

# WATER MATTERS

VICTORIAN WATER INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION NEWS

Volume 6 Issue 2 Autumn 2005

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## HUNTER LOVINS INSPIRING ADDRESS

**H**unter Lovins enthralled a group of around 80 water industry practitioners on 23 March when she made two presentations and participated in two question and answer sessions in a VicWater Sustainability Task Group Special Event.

Hunter is the author of *Natural Capitalism* and was named as a Time magazine Hero for the Planet in 2000. She is a founding Professor of Business at Presidio World College.

John Barnes, VicWater Chairman, introduced Hunter expressing his personal delight in being able to meet with her, particularly as we understand he has recently been reading her books.

In her first presentation Hunter outlined her ideas on Profiting from Sustainable Practices. This presentation included examples from case studies where corporations had increased shareholder wealth by embracing sustainability rather than resisting it. Hunter referred to *The Natural Advantage of Nations* a very recent book edited by Charlie Hargroves and Michael Smith which contains many of the examples cited by Hunter.

Her second presentation was tailored specifically to the water industry and featured examples of nature being used a model for living machines that clean

water and wastewater naturally. One intriguing concept was that of "daylighting" where a natural water-course is unearthed from under the tar and cement of the city and restored to life. Hunter believes that the renewed presence of open waters will bring to a city those young people whose talents and energy are critical to future prosperity.

Both question and answer sessions were very informative and the second was particularly lively, given the focus on the water industry.

VicWater would like to express its thanks to PricewaterhouseCoopers for its sponsorship of this event that assisted so many of our local practitioners to see this "inspiring address".



Hunter Lovins and John Barnes

## COMING VICWATER EVENTS

There are three VicWater Events coming in May 2005. They are:

<b>Water Supply-Demand Strategy</b>	<b>12 May, Melbourne</b>
<b>Sustainability Seminar</b>	<b>20 May, Melbourne</b>
<b>Finance Issues Workshop</b>	<b>26-27 May, Bendigo</b>

If you would like a Registration Form for any of these events, please email vicwater@vicwater.org.au nominating which event(s) in the text of your email.

“from the CEO’s desk”



Welcome to the Autumn edition of Water Matters. There have been some significant activities since the last edition and, as usual in the water industry, activities that have demanded immediate attention and resources.

In February the Council accepted the recommendations that came out of the Review of the Association. That Council decision has confirmed the direction of VicWater and has formally adopted the following roles for the Association:

**Providing water authorities with a credible voice, through:**

- ◆ Coordination of industry positions on key issues;
- ◆ Policy development;
- ◆ Effective communication with stakeholders.

**And supporting individual authorities, through:**

- ◆ Information
- ◆ Resources
- ◆ Publications and events.

The Council also adopted revised sector grouping arrangements following the recent amalgamations of a number of Authorities. The Association’s full members are now recorded in two categories: Metropolitan and Regional.

Another result of the changes has been a modification to the Board representative positions and the need to call for nominations for all Board positions. As we go to print the following appointments have been finalised and an election is being arranged for the remaining position and will be held in late April/early May.

**BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>
<b>Terry Larkins</b>	<b>Melbourne Water</b>
<b>Dennis Cavagna</b>	<b>Metropolitan Sector</b>
<b>Jan Greig</b>	<b>Southern/Goulburn-Murray Rural Water</b>
<b>Mike Paine</b>	<b>Regional Sector</b>
<b>John Barnes</b>	<b>Regional Sector</b>

On behalf of the industry I would like to congratulate those appointed to the Board and I look forward to their assistance in guiding VicWater over the next few years.

I would also like to thank Peter McManamon, who did not re-nominate for the Board, for his input and assistance during his time on the Board. The efforts of the VicWater Board members, like Peter, provides a considerable benefit to the whole water industry.

The other major activity at present is the activity associated with the Essential Service Commission’s first draft decision for 17 of the water businesses.

The industry has seen some major changes over the years but it is difficult to recall any that have focused the same level of activity in such a short timeframe. All businesses involved are conducting extensive reviews of their Water Plans in light of the draft decision. Hopefully all will reach an acceptable outcome in the near future.

