

SUSTAINABILITY

NEWS

The VICWATER Industry Association Newsletter providing invaluable information for all water providers



If you have a relevant idea, program or event you'd like considered for Sustainability News, e-mail your article to sustainability@vicwater.org.au or call (03) 9639 8868



SPRING 2006

What Sustainability Means to Me - Mick Bourke, Chairman EPA Victoria



Mick Bourke, Chairman of EPA Victoria

I remember well as a very small boy the mammoth stacks of mallee tree stumps amongst the wheat crops in the large paddocks of my home district; and the endless mobs of crossbreed sheep that yielded both wool and meat for the local export markets.

The 60's were my first experience of drought and the social effects of economic measures such as wheat quotas and a significant credit squeeze. In the 70's floods

were delivered along with stagflation; the 80's were drought again in the early part then some good seasons, and in the late 80's a crippling share market crash. My 90's were filled with micro economic reform, globalisation and some of the best years for our business sector.

In the birth of the new millennium came my fifth child, terrorism, an endless drought; and an awakening to "climate change", along with the understanding of my contributory negligence towards global warming.

The new millennium also delivered me the gift of "sustainability" a word with so many and so much meaning. It came with a generous helping of hope, ambition, a new basis for unity of action, and provided an explanation, without blame, for the impacts of our past on our future – especially for our environment.

CONTENTS

- 2 VicWater Annual Conference 2006
- 2 Embedding a Sustainability Culture at Melbourne Water
- 3 Encouraging Staff Innovation
- 4 Greenhouse Emission Reduction Framework
- 4 Water Governance
- 4 Book Review
- 5 Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy Released
- 5 Sustainability and the Role of Accountants
- 6 Global Reporting Initiative "G3" Guidelines Launched
- 6 Update from the Sustainability Task Group
- 7 National Emissions Trading Scheme
- 7 Desalination Using Solar Energy – Port Augusta Proposal
- 7 Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET)
- 8 WaterAid Ball 17 November, 2006
- 8 Research in to Perceptions on Sustainable Housing



continued on page 2

Sustainability is not some sort of religion, for me it is the guidance for the decisions and actions that we can make, and we know we must make, to ensure the future for those we are raising to follow us. It brings with it endless opportunities such as the "new economic productivity" of resource efficiency; industry growth in solutions and technologies that reduce cost and improve ecological outcomes;

and the emergence of fuel sources that renew our future; not condemn it. There are many pioneering aspects to Sustainability, and I look forward to being part of its delivery in these early years.

Thomas Jefferson (1789)

"Then I say that the earth belongs to each generation during its course, fully and in its own right. The second

generation receives it clear of the debts and encumbrances, the third of the second, and so on. For if the first could charge it with a debt, then the earth belongs to the dead and not to the living generation. Then, no generation can contract debts greater than may be paid during the course of its own existence".

VicWater Annual Conference 2006

The 2006 VicWater Annual Conference "Looking Beyond... New Technology, New Capabilities, New Processes, New Challenges" held on the 28 and 29 September 2006 was a resounding success! The Conference was officially opened by the Minister for Water, the Hon John Thwaites MP. Key note speaker



Key note address by Ian Lowe, Chairman Australian Conservation Foundation

Professor Ian Lowe (Chairman of Australian Conservation Foundation), delivered an inspiring address on the challenge of reducing greenhouse emissions and adapting to climate change.

The Conference also covered a range of topics including improved technologies, human resources, recycling and water trading. Other key speakers included Mike Young (former Chief Research Scientist for CSIRO Land and Water), Neville Smith (CEO, Water for Rivers) and marathon swimmer Tammy van Wisse. The Conference was also an important networking opportunity that brought together over 150 representatives from Victorian water businesses,

Government Departments, consultants and other stakeholders.

All Conference presentations can be downloaded from the VicWater website.

[View Presentations](#)



Marathon swimmer Tammy van Wisse

Embedding a Sustainability Culture at Melbourne Water



Melbourne Water has developed a sustainability behaviour change program called LivingSmart. It is much more than a typical Green Office Program, as it encourages sustainable behaviour change across all aspects of a person's life. The motto of LivingSmart is "It's your choice", reflecting the fact that everyone can make a difference to global sustainability issues through the choices they make.

