from Cairns RC. The winner of long bowl across the green was Matt Reusch from TRILITY

Each year WIOA rotates the responsibility for nominating a charity to receive the proceeds from the bowls afternoon and this year it was the Cassowary Coast Regional Council who nominated Cassowary Coast Paws and Claws as the recipient of the \$2,400 charity donation.



WaterWorks Technical Publication

WaterWorks is the technical publication of the Association which is distributed in hard copy to all members in May and November annually. A copy of WaterWorks is also provided to all WIOA conference delegates and exhibitors. The technical articles published have a distinctly operational and practical focus. There is also an opportunity for our Corporate Members to supply a limited amount of advertorial material.

With a large distribution to water industry employees, WaterWorks is a valuable vehicle to publish operationally focussed articles to share vital information across the sector.

WIOA is now managing the production and distribution of the publication internally and Corporate Members can help support WIOA by advertising products or services in the May 2023 or future editions. More information or a copy of the 2023 Media Kit can be downloaded from <https://wioa.org.au/publications/water-works/>

Practical Guides

The Practical Guide to the Operation and Optimisation of Microfiltration and Ultrafiltration Membrane Processes authored by Kathy Northcott, Greg Creek and Peter Mosse was finalised and made available for sale in early 2021.

The membranes practical guide joins the range of other guides for water and wastewater treatment covering aspects from the catchment to the tap. The books are available to the entire industry and provide real value for an exceptional resource.

All practical guides have been produced by water industry experts, with significant practical operational experience in Australia.

Practical Guides to Water Treatment

- Practical Guide to Understanding and Managing Surface Water Catchments
- Practical Guide to the Optimisation of Chemical Dosing, Coagulation, Flocculation and Clarification
- Practical Guide to Operation and Optimisation of Media Filters
- Practical Guide to the Operation and Optimisation of Chlorine and Chloramine Disinfection
- Practical Guide to Operation and Optimisation of Distribution Systems
- Practical Guide to the Operation and Optimisation of Microfiltration and Ultrafiltration Membrane Processes

Practical Guides to Wastewater Treatment

- Practical Guide to the Odour Control in Sewage Transport Systems
- Practical Guide to the Operation and Optimisation of Activated Sludge Wastewater Treatment Plants



Operator Newsletter

Operator is WIOA's quarterly publication which includes individual and corporate member news, general interest stories, water industry news and more. Produced in February, May, August and November annually, it is an effective way of keeping the WIOA community in touch with industry developments. Operator provides additional advertising opportunities for corporate members.



Words

Words is WIOA's monthly electronic newsletter which includes short updates on training, positions vacant and other items of general interest to members, relating to WIOA activities and the operational side of the water industry.

Certification becomes Registration

The Drinking Water Operator Certification Framework was originally developed in 2012, and at the time, Certification was the adopted name as it most accurately reflected the need of the water industry at the time.

Since then, there has been growing confusion over the use of the term Certification. Many individuals hold a Certificate II or III, but that doesn't mean they are, or can be, "Certified" under the new national Framework. Certification requires operators to have all the units of competency relevant to the specific treatment processes they operate, and a commitment to an ongoing skills development program.

Following a Certification Taskforce meeting in July 2021, amendments were made to the Framework and its supporting functions in late August to reflect the name changes from certification to registration

Operators "Certified" under former Frameworks are automatically recognised as "Registered Professional Operators", provided the conditions of the Framework remain met.

Water Industry Operator Registration Taskforce

The Water Industry Operator Registration Taskforce (WIORT) is the owner and manager of the Water Industry Operator Registration Framework 2021. The Queensland Water Directorate (*qldwater*) continues in the role of voluntary secretariat.

WIOA has worked collaboratively with organisations and water service providers to map their treatment plant processes to determine the specific training and skills requirements for each plant operator. Many operators are undertaking gap training to allow them to be Registered as they complete their training.