**Steve Bird**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

**WELCOME TO OWEN PHILLIS**

VicWater would like to welcome Owen Phillis as the newest addition to the VicWater team. Owen has joined us in the role of Project Officer (Sustainability) and will be focussing on the review of the Victorian Water Review placing a greater emphasis on sustainability measurement and policy across the industry. The review

will rely on input from people across the industry, and will be closely tied to the output from the Performance Measurement Task Group and the Sustainability Task Group.

Owen has joined VicWater following 11 months as the Chief Executive Officer of Portland Coast Water Authority, and 6 months as the Technical Services Manager of the Authority. Prior to this, Owen worked with the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) involved in strategic business planning and market analysis. He graduated from Curtin University in 2000 with a Bachelor of Engineering Degree. His passions lie in the sustainable use of natural resources in industry and the community.

VicWater welcomes Owen to the Association, and looks forward to some significant steps being made in sustainability over the coming few years.

*Owen Phillis*



# GWM WATER – YOUR WATER BUSINESS

The Board of Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water has adopted a new trading name for the organisation.

From now on Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water will trade as GMMWater, and this will be the name that you will hear in association with all urban and rural water supply and environmental services across the Grampians Wimmera Mallee regions.

On 1 July 2004 the former Wimmera Mallee Water and Grampians Water joined together to become one water business serving western Victoria.

Since then the new organisation has been working hard to fulfil the commitment of providing the best possible water services to all customers, right across the region.

GMMWater employs approximately 230 staff who are based at strategic locations across the region or at the regional administrative centre located in Horsham. The total area serviced by GMMWater covers approximately 6.2 million hectares or more than 60,000 square kilometres. The region extends

from Ouyen in the north to Harrow in the south, and from Streatham to the South Australian border.

Water supply services are provided to approximately 52,000 urban customers who live in 74 towns throughout the region. Environmental services are provided to 24 of these towns. Services provided to GMMWaters 7,000 rural customers include annual domestic and stock supplies by way of an annual dam fill for up to 20,000 dams, rural pipeline supplies to some 650,000 hectares and irrigation supply to about 3,000 hectares.

Other services include groundwater management, river diversions and support of key regional catchment and environmental management strategies.

GMMWater also manages 14 storages, including recreational access to these storages. An important future role for GMMWater will be the future delivery of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Project.

"The formation of GMMWater has been a key element in securing government support for this vital regional project",



said Chairman Barry Clugston. "Our experienced team is committed to continuing to deliver the best possible level of service to all our customers throughout the region".

"An integral component of this commitment will be the delivery of an affordable pipeline system that will enable us to continue to meet the needs of all our customers into the future", Mr Clugston said.

More information on GMMWater is available by visiting the website at [www.gmmwater.org.au](http://www.gmmwater.org.au)

## ABOUT ACORE

ACORE (Australian Centre of Regulatory Economics) has been jointly established by the industry and the Faculty of Economics and Commerce of the Australian National University to provide a national focal point for excellence in research and teaching in the economics of regulation.

The field of regulatory economics has gained prominence in Australia over the

last few years as a result of State and Commonwealth governments pursuing industry reforms and implementing competition policy. ACORE is the only institution currently in Australia that provides specialised postgraduate education and professional development training in regulatory economics.

They offer Masters Degrees, Post Graduate Diplomas and Graduate

Certificates in regulation economics. They also conduct workshops, seminars and organise forums on various aspects of economic regulation throughout the country.

Details of their range of courses and general information on ACORE can be found at their website [www.acore.org.au](http://www.acore.org.au)

## VICWATER CONFERENCE 2005

This year's **VicWater Annual Conference** will be held at the Sheraton in Geelong on the 8th - 9th September 2005. Please note these dates in your diary. Further information will be included in the next edition of *Water Matters*.

## SYSTEMS NETWORK MEETING AT WESTERN WATER

Dean Barnett of Western Water hosted an inaugural meeting of the Water Authorities Systems Network at the Western Water Office at Gisborne on 6 April.