The first module of the LivingSmart program was launched on World Environment Day (5 June 2006), and focused on greenhouse and energy reduction, combining tips for the home and the workplace. During the module employees learnt about the greenhouse implications of issues such as standby power, heating and cooling, lights and appliances. Information was conveyed via emails, tip-sheets in the bathrooms, posters

in lift foyers, weekly newsletters, and combining all the information into books for lunchrooms at some of the sites.

In conjunction with specific information provided on energy and greenhouse, employees were encouraged to assess their Ecological Footprint, with approximately 30% completing this. Results showed that Melbourne Water employees, on average, needed fewer global hectares (6.9) to support their lifestyle than the Victorian average

of 8.1 global ha. Of course, not all employees were equivalent to the average, with many people being above the average! Its best value came from the awareness it raised, and the conversations had about individual's respective impacts.

The LivingSmart program has just launched into a Resource Use and Waste module, addressing the issues of resource depletion in the world, excess consumption, and waste disposal, with a focus on the waste

hierarchy. As with the previous module, the focus has been on the individual's choice to make a difference in the world, and the plan is to continue this thread throughout all LivingSmart modules.

By Jan Fitzgerald
Team Leader Sustainability
Melbourne Water

Jan Fitzgerald presented at the VicWater Conference 2006.

[View Presentation](#)

Encouraging Staff Innovation



- South East Water

Since the end of 2004, the 'Brain Waves' program has been the vehicle through which South East Water supports and develops innovation across the company. 'Brain Waves' is about growing South East Water's culture to support innovation in all forms. It is also tasked with uncovering, evaluating, and implementing opportunities for revenue growth, productivity increases and social and environmental initiatives.

In 2006 South East Water ran the 'Brain Waves Cup' – a business planning competition encouraging its staff to 'think big' about business solutions. Running from February to June, the Brain Waves Cup taught employees a structured approach to innovation and business planning, and is based on providing incentive rewards and giving recognition as appropriate.

Twenty percent of the business participated in 18 cross-functional teams to turn their ideas into viable business plans. Workshops were held for participants to assist them with such things as business planning, opportunity identification and market and financial projections. 11 final business plans were submitted in June

and winners were decided based on innovativeness of the concept and benefits to South East Water. The winning team developed a computer assessment tool that helps predict where problems might occur in the sewerage system. \$10,000 was awarded to the winning team with a \$4,000 prize for two runner-ups.

In addition to the top 3 ideas, the quality of the plans was so good that 9 of the 11 projects have been funded for implementation. Included in these plans are new business models, safety initiatives and new services for our residential and commercial customers. Projected financial benefits from the projects are well into seven figures

and there are numerous social and environmental benefits.

South East Water, as part of the 'Brain Waves' Program has now launched 'iCampaign', a range of three week programs that call for ideas from employees on specific business issues. For example, the first 'iCampaign' was run in October, and gathered ideas on the topic "In what ways could you better service your customer?" On top of the innovativeness of its employees, South East Water is now also developing ways to engage with external groups such as customers, business partners and industry, to feed innovation.



Winners of the "Brain Waves Cup" - South East Water

Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Framework

The VicWater Board on the 26 October 2006 formally endorsed the water industry's 'Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Framework' (previously 'Discussion Paper') for implementation by Victorian water businesses. 'The Framework' was developed by the water industry in response to the challenge to reduce greenhouse emissions whilst providing services to a growing population with a reduced water supply. 'The Framework' provides recommendations around the following five key goals:

- ◆ Demonstrate leadership in greenhouse gas reduction.
- ◆ Set realistic stretch greenhouse gas reduction targets for a benchmarked water industry.
- ◆ Influence behaviour change based on communication and education.
- ◆ Influence the adoption of a whole of system method to infrastructure design, operation and new markets.

- ◆ Incorporate an industry wide collaborative and cooperative approach.