WIOA Water Industry Operator Registration Scheme

Ensuring that all operations staff are appropriately trained and skilled is one of the primary ways to help reduce risk and protect public safety and the environment. The national operator Registration scheme remains the only formal driver to ensure that the training undertaken by operators is matched to the processes that they operate, along with ensuring that operators are provided the opportunity to develop new skills or refresh their existing competencies.

WIOA has continued to work with regulators, employers and operators and we now have more than 100 registered operators across Australia, with another 445 users in the system at different stages of registration.

Acuario Registration Portal

WIOA continued with development of Acuario, the information and communication technology solution created to assist in the administration and management of the national Registration scheme. Acuario provides organisations, and individual operators a way to easily manage and keep track of skills gaps and training requirements.

Additional development of the Acuario platform has enabled WIOA to support 2 initiatives of government departments, the Queensland Health Department's Indigenous Council Training Project and the NSW Town Water Risk Reduction Program, Orana Region Training Project.

The platform is now available to be applied from catchment to tap, with additional facilities able to be added to cover non treatment areas. The additional facilities now include:

- Source/catchment
- Water treatment*
- Wastewater treatment*
- Recycled water treatment*
- Water networks
- Wastewater networks

* processes that are included in the Water Industry Operator Registration Framework 2021

The platform also enables the addition of processes, skill sets or licencing requirements that are not formally part of the Registration Framework. This has proven very beneficial for organisations that are seeking the development of a thorough training plan for their operational staff. Skills like working safely at heights or a forklift license can now be added if identified as a training need.

One of the major enhancements completed has been the development of a suite of reports that are available to authenticated users of the Acuario platform. Authenticated reports are available for the Service Provider (Council/Water business), Public Health Unit/Alliance, and the Government Regulator. The reports available cater for various job roles including for a supervisor, operator or a relief operator:

- Model roles report (training needed for a position at a facility)
- Model roles report (training needed for all positions at a facility)
- Gap analysis (training gaps by individuals at a facility)
- Training requirements (training gaps by training required at a facility)
- Staffing report (overview of the status of all individuals at a facility)

The reports are available in a .pdf or .csv format and can be downloaded at any stage. The development of the reports commenced in October and the final one, the staffing report was completed in December.

WIOA staff have conducted training sessions throughout 2022 on the use of the Acuario platform for water Utilities with registered operators. As well as training them on how the system works, the training encourages users to take more control of the management and update of their own data. Many have indicated that they now intend to sign up more operators for the Registration process for both water and wastewater.



NSW Town Water Risk Reduction Program

The NSW Government in partnership with local water utilities and the wider water sector collaborated in 2021-22 on the Town Water Risk Reduction Program. The Program aimed to develop and implement a new approach of working together that enables local water utilities to manage risks and priorities in town water systems more strategically and effectively and, as a result, reduce risks in regional NSW communities over time.

Several Focus Groups were established to provide input and guidance to the Program managers on a range of topics of interest. WIOA participated in the Skills and Training Focus Group.

In late 2021, WIOA was engaged to undertake a pilot project to assess the training needs of operational staff in the 11 Councils in the Orana Water Utilities Alliance. Work continued throughout 2022 with a final report and all the data provided to DPIE in September.

As part of the project, WIOA collected details of water supply systems and operator training records to assist the Orana Water Utilities Alliance (OWUA) to identify any skills gaps and plan for the delivery of future training programs. The project outcomes identified the scale of operator training needs in the Orana region, allowing DPIE to investigate how best to support the local water utilities to provide appropriate water services to their communities.

The project involved several action steps including:

- Collection of information relating to each site operated by all 11 Councils in the Orana Alliance
- Review of the site information including identification of process steps for the source water supply; water treatment; wastewater treatment; water reticulation; and wastewater collection areas.
- Confirmation of process steps and mapping to the corresponding training units of competence from the National Water Package.
- Identification of tasks undertaken by all operators and allocation of training required against the model roles of “Supervisor”, “Operator”, and “Relief Operator”.
- Collection and entry of data relating to actual training completed by all operators.
- Identification of any skill gaps to facilitate future training programs.