With the objective of sharing experience in quality systems, environmental management systems and OH&S systems, the participants were drawn from a wide range of Water Authorities with a range of job roles focussing on systems management.

Of particular interest from the first meeting was a strongly supported suggestion regarding authorities assisting each other by providing staff to help each other undertake internal audits of the various systems.

VicWater is happy to work with this new Network and commends Dean and Western Water on this initiative.



*Inaugural meeting of the Systems Network at Western Water*

## SAFETY SYSTEM WINS APPROVAL

Employees at North East Water began the New Year knowing that their wellbeing at work was being managed by an accredited safety system.

The Wodonga-based Authority received the coveted 'yellow ticks' from SAI Global in January after an exhaustive audit of its field activities.

The accreditation, under Australian Standard AS 4801:2001 is the final

step in a long process that began back in 1997.

Chief Executive, Jim Martin, said the approval from SAI Global was a great achievement for North East Water.

"The groundwork for this was put in place eight years ago, and it's taken a lot of hard work and dedication to get to this point," he said.

"This is a particularly special accomplishment for us, and is a

great credit to our OHS officer, Brent Janetzki, along with the hard-working OHS committee," he said.

"But much of the credit should really go to the people out in the field who make the system work on a daily basis – the people who understand and want to protect their right to go home in the same condition in which they came to work."

## Reuse up to 130,000L\* of grey water without compromise

Introducing the Nylex Greywater Diverta™ - designed to divert grey water to a sub-surface irrigation system.

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\*Based on an average household's annual water consumption of 2 adults and 2 children.

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Water Conservation

## WATERAID AUSTRALIA LAUNCHED IN CANBERRA

The Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer officially launched *WaterAid Australia* in March releasing details of countries and projects where *WaterAid Australia* will operate.

Mr Downer was joined by Tony Kelly, Chairman of *Water Aid Australia* and Managing Director of Yarra Valley Water to officially launch *WaterAid Australia* with the symbolic filling of a bucket of water to symbolise the amount of drinking water needed for a family to survive on a daily basis.

*WaterAid Australia* is an international aid and development agency dedicated exclusively to the provision of safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education to the world's poorest people. *WaterAid* works by helping local organisations set up low cost, sustainable projects using appropriate technology that can be managed by the community itself.

Over fifty of Australia's leading water industry companies, including VicWater, have become foundation members of *WaterAid Australia*.

Tony Kelly, *WaterAid Australia's* Chairman said: "Every fifteen seconds a child dies in developing countries from easily preventable water related diseases."



Tony Kelly and the Hon Alexander Downer at the *WaterAid* Launch.

"Whilst water has become an issue in Australia with water restrictions, in developing countries it is a matter of life and death."

"In many countries mainly women spend between five to eight hours a day carrying water for their families to survive." When *WaterAid* provide reliable water supplies to these communities, the women are

free to become involved in economic activities that release the community from the poverty trap."

*WaterAid Australia* welcomes the support provided by the Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, and will be working closely with the Federal Government to coordinate its efforts and maximise the benefits of the projects.

## NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE 2005 SAVEWATER! AWARDS®

The savewater! awards® recognise outstanding achievements and innovation in water conservation by businesses, government, schools, local communities and individuals across Victoria.

Now in their fourth year, the savewater! awards® have emerged as the leading water sustainability awards in Victoria. Winning a savewater! award® has helped many companies and individuals spread the water conservation message and help other members of their community to use water more efficiently. Some companies have even had business and funding opportunities open up as a result of winning an award.

Entries are welcomed in the following areas:

- ◆ Manufacturing
- ◆ Service Providers
- ◆ Government
- ◆ Primary Industries
- ◆ Education Programs
- ◆ Built Environment
- ◆ Garden Management
- ◆ Product Innovations
- ◆ Regional Business
- ◆ Community Action

An overall 'Award for Excellence' winner is decided from all eventual finalists.

Nominations Close Monday 22 August 2005. Winners are announced during National Water Week in October.