The recommendations outlined in 'the Framework' are an important step in assisting the whole of the water industry to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency and utilise renewable energy. 'The Framework' also seeks to provide a consistent and collaborative water industry approach to the challenges of climate change. The 'Working Group' will continue to meet on an 'as needed' basis, with their focus now on assisting the industry implement the recommendations.

Download Framework

For further information on 'the Framework' contact Peta Maddy from Western Water peta.maddy@westernwater.com.au or (03) 5421 9440.



Water Governance

The Water (Governance) Act 2006 was given Royal Assent on the 17 October 2006. The Act amends the Water Act 1989 and related legislation:

- ◆ To require water authorities to have regard to principles of sustainable management.
- ◆ To provide a stronger governance framework for water authorities.
- ◆ To bring Melbourne Water under the Water Act 1989.
- ◆ To establish the role of storage manager and to set out the functions of this role.
- ◆ To provide consultative processes for the decommissioning of dams.
- ◆ To introduce 'on the spot' fines for permanent water savings plans and drought response plans or water restriction by-laws.
- ◆ To provide for the protection of public land by making it clear that water authorities are exempt from adverse possession claims.

BOOK REVIEW

by Francis Pamminger
(Yarra Valley Water)

"Strategic Planning of Sustainable Urban Water Management"

Edited by Per-Arne Malmqvist, Gerald Heinicke, Erik Kärman, Thor Axel Stenstrom and Gilbert Svensson. IWA Publishing (2006)



For those wanting a methodology to evaluate the sustainability of alternative urban water systems this text provides a must read. It presents an extensive theoretical foundation

and through the application at five different locations, projects both ground the theory and can offer readers inspiration for their own planning situations. The study areas included a new city, a small town, a city centre, urban enclaves, and integrated planning in a city.

The strategic planning of urban water systems is a complex task. The Urban Water programme covered projects from various disciplines at nine Swedish Universities, from 1999 to 2006. The projects developed a "toolbox" for strategic planning of drinking water, wastewater and stormwater management, covering aspects such as the environment, health and hygiene, financing, organisation, households, and technical function. 'Strategic Planning of Sustainable Urban Water Management' synthesises the results and presents a comprehensive approach, which includes not only the technical, economic and environmental aspects, but also the challenges of institutional capacity and public participation in the planning process.

Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy Released

The Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy was released in October 2006. The strategy aims to secure the water future of Victoria's most populated region, incorporating Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, the inner west and Latrobe Valley. The Strategy puts in place a range of short-term (2015), medium-term (2030) and long-term (2055) actions to provide an additional 400,000 ML of water for urban and industrial use in the region by 2055. An extra 66,000 ML of water will also be returned to our rivers by 2015, including the recommended flows for the Yarra and Barwon Rivers.

The plan uses a variety of approaches to secure the region's water future, including: conservation and efficiency; interconnection of water systems; increased use of alternative supplies such as stormwater and recycled water; and adding to (augmenting) current urban supply systems.

Key projects outlined in the 'Strategy' include the building of a new pipeline

to connect Ballarat with the Goulburn River water system and increased use of groundwater and recycling initiatives for Geelong. The \$180 million project 'Goldfields Superpipe' will connect Ballarat's White Swan Reservoir to Bendigo's Lake Eppalock, which is currently being connected to the Goulburn Murray system. As a result the 'Goldfields Superpipe' will provide water security for 50 years to the regional cities of Ballarat and Bendigo. The 'Strategy' will also set water conservation targets to cut total per capita water use by at least 25 per cent by 2015, increasing to 30 per cent by 2020.

Since the draft strategy was released (April 2006) there have been record low winter/spring inflows, while the latest projections, based on the



last ten years of data, show a likely worsening of inflows into water storages. The strategy plans on the basis that low inflows will continue into the future and considers the possibility that the impacts of climate change will involve a step reduction in water supplies, rather than a gradual reduction over 50 years.

[View 'Strategy'](#)

or contact DSE on 136 186

Sustainability and the Role of Accountants

To assist professional accountants in business better understand how they can advance, measure and report on sustainable development, the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) have recently published two information papers. IFAC is a worldwide organisation dedicated to strengthening the accounting profession.