All the data collected was entered into the Acuario system and was made available to all the participating Councils. Staff in the participating Councils are now in the process of undertaking training to fill any gaps identified.

Queensland Department Health Indigenous Water Operator Training Package

A safe and continuous supply of drinking water is taken for granted by most, however those living in some of Queensland Indigenous communities face regular drinking water quality and supply challenges. To address this inequality, Queensland Health continues to expand the delivery of the Safe Drinking Water Program to assist the indigenous water operator training component of the Program.

The program is designed to safeguard Indigenous communities from public health risks attributed to illness caused by exposure to unsafe drinking water or lack of a continuous drinking water supply. The Program adopts a new approach to building the capacity of Indigenous water operators to assure the ongoing safety and quality of water supplied, while improving regulatory compliance. The Program is also a key strategy for promoting the well-being of the Indigenous population in Queensland and is an essential step towards ‘Closing the Gap’.

A key objective of the Program is to build the capacity of Indigenous water operators, so that they can deliver drinking water services competently and confidently. Appropriate training is therefore a key prerequisite.

To date, the roll-out of the Program has repeatedly identified that the formal registered training organisation delivered certificate based training does not always equip operators based in Indigenous communities.

WIOA was engaged to undertake an audit of all 17 Queensland Indigenous Councils to identify the necessary skills, knowledge and experience operators require to be able to undertake their role and safeguard their communities from drinking water associated public health risks.

WIOA staff undertook the operator skills review through a series of face to face and online meetings. The Acuario platform was used to record all the plant, process and training information from each Indigenous Council. Several additional reporting features were developed within Acuario through 2021 to allow this project to be successfully completed. The project was completed in June 2022.



Awards

Operator of the Year



Victoria
Tom Stiles
Central Highlands Water



Queensland
Neil Wilcox
Suez



Tasmania
Shannon Spencer
TasWater



NSW
David Miller
Parkes Shire Council

Young Operator of the Year



Victoria
Tom Bennett
Barwon Water



Queensland
Exavier Evile
Urban Utilities



Tasmania
Jamie Brown
TasWater

All Rounder / Networks Operator of the Year



Queensland
Harris Tahau
Redland City Council



Victoria
Matthew Boyle
Wannon Water



PASS Award

Matthew Holz - TasWater

TasWater staff member Matt Holz has won this year's Problem Accepted Solution Supplied (PASS) award. The award provides an opportunity for operational staff to share their innovations and solutions with others in the water industry.

Matt took out the award for his Pump Sump Claw. The Claw was created to replace the manual process of using a rake and muscle power to remove rag and other debris from pump stations safely and efficiently.

Matt and the TasWater staff investigated ideas and ways to mechanically grab and lift the rag out of the pump stations. The TasWater team along with a manufacturer created a prototype which was later further improved.

The claw has clamps that grab the rag without cutting or breaking it, and as the claw is lifted up, the scissor action causes the clamp to grab tighter as the weight is taken up. This way, the rag is lifted as a large wad. The claw can be operated on the lift arm of service utes or larger trucks.

One operator holds a rope that opens the jaws - a later design has a holding mechanism that can be pulled to releases the jaws to close rather than the operator holding them open. The jaws also enable the collection of smaller debris and gravel that was impossible to capture previously. The original rake or a pole can be used to push the claw under ledges and position it on a rag ball. Rag that is torn off very large rag balls is captured and held fast in the jaws, unlike with the rake.

As operators no longer have to enter the pump well or use a rake to remove rag, confined space entry and manual handling risks associated with this task have been eliminated. It is much quicker and much less physically demanding than the rake. Less rag is dislodged and sucked back into pumps or lost on filters. Gravel and other debris that may arise in combined sewer /stormwater systems can be captured. Roots can be held firmly and pulled out or cut with the action of the jaws. The claw has also been very effective at grabbing tree roots which are hard to hold fast and pull out.

