

Introduction

The best tasting tap water competition is a highly prestigious competition within the water industry, that is designed to be a bit of fun and truly recognise the front-line operators and their organisations that are providing water services 24/7, 365 days a week.

To Qualify

1. To participate in this competition, you must be a water provider that provides water to a community
2. Your sample must be collected from a customer tap within the network
3. You must be the last company that has treated that supply
4. You must not have been issued with a water quality breach notice for that water supply region within the previous 12-month period.

Sampling

Water sampling for the best tasting tap water competition is important and requires appropriate collection and transportation of samples.

Samples should be collected by a person trained with correct sampling techniques.

Precautions must be taken to ensure contamination is not introduced into the sample which can lead to poor water quality results, or risk to the competition judges.

For the State/Territory/Water of Origin/Aus vs NZ competitions - Two one litre glass sample bottles are required, leaving a 2.5cm air gap at the top. The bottle must be clearly labelled with:

Appendix 1 IXOM Best Tasting Tap Water Competition WIOA Application Form and must arrive before the opening of the conference at 8.30 am on the Wednesday or the morning of the Interest Day at the latest, while being no more than 7 days of being collected and transported, **in a non-cooling container.**

Note: chilled samples will not be accepted in the competition

The National competition will require four one litre glass sample bottles, leaving a 2.5cm air gap at the top.

Judging

The judging process will be democratic, with the highest number of votes declaring a winner. In a final, a system will be implemented to avoid a draw. E.g. Odd number of judges.



Evaluation Criteria

- Colour: water that is completely translucent without any white or brown tones
- Clarity: crystal clear water with minimal turbidity
- Odour: samples that are pleasing to smell with a nice scent
- Taste: samples that are pleasing to the palate

The judging process is like wine tasting without needing to spit out the samples, coffee beans can also be sniffed between tastings to cleanse the palate.

CRITERIA	SAMPLES				
	A	B	C	D	E
Appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Odour	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Taste	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Total	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Competition

WIOA's ambition is to run this competition in each State and Territory within Australia.

Once the State/Territory winners have been determined, a national competition will be held at a WIOA event. All annual state and territory winning samples will be put forward and judged to determine the national winner, that will be crowned Australia's best tasting tap water.

Each winner will be provided with a sign.

While the text will be similar, water companies may need to change the layout to meet their style guides.

We will request that the organisation considers including the IXOM logo on their sign. This may be adopted on a case-by-case basis.



The national competition winner will then provide a sample for the international competition in America. The winner will need to register via:

<https://berkeleyspringswatertasting.com/registration/>

The New South Wales and Queensland state winners will also compete in the Water of Origin, and WIOA is currently working with the Water Industry Operations Group NZ on a process for both national competition winners to go up against each other in a cross-nation competition.



Best Tasting Tap Water Competition Procedure



Media / Communications

IXOM is the proud sponsor of this competition. We aim to prominently feature their branding throughout the event, including photos and videos related to the competition, banners, and their logo at key locations. Additionally, we will quote IXOM in all verbal and printed communications whenever possible.

Approved External Communications

The annual IXOM Best Tasting Tap Water competition is a fun and engaging way to celebrate the high quality of Australia's drinking water while acknowledging the dedication of local water service providers in delivering this essential resource to their communities.

In its search for the best-tasting tap water in each state and nationally, the Water Industry Operations Association of Australia (WIOA) invites all water suppliers to participate in the competition. Water samples undergo a blind taste test and are evaluated using the Water Tasting Wheel, which highlights key attributes such as colour, clarity, odour, and taste – just like a wine tasting, but you can drink the samples, leaving our judges well hydrated.

“This competition highlights the dedication and commitment of the operations staff and their water companies that work tirelessly – often in challenging conditions – to provide their communities with safe, high-quality drinking water every day,” said Dean Barnett, Chief Executive Officer of the Water Industry Operations Association of Australia (WIOA). “It also shines a spotlight on the vital behind-the-scenes work of this discreet industry, which supports communities every hour of every day.”

Mr Barnett also acknowledged IXOM's ongoing support of the Best Tasting Tap Water competition for 10 years now. “IXOM's commitment to the industry enables us to continue running this competition over many years and celebrate the critical work of water service providers across the country,” he said.

“IXOM is proud to be the sponsor of the prestigious 2026 IXOM Best Tasting Tap Water competition,” said Bryce Wolfe, Chief Executive Officer of IXOM. “IXOM is a leading supplier of water treatment chemicals to the water sector. With over 100 years of expertise, IXOM locally manufactures and supplies chemicals to water treatment plants all over Australia. We strive to raise standards and innovate across the industry, and help to ensure everyone has access to safe, clean and great-tasting drinking water.”

Procedure owners

- WIOA
- IXOM
- Xcubed Communications

Winner announcement process

WIOA to send Xcubed Communications

- Winner's application form
- CEO comment on the current competition and the result
- Photos of the event



Best Tasting Tap Water Competition Procedure



Appendix 1 IXOM Best Tasting Tap Water Competition WIOA Application Form

Water Company / Council name: _____

Treatment facility name: _____

Treatment process: _____

Estimated value of the treatment facility / process: _____

Sample location / town: _____

Tell us a bit about the sample:

- Population served
- Approved photos for use in communications if the winner
 - Aerial treatment plant
 - Team photo

Supplied from (water source): _____

Approximate number of residents served: _____

Best contact for media requests: _____

Media contact phone number and email: _____

I agree with the WIOA terms of this competition and have permission to submit this entry.

I have supplied a sample that is not chilled.

Only the identity of grand finalists and the supplier of the winning sample will be announced. Grand Final or Heat samples will not be ranked. The judges decision is final.

Submitted by: _____

Signed: _____



Best Tasting Tap Water Competition Procedure



HEATS - SUBMISSION FORM

Bottle Number	Water Business Sample
1	
2	
3	
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Best Tasting Tap Water Competition Procedure



FINALS - SUBMISSION FORM

Bottle Number	Water Business Sample
1	
2	
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9	
10	