The first information paper, 'Why Sustainability Counts for Professional Accountants in Business' provides an overview of enterprise sustainability and sets out the business / financial

case for addressing the risks and opportunities of sustainable development at the enterprise level. The paper also discusses the ways in which professional accountants in business will be involved with the measurement, recording and interpretation of sustainability-related information.

[Download Paper](#)

The second information paper, 'Professional Accountants in Business – At the Heart of Sustainability?' provides commentary from eleven professionals working in various

enterprises around the world. It outlines the challenges professionals face in promoting and implementing sustainable development strategies.

[Download Paper](#)

These two IFAC papers represent a significant international step in the education process of incorporating sustainability considerations in to the accounting profession.

Global Reporting Initiative "G3" Guidelines Launched

In October 2006, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) launched their next generation of Guidelines, known as "G3" at the GRI Conference in Amsterdam. The Conference was well attended by 1150 participants from 65 countries (including 37 developing countries and emerging markets).

[View Conference Summary](#)

Major elements in the G3 include a

stronger focus on reporting principles, the support of protocols for every indicator, a new architecture to disclose management approach, and greater emphasis on clarity and materiality. G3 innovations such as principles and protocols will help create technically sound, more comparable reports: issues where sustainability reporting has perceived to have historically struggled.

The GRI's vision is that reporting on economic, environmental, and social performance by all organizations becomes as routine and comparable as financial reporting. GRI accomplishes this vision by developing, continually improving, and building capacity around the use of its Sustainability Reporting Framework.

[View "G3" Guidelines](#)

Enquiries: Alyson Slater
slater@globalreporting.org

+31-20-531-0000

Update from the Sustainability Task Group

The Sustainability Task Group (STG) met on the 10 October 2006, with Francis Pamminger (Yarra Valley Water) presenting on the latest sustainability issues, challenges and information facing the industry.

[Download Presentation](#)

The STG's 2006/2007 Business Plan was also approved with key projects including the annual Sustainability Seminar, 'Water & Sustainability' Training Course as well as projects to improve community consultation and improve industry greenhouse/

energy capabilities. The STG will also be investigating nanotechnology opportunities for the Victorian water industry.

Current membership of the Sustainability Task Group:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Water business</i>	<i>Email</i>
Tony Kelly (Chair)	Yarra Valley Water	tkelly@yvw.com.au
Tim Clune	North East Water	tclune@nerwa.vic.gov.au
Martin Kent	Southern Rural Water	chiefexecutive@srw.com.au
Sally-Anne Mason	Coliban Water	sally-annem@coliban.com.au
Jan Fitzgerald	Melbourne Water	jan.fitzgerald@melbournewater.com.au
Gordon Logan	South East Water	Gordon.Logan@sewl.com.au
Rowan Mackenzie	Barwon Water	Rowan.Mackenzie@barwonwater.vic.gov.au
Peta Maddy	Western Water	peta.maddy@westernwater.com.au
Michelle Pinan	City West Water	mpinan@citywestwater.com.au
Nathan Smith (Coordinator)	VicWater	nathan.smith@vicwater.org.au

For queries about STG activities, please contact Nathan Smith at VicWater on (03) 9639 8868 or nathan.smith@vicwater.org.au

National Emissions Trading Scheme

The 'National Emissions Trading Taskforce' (an initiative of the State and Territory Government's) released a Discussion Paper in August 2006 titled: a 'Possible Design for a National Emissions Trading Scheme' (NETS). The 'Discussion Paper' is a proposal put forward in the national interest. The 'National Emissions Trading Taskforce' are seeking comments on the 'Discussion Paper' by Friday 22 December 2006.

A greenhouse emissions trading scheme may offer flexible and cost effective options to meet greenhouse targets for Australia. The potential of an emissions trading scheme has been recognised in the Kyoto Protocol, through which participating countries will be able to buy or sell part of their allocated amount of greenhouse emissions. The European Union has recently established its own emissions trading scheme, and other regions and nations are actively considering emissions trading approaches.