There is an option to use the same design to make smaller and larger versions which would be useful for different situations.

The 2022 PASS awards had 6 great ideas submitted for consideration with entries from South Australia, Victoria, NSW and Tasmania. Aqualift is the PASS Award sponsor and provided sponsorship for the winner to join the WIOA team on their annual operational tour of New Zealand in May 2023.



Kwatye Award

Nerilee Kerslake - Albury City Council and the Wagirra

Nerilee Kerslake from Albury City Council and the Wagirra Team are the winner of the 2022 Kwatye Award for their Wagirra Trail project at Wonga Wetlands.

Wonga Wetlands was developed in the 1990's as a pioneering method for using treated wastewater from Albury City to improve and enhance the natural environment. The wastewater is delivered to a series of lagoons adjacent to the Murray River and is set up to replicate the pre-regulated wetting and drying regime of the riverine wetlands. With its lagoons and walking trails, it has become a mecca for bird watchers, nature lovers, schools and those seeking a tranquil place to reconnect with nature.

The Wagirra Trail project at Wonga Wetlands is a three-year project to design and construct approximately 12 kilometres of shared path along the Murray River that loops around Wonga Wetlands. Wagirra in Wiradjuri language translates to 'step on the ground' and Wonga translates to 'black cormorant'.

The Wagirra Team - who sit as a part of the larger Natural Areas Team at AlburyCity Council consists of six local Aboriginal people who are trained or are training in Conservation and Land Management or Civil Construction. The team have been responsible for the construction and ongoing maintenance of the trail, have undertaken cultural heritage investigations and have also run guided tours of the site.

A Wiradjuri camp has been built at Wonga Wetlands in conjunction with local elders to replicate a traditional campsite. This forms a part of the Wonga experience for visitors.

Once the Trail is open to the public (anticipated by July 2022) the Wagirra Team will be engaged to develop a suite of interpretative material and artwork that will be installed as signs across the broader Wonga site.

The Natural Areas Team and Wagirra staff are currently working with the Tourism Team and the broader Aboriginal Community to investigate cultural tourism opportunities at Wonga to showcase Aboriginal culture across the broader Albury area.

Wonga Wetlands and the Wagirra Trail will allow for the blending of knowledge regarding treating and managing wastewater with Traditional Owner knowledge of the land. Whilst Wonga has traditionally only been used by those walking the lagoons and wetlands, the new trail will open the experience to a broader audience through activating the outer perimeter of the site.

This will ensure passive and active areas, as well as dedicated wastewater management areas are kept separated.





National Awards



Team of the Year

Congratulations to the Operators from Rous County Council who were named as the 2022 Team of the Year on the WIOA reconnects day in late 2022.

During February 2022 Lismore and its surrounds experienced unprecedented rainfall, flooding townships, destroying distribution systems, and creating near untreatable water sources.

Staff rallied together, worked around the clock for days on end, sleeping on-site to prevent loss of water that would have further damaged infrastructure and prolonged the recovery effort.

Many staff were isolated or stood down for safety reasons leaving remaining personnel to work together as one team with one purpose of supporting the region in the best way they knew how during a once in a lifetime, devastating event.

The entire staff pitched in to clean, relocate, and restock depots to new locations out of flood damage to continue business as normal and barely prevented the town from running out of water or being placed on boil water alerts which would have been both catastrophic and unactionable.

With source water quality well outside of plant operating capacity, many work arounds were implemented including direct filtration in a typically DAFF based set up using ozone/BAC filters and new operational control points to ensure that water quality remained in spec. Dose pumps were jerry rigged to pump higher capacities, batch strengths were altered to allow usable dose rates, constant jar testing and dose alterations were performed to allow best quality water to be produced under quickly changing circumstances.