Entry forms and detailed category information are available from [www.savewater.com.au](http://www.savewater.com.au)

– click on 2005 savewater! awards®.



# TRAINING AND OH&S MATTERS

## TRADE WASTE COURSE

The development of the Trade Waste Course is nearing completion with a meeting at the EPA on 17 March which signed off on the developed Units of Competency for the Certificate IV level course. This new course is a first for the water industry in Australia and shows once again Victoria leading the way in the development and implementation of new courses for the industry.

Discussions are already underway regarding the running of a pilot program to get the course underway and to do some fine-tuning at the same time.

## OH&S Network

The OH&S Network had its first meeting for 2005 in conjunction with the Safety in Action Conference at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre on 22 March. There was a good attendance from most Water Authorities and with 10 items on the agenda it was a busy afternoon!

Consideration is currently being given to holding the second meeting for 2005 in conjunction with the Water Industry Operator's Conference in September.

Working Groups already underway or inaugurated at the 22 March Meeting are:

### *OHS Benchmarking*

Chair **Con Mavrelis** City West Water

### *Manual Handling Project*

Chair **Tony Smith**  
East Gippsland Water

### *Working Near Overhead and Underground Services*

Chair **Luke Haines**  
Goulburn Valley Water

### *Roadside Worksite Safety*

Chair **Tony Henderson** Gippsland Water

## Review of the National Water Industry Training Package

We have been advised that \$300,000 is set aside to complete the Review of the Water Training Package (Phase II).

Phase I of the Review was completed at the end of 2003 and its findings were agreed at that time by the Australian National Training Authority.



*WIETAA Members at Training Services, Goulburn-Murray Water*

Unfortunately, before Phase II could commence the national Industry Training Advisory Bodies were embroiled in restructuring to become the rebadged Industry Skills Councils and in October last year, the imminent abolition of the Australian National Training Authority was announced.

More than a year after the Phase I of the Review was successfully completed and its findings accepted we still do not have a means of enhancing the national Training Package, despite significant work being done at the Victorian level.

## On Site Supervision Course

Recently completed and accredited, this new course features two new Units of Competency developed at the Victorian level. The short course of 22 hours is made up of the units VBN953 Inspect and supervise OH&S conformance on construction sites and VBN954 Manage and review construction site OH&S conformance reporting systems.

Among the issues activities covered by the course are:

- ◆ Trench shoring
- ◆ Confined space entry
- ◆ Hot welding
- ◆ Temporary electrical services
- ◆ Fire/explosion risks
- ◆ Working at heights
- ◆ Asbestos removal
- ◆ Electrical no go zones
- ◆ First aid
- ◆ Plant operations
- ◆ Temporary worker amenities
- ◆ Fall prevention

It is expected that the course will be run for the first time prior to the end of the financial year.

## Water Industry Education and Training Association of Australia (WIETAA) Meeting

Victoria hosted a national meeting of the Water Industry Education and Training Association of Australia in Tatura on 8-9 March.

Thanks to the hospitality of David Roberts and John Flett of Goulburn-Murray Water, a group consisting of representatives from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia was able to update the WIETAA Business Plan, make important decisions about the future national direction of water industry training and begin the process of setting up a WIETAA website.

Since that meeting Steve Bird, Paul O'Brien and David Roberts have met with Ross Young and Peter Donlon of Water Services Association of Australia to examine ways in which the respective organisations might work together to enhance the profile of training for the water industry.

## Roadside Worksite Safety

A training subcommittee has been formed to look at training issues arising out of the current WorkSafe/VicRoads campaign on roadside worksite safety in support of the Code of Practice for Worksite Safety - Traffic Management which was published on 22 December 2004.

The subcommittee was joined by Alexandra Mannell, Curriculum Maintenance Manager for the water and building and construction industries at its last meeting on 5 April.

Alexandra's knowledge of the relevant Units from the Building and Construction Training Package will allow the subcommittee to realistically evaluate current training in road traffic management and make recommendations on future training resources.