A carefully designed 'NETS' could provide a mechanism for the Australian economy to transition more smoothly to a carbon constrained future, and potentially link Australia to international carbon markets. The NETS can create a market for greenhouse gas emissions and emissions reductions and has the potential to provide flexible and low cost abatement options while accelerating the adoption of existing and new technologies.

[Download Executive Summary](#)

[Download Discussion Paper](#)

[Further Information](#)

Desalination Using Solar Energy – Port Augusta Proposal



Solar Mirror Troughs, Source: www.acquasol.biz/

Water and energy company 'Aquasol' has proposed a desalination plant to be powered by solar energy, to serve the community of Port Augusta in South Australia. The proposal would deliver 10,000 megalitres of clean, fresh drinking water daily to Port Augusta, with required energy to be supplied from 50 megawatts of renewable electricity by 1.7km of solar trough mirrors.

The proposal aims to utilise much of the existing infrastructure to pump water from the Upper Spencer Gulf to the desalination facility at Point Patterson (on Port Augusta's outskirts). At the desalination facility, the water would then be purified using reverse osmosis and multi-effects desalination.

An important part of the project is that the output of brine from the facility would not be pumped back into the gulf but instead be harvested into commercial grade salt. Another important upstream benefit is that the proposal will reduce stress on the Murray River, as Port Augusta currently relies on the Murray to supply its water needs. A recent meeting held in Port Augusta, showed the community were interested and supportive of the project.

For more information contact:
City Manager John Stephens (08) 8641 9144; Mayor Joy Baluch (08) 8642 3795; or Acquasol Managing Director Michael Fielden 0415 845 305.

Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET)

One of the major initiatives to come out of the recent Victorian Government's 'Sustainability Action Statement' was the introduction of a Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET), that aims to ensure 10% of Victoria's electricity consumption is provided by renewable sources by 2016. Effectively, this will require

each electricity retailer to purchase 10% of their electricity supply from renewable sources such as wind, hydro and solar (for a total of 3,274 Gigawatt hours) by 2016.

[Download Sustainable Action Statement](#)

WaterAid Ball 17 Nov 2006



The annual Victorian WaterAid Ball took place on Friday 17 November 2006 at the Melbourne Town Hall, and raised over \$200k for WaterAid projects to improve water and sanitation conditions in some of the poorest communities in the world.

The 650+ attendees were treated to a night of fundraising, great food and entertainment, including Bollywood dancers, comedian Brian Dawe, and singer Matt Hetherington with his band.

WaterAid Australia would like to acknowledge all the sponsors who supported the night, and in particular the major sponsors of Bilfinger Berger Services, DKM Utilities Services, Fujitsu, Interflow and John Holland.



Research in to Perceptions on Sustainable Housing

Social researchers in Brisbane have recently explored the driver's and perceptions of sustainable housing for the Queensland EPA. Surveys were conducted with 382 people from the general public and 142 people from the building industry at the 2006 HIA Home & Building Expo in Brisbane. The intent of the research is to provide key policy recommendations to the Queensland EPA with the aim to overcome negative perceptions and build on positive perceptions for sustainable housing.

Both the general public and building industry representatives that were surveyed demonstrated

strong positive attitudes towards sustainability. However, there was a perceived conflict between sustainability and other important drivers such as cost, comfort or convenience, and many people in the building industry believed that demand for sustainable housing was limited. In some additional more in-depth interviews with building industry stakeholders, a range of views became evident: Some believed that sustainability features in housing are a nuisance that is pushing up the cost of housing whilst others remained positive suggesting that most architects have a genuine drive to keep pushing the sustainability frontier.

The Sustainability Web Resource Centre

The VicWater Sustainability website (www.vicwater.org.au/sustainability) provides readily accessible information about current tools and activities relevant to sustainability.



Tell us what your business is doing in the area of Sustainability

If you have articles for inclusion in future editions of 'Sustainability News', please contact VicWater at sustainability@vicwater.org.au



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