Many staff operated out of makeshift workspaces with minimal tools after the majority of the stock and main operational site was destroyed by floodwater. New workplaces were created off site in the months following and most staff worked well outside their normal duties to ensure business continuity.

The Rous County Council team won the opportunity to select WIOA Practical Guides for their staff to the value of \$2,000 courtesy of award sponsor TRILITY.



Neville Whittaker Joins the IDIOTS

At the 2022 Victorian Conference, Neville Whittaker from Goulburn Valley Water in Victoria became the 42nd IDIOTS member.

Neville has been a WIOA member since 1994, and certainly longer as our records only go back that far. In those days, AWWOA had coordinators based on the telephone Area Codes. Nev looked after the activities in the 058 area for many years.

He was a regular at the conferences and you could never miss that he was there. His laugh could (and still can) be heard well above the loudest of noises at any event.

Nev took on the challenge several years ago to increase the level of engagement that Networks Operators have with WIOA. Much of our current success goes back to Nev's hard work and vision.

He has provided support and encouragement to employees at GV Water in presenting posters and/or papers at conferences. He even presented a paper himself one year in his own colourful way.

Nev has been a believer in promoting best practice and raising the bar in the networks operations field. He was one of the inaugural Committee members that helped WIOA establish and run the Network Operator Development Program. He is still doing his share of heavy lifting on the Committee even though he has officially retired from full time work with GV Water.

He practiced what he preached and helped create the "best practice" video showing how to undertake a safe water focussed repair process for water mains. This is now used widely around Australia.

More recently he has taken on the role as commentator for the water main tapping competition and has brought an added level of excitement with his independent comments directed at all and sundry, but especially at anyone from Wannon Water or North East Water, or Gippsland Water or well, maybe anywhere except GV Water.

Never short of a laugh or a story, some true and others not so true, he can entertain with the best of them. But that is what we love about Nev – what you see (and hear) is what you get.

Congratulations Neville, your involvement with WIOA is greatly appreciated by all members, and particularly by those in Victoria.





Best Tasting Tap Water Competitions

Network Operator Development Program

COVID had a major impact on the 2020 group of operators involved in the Victorian Network Operator Development Program (NODP). Normally completed in one year, the 2020 group finally managed to complete the final day of their program in early February 2022. This group included 12 Operators from around Victoria (including one from Albury in NSW). This cohort graduated from the program at the WIOA Conference in Bendigo in June.

The 2022 cohort originally comprising 10 members commenced their program in April 2022. Due to some resignations, the final number of 8 participants completed the final session for this group in November 2022. The group is scheduled to graduate at a ceremony at the WIOA Victorian conference in March 2023.

A major outcome of the program is the engagement with and learning from the organising committee members, the presenters and building a network of peers that can be called on in the future. The feedback from both cohorts to complete the program in 2022 is very positive.



Ixom Best Tasting Tap Water in Australia

In a slightly unusual occurrence, the winners of both the 2021 and 2022 Ixom Best Tasting Tap Water in Australia competitions were determined in 2022.

The 2021 Victorian taste test was scheduled to be staged at the Victorian conference in November 2021. Unfortunately due to COVID, the event was postponed to 2022 and this meant that WIOA needed to determine the winners of the last few taste tests in an online format. The 2021 grand final was then staged in January 2022 and hosted by TasWater.

The team at TasWater, ably led by Stephen Westgate, Chair of WIOA Advisory Committee, managed the competition. The judging was livestreamed on Facebook from Risdon Brook dam in Hobart, where TasWater CEO Mike Brewster, Derwent Estuary Program CEO Ursula Taylor, and guest judge George Bailey, national chairman of selectors for the Australian Men's International Cricket Team decided the winner.

The winner was announced as Richmond Valley Council for their sample from the Casino WTP. The team at the Richmond Valley Council were absolutely rapt just to have won the NSW competition, let alone to win the Australian one.