# TASK GROUP TOPICS

## WATER RESTRICTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP

In a letter to VicWater, the Minister for Water has thanked the Water Restriction Review Working Group for their efforts in achieving an agreed water industry position on the nature of the four-stage restriction policy.

The Minister has agreed with the Working Group's recommendation that consultation with key stakeholder groups with statewide interests is desirable, to further refine the restriction guidelines. VicWater is coordinating these stakeholder consultation forums in late April, which will involve representatives from the garden and lawn industries, sporting associations, Councils, manufacturers and retailers of water-related products (eg trigger nozzles etc), and the motor industry (regarding car washing).

Following the stakeholder forums, the Working Group will consider the feedback from the forums, and have the restriction guidelines legally reviewed. The water industry's feedback will be sought for a final time, and pending any further comments, the restriction guidelines will be submitted to the Minister. It is expected the Minister will then distribute the guidelines to all water businesses, who will then undertake community consultation on the guidelines so that restriction policies can be further tailored to suit local conditions, for the revised DRP/Bylaws for each water business to be in place by 1 December 2006.

## DAMS WORKING GROUP

The Dam's Working Group wished to thank Shane McGrath (Goulburn Murray Water) for his Chairmanship during 2005, and welcomes Bruce Duncan (Coliban Water) as Chairman and Adam Fletcher (Barwon Water) as Deputy Chair for 2006. This year the Dam's Working Group will be investigating the extension of membership to owners of large Victorian dams, which will strengthen the Working Group's role as representing Victorian dam owners.

## WATER SUPPLY-DEMAND STRATEGY (WSDS) REFERENCE GROUP

DSE has requested VicWater provide a reference group for the development of the WSDS Guidelines. The guidelines are currently in draft format, and expect to be released to the industry June 2005. Registration forms will soon be available for a WSDS Forum (12 May, Melbourne) that will include hearing from interstate guests and their lessons-learnt in developing their water strategies, and also an update from DSE on the WSDS Guidelines.

## PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT TASK GROUP

The next workshop of the Performance Measurement Task Group is currently being organised. The key topic of discussion for the group will be the re-vamp of the Victorian Water Review into a Comparative Sustainability Review for the water industry. To assist in this discussion a number of external parties are currently being engaged, including the ESC, ICLEI, DSE and the Commissioner for Sustainability. A fundamental aim of the re-vamp will be to create no increase in the reporting burden on businesses.

## FINANCE ISSUES STEERING COMMITTEE

The next workshop for the FISC group will be held on 26 and 27 May in Bendigo. Key items will include:

- ◆ Corporate Plans and Commercial Issues (Department of Treasury and Finance)
- ◆ Financial Accounting and Governance Issues (Department of Sustainability and Environment)
- ◆ Gearing and Balance Sheet structure (Treasury Corporation of Victoria)
- ◆ Reporting Requirements / Next Steps (Essential Services Commission)
- ◆ IFRS Training (Deloitte)

## SUSTAINABILITY TASK GROUP

The Sustainability Task Group recently hosted a presentation by Hunter Lovins, author of a number of books in the field of sustainability. Hunter is a strong advocate for sensible policies to achieve sustainability, and praised the work done by the Victorian Water Industry in this area. Given the success of the presentation, the Task Group has commenced organising more of these inspirational/educational addresses for the future. The first such address will be given by Tim Fischer from the EPA, who will be speaking to the industry on his thoughts on key priorities for the EPA now and in the future, and how water businesses can best work with the EPA to combat some of Victoria's highest priority environmental problems. Tim will present from 1 to 2pm on Friday 6 May at CEDA, Melbourne.

The 2005 Sustainability Seminar will soon be held and this year will focus on some real-life applications of sustainability in the State. Presentations will include:

- ◆ Life Cycle Analyses (Sydney Water and Yarra Valley Water)
- ◆ Pollution Control from industries (City West Water)
- ◆ Gippsland Water Factory (Gippsland Water)
- ◆ Water Industry Sustainability Training Course (RMIT)
- ◆ Research into Sustainability Measurement Tools (WSAA)
- ◆ Reducing Energy Consumption in water networks (Yarra Valley Water)

The sustainable water business essay winner will also present at the Sustainability Seminar. Entries to the competition will close on 6 May.