In November 2022, Richmond Valley Council hosted the 2022 Ixom Best Tasting Tap Water in Australia competition at the Primex Field days in Casino. This very large event provided the perfect location not only to involve the public in tasting the best water from around the country, but also to share the message about what a fantastic job our water industry operators do in servicing our communities and providing safe drinking water on a 24/7 basis.

With the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Richmond Valley Council coming along, a total of 260 field day attendees participated by tasting each of the six entries. The team from Melbourne Water and the Cresswell WTP were declared the winner.

The Melbourne Water sample was also submitted as Australia's representative in the International Water Taste Test competition in Berkeley Springs in the USA on 25 February 2023. Unfortunately, unlike Rossarden in 2021, they failed to finish in the top five in the Municipal Water category. Better luck to the winner from 2023, which will be decided at an event to be hosted by Melbourne Water in November 2023.

Queenslanders Water of Origin Victory

The WIOA Queensland Conference once again hosted the Ixom Water of Origin Taste Test that saw the Queensland entry from Mackay Regional Council go head to head against the NSW/ACT sample from Shoalhaven Water.

In a warm up prior to the big State of Origin Rugby game, Mackay Regional Council took out the honours for Queensland. The Queenslanders now lead the Water of Origin competition 6 to 3 in the head to head challenge.

The real winners were the operators who look after the systems and supply such fantastic water to their customers daily.



The search for the Best Tasting Tap Water in Australia

With the support of IXOM as our taste test sponsor and in the absence of face to face events, WIOA was excited to be able to host the 2021 Best Tasting Tap Water competitions online.

The Ixom water taste test competitions are a fun way for WIOA and the industry to raise awareness of the hard work that our operational staff do behind the scenes to ensure a safe and high quality drinking water supply is available to communities all around Australia.

Using a blind taste test approach, the WIOA staff members replaced event participants as judges and undertook the difficult task of selecting the winners with the samples judged on colour, clarity, odour and taste.



NSW/ACT

Soahaven Water

Source Richmond River
 Facility Casino Water Treatment Plant
 Community Casino
 Population 10,500
 Treatment PAC dosing, coagulation, flocculation, filtration, disinfection



South Australia

Trility

Source River Murray or the Milbrook reservoir (River Torrens catchment)
 Facility Anstey Hill Water Treatment Plant
 Community Adelaide
 Population 642,000
 Treatment Conventional: coagulation, flocculation, sedimentation, media filtration and chlorination



Tasmania

TasWater

Source Rocky Creek which flows of the rear of Mt Wellington Park
 Facility Rocky Creek Water Treatment Plant
 Community Huonville / Ranelagh
 Population 500
 Treatment UF Membrane, GAC, Calcite, UV, Hypo

Grand Finalists

- Tamworth Regional Council
- Tamworth WTP
- Shoalhaven Water
- Bamarang WTP
- Port Macquarie Hastings Council
- Port Macquarie WTP

- TRILITY
- Loxton WTP
- TRILITY
- Murray Bridge WTP
- TRILITY
- Renmark WTP

- TasWater
- Ferntree WTP
- TasWater
- National Park WTP
- TasWater
- Rocky Creek WTP



Victoria

Melbourne Water

Source Candowie Reservoir

Facility Ian Bartlett Water Purification Plant (IBWPP)

Community Phillip Island, San Remo, Kilcunda, Dalyston, Corinella.

Population 22,000

Treatment Combination of oxidation, adsorption, flocculation, coagulation, dissolved air flotation, filtration, pH correction, fluoridation and disinfection



WA

Water Corporation

Source Moochalabra Dam

Facility Wyndham Water Treatment Plant

Community Wyndham

Population 780

Treatment Coagulation, microfiltration, UV and chlorine disinfection



Queensland

Mackay Regional Council

Source Pioneer River

Facility Marian Water Treatment Plant

Community Marian and Mirani

Population 6,000

Treatment Clarification, filtration and chlorine disinfection

- Central Highlands Water
- Whiteswan WTP
- Goulburn Valley Water
- Mansfield WTP
- Melbourne Water
- Cresswell WTP

- Busselton Water
- Busselton WTP
- Water Corporation
- Pemberton WTP
- Water Corporation
- Wyndham WTP



Membership Form



Water Industry Operators Association of Australia MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL 2023

Inc ABN 27 302 677 808

THIS FORM WILL BECOME A TAX INVOICE ON RECEIPT OF PAYMENT. PLEASE RETAIN A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.

Date: ___/___/___

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

Please tick the appropriate box

Individual Membership \$45 (inc. GST)

Corporate Membership \$310 (inc. GST)

MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

Name: Mr / Ms

Postal Address

(Individual members please provide your private mailing address.)

Suburb State Postcode

Date of Birth

Employer

Position

Telephone Fax

Mobile phone

E-mail

In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the Rules of the Association. A copy of the Rules can be found on the WIOA website.

Signature

WIOA encourage the use of electronic correspondence to reduce paper wastage.

I wish to receive correspondence by E-mail in preference to Post Yes No

PAYMENT OPTIONS

EFT BANKING DETAILS

BSB: 033-254

A/C: 327-012

Amount: Individual \$45 or Corporate \$310

The following must be included on your payment:

- New members: Full name
- Renewing members: Invoice number and name

CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS Visa Mastercard (Diners Club and Amex are not accepted)

1% Administration Fee on all credit card payments

Cardholders Name

Card Number

Expiry Date:

Amount (please circle): **\$44.45 / \$313.10** (Including 1% Admin Fee)

Signature:

RETURN BY: Post PO Box 6012, Shepparton, Victoria, 3632 **Fax** 03 5821 6033 **Email** admin@wioa.org.au

2023

Office Use Only

New Renewal Date Paid: Rec No:

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I join, how much is membership and how can I pay?

You can join by completing and submitting an application form, (which doubles as a Tax Invoice) with your payment to WIOA. There is an application form in the back of this booklet and more forms can be downloaded from the WIOA website.

WIOA has three membership categories, Individual, Corporate and Utility Corporate. The fees are \$45 (individual), \$310 (Corporate) and \$45 per member (Utility Corporate - must have 8 members or pay a minimum of \$310 to be eligible for this category). Payment can be made by cash, cheque, credit card (Visa & Mastercard only) or by EFT. Payment can also be made in person at any Westpac branch using the BSB/account details from your invoice.

What dates does the membership year cover and is a pro-rata fee available?

The membership year runs from 1 January to 31 December annually. A pro-rata membership fee is available, but only to Corporate members joining after 1 July annually. Individual members joining after 1 September annually receive the balance of that year plus all of the next calendar year for their \$45 fee.

What benefits do I receive as an Individual Member?

- New member pack on sign up
- WaterWorks Technical publication twice per year
- Operator newsletter quarterly
- WIOA's electronic newsletter Words, monthly
- Notification of events, seminars and conferences plus positions vacant and wanted adverts
- New product or equipment brochures from Corporate members
- Updates on industry developments including training
- Updates on technical resources specifically aimed at the operational side of the industry
- Access to webinars
- Discounted registration fees to WIOA events
- Application forms for various industry Awards

What benefits do I receive as a Corporate Member?

Corporate Members receive all the items listed above plus:

- Discounted exhibition fees at WIOA conferences
- Rights of individual membership is afforded to the nominated person only
- Company details listed in the Corporate member section of the WIOA website
- Access to WIOA members via product brochure mail outs with only a small postage fee
- Editorial promotional space in "Words", "Operator" or possibly "WaterWorks"
- Recognition at the Annual Conferences
- Preference given to Corporate members for mini trade shows at specific issues seminars
- Copies of the WIOA handbook to distribute

What benefits do I receive as a Utility Corporate Member?

Utility Corporate Membership is open to all employers of water industry Operators. This category allows employers of operators to join up and pay for their operational staff to be individual members and they will receive all the benefits of an individual member. The employer will receive a free corporate membership as well as member registration rates for all staff attending events.