The Water Industry Sustainability Training Course being developed by RMIT is now approaching its final stages, with the curriculum soon to be finalised with the Sustainability Task Group. The course will be available to everyone in the industry at a very reasonable price.

## \$2 MILLION WATER SAVER PROGRAM TO HELP SCHOOLS SAVE UP TO 30 PER CENT ON THEIR WATER USE

**A** \$2 million 'Schools Water Efficiency Program' will help Victorian schools conserve water across the state while saving money on their water bills, the Minister for Water, John Thwaites, said today (18th April).

Mr Thwaites said the four-year program would be available to assist 2200 primary and secondary schools to undertake an audit of their internal water use.

"Where the potential for water savings is identified, the program will also help schools to update their plumbing," Mr Thwaites said.

"Through focusing on simple measures, such as fitting flow-control valves and fixing leaky taps or cisterns, the Schools Water Efficiency Program offers low cost works for potential water savings of between five and 30 per cent in each school."

The program is part of the Bracks Government's Our Water Our Future plan to secure the State's water supplies.

Mr Thwaites said the Program would operate under a 'payment by savings' system, allowing schools to obtain funding up front to undertake the works, and recoup costs through water savings.

"Over coming months we will be providing all public and private schools on reticulated water systems with information about the program. Schools will then be invited to apply for funding to begin the audit process," he said.

"It's envisaged that schools will be able to save, on average, more than a \$1000 on their water bills per year through taking simple measures to improve their water efficiency.

Education Services Minister Jacinta Allan said the program would add to efforts already underway to save water in schools.

"Since 2002 every capital works project for new or replacement schools, modernisation or fire reinstatement have been planned and designed to include the provision of water tanks," she said.

"The water from the tanks is used for toilet flushing or garden watering.

"Also, recent projects such as the new Lynbrook Primary have been designed to include ponds and wetlands to act as holding basins for water run-off. This provides significant opportunities for environmental education in the schools."

## IRRIGATION FUTURE MANAGEMENT PROJECT LAUNCHED IN PYRAMID-BOORT

**A** series of strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of the local irrigation industry will soon be developed in the Pyramid-Boort area.

The Pyramid-Boort Future Management Strategy, which seeks to determine what the most viable irrigation system for Pyramid-Boort should look like, was officially launched today by the Minister for Water, John Thwaites, in a ceremony at Durham Ox.

Goulburn-Murray Water Director and Chair of the project's Steering Committee, John Brooke, said a lot of work will go into developing the strategy and that the results will also provide a great example of what could be achieved in other irrigation areas.

"With water leaving the Pyramid-Boort area permanently, in some cases resulting in stranded assets, and with many of assets in need of repair, it became clear that we needed to look

very closely at our industry and infrastructure needs to secure a sustainable future for the area," he said.

"In essence, it is important that we understand the future service needs of our customers and the assets required to deliver that service. This may mean that the way we deliver our service will change to ensure the industry remains sustainable.

"In determining this, the project will consider the impact of water trading and associated stranded assets, asset conditions, viability of customers, pricing pressures and future costs, and various water reform initiatives such as the Our Water Our Future white paper.

"The white paper has provided a clear framework to support the reconfiguration of irrigation systems and the government is also helping to fund this groundbreaking project.

"This strategy will clearly acknowledge the strong link between a reliable water supply system and a prosperous community, and seeks to ensure confidence in the future of Pyramid-Boort."

The steering committee is confident that the strategy will also produce water savings, introduce new and more efficient technologies and produce more efficient agriculture.

The project has economic, social and environmental implications for the region, and community involvement will play a vital role in it. Various community consultation committees will be set up to allow for significant input from the community.

"This is a very exciting project that will help shape the future of our region," Mr Brooke said.

"I encourage the community to become involved and to support the project as it is rolled out."