What events does WIOA run?

Annual Conferences

WIOA organises and annually stages an operationally focussed Conference and Exhibition in Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. These major events are designed to provide an opportunity for operations personnel and product and service supplier companies to come together to discuss operational issues and see and hear about advances in technology and process methodologies.

Special Interest Seminars

WIOA runs a series of special interest seminars using the expertise of various members and supporters to provide the latest in information on specific topics. These seminars are staged as widely around Australia as possible. Topics and locations are chosen based on demand from members.

Water Taste Tests

WIOA holds a number of Best Tasting Tap Water competitions across Australia, including a National competition, to raise awareness of the quality of drinking water and to recognise the efforts of local water service providers in delivering valuable water services to their communities on a day to day basis.

Charity Events

WIOA holds several charity events such as bowls and golf days across Australia with proceeds donated to charity. In recent years we have also sold hats and collected money for charity via raffles at our events. To date we have distributed over \$165,000 to worthy charities.

I have an operational problem, can WIOA help?

WIOA has a wide range of members both individual and corporate, from all Australian States as well as overseas. If you have an operational issue that you are having difficulty resolving, just let us know about it, preferably by email, and we can tap into our network to potentially get you an answer.

How do I update my Member details or website listing?

All members can update their contact or other personal details by contacting the WIOA office by phone or email at any time.

Does WIOA have a Privacy Policy and how will my personal details be used?

WIOA has a Privacy Policy which is available from the WIOA website. This policy outlines what information will be collected from Members, how it will be used and under what circumstances. WIOA has a policy of not providing personal details to anyone without prior approval from the Member.

I would like to receive my information by email instead of post. Is this possible?

WIOA members can choose to receive all correspondence either electronically (by email) or by hard copy (via Australia Post). Sending information by email is more environmentally friendly, efficient, cost effective and is WIOA's preferred method. If you wish to receive information electronically, you can indicate this on the Membership application form. If you are an existing member and would like to change to email, contact us and we will update your mail preference.

I have a position vacant, can WIOA advertise it?

WIOA will place all relevant Position Vacant advertisements onto the WIOA website free of charge.

I have a position wanted. Can I advertise it with WIOA?

As an additional benefit to individual members, WIOA can place positions wanted adverts on the WIOA website free of charge for any Individual member. Notification of the advert is included in our monthly newsletter 'Words'. For more information contact the WIOA office.

How do I obtain a copy of the WIOA Constitution?

The Constitution is included on our website and can be accessed at: <http://wioa.org.au/about-wioa/constitution-rules-of-association/>

I would like to submit an article for a WIOA publication. What do I have to do?

We welcome contributions from members for any of our publications including 'WaterWorks', 'Operator' or 'Words'. All you need to do is send us your information/photos and we will do the rest. WIOA has an editorial team willing and able to help you put an article together, if you require assistance.

I would like to advertise in a WIOA publication. What do I have to do?

We encourage advertising in both 'WaterWorks' or 'Operator' publications. Media Kits are available for both publications on the WIOA website:

WaterWorks

▶ <https://wioa.org.au/publications/water-works>

Operator

▶ <https://wioa.org.au/publications/operator>

I would like to help the Association. How do I get onto the Committee?

The Committee is elected by the Members at the AGM annually and if you wish to be considered, just complete and return the Committee Nomination form which usually comes out each January. We have established Advisory Committees in Tasmania, Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia to assist us to run our various events. If you don't want to be on the national Committee but would like to help out, just contact us and we can put you in touch with your State based group.

Vision



To be the leading industry association promoting excellence in water industry operations.

Mission



To develop and support people in water industry operations.

Values



- Integrity
- Being safe
- Professionalism & consistency
- Supportive behaviour & respect
- Recognition & celebration of achievements
- Innovation & sustainability
- Open, honest & timely communications



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