

WATERMATTERS

VICTORIAN WATER INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION NEWS

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Due dates: 15 January, 15 April, 15 July and 15 October or call T: (03) 9639 8868

VICWATER 2008 ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2 & 3 OCTOBER 2008

The Sebel Heritage Yarra Valley will be the venue for the conference.

The theme this year is *Facing Challenges and Seeking Solutions*. The Conference will focus on how water businesses and key stakeholders are tackling the challenge of planning in such changing conditions, while seeking innovative solutions and opportunities.

Brochures and registration forms will be mailed in July and will also be available at www.vicwater.org.au. Please add these dates to your diary now.

PHIL THE BUCKET - GWMWATER'S NEW MASCOT

GWMWater's new mascot 'Phil the Bucket' was officially unveiled at the Wimmera Machinery Field Days on Tuesday 4 March 2008 where he presented a range of giveaways to kids.

The concept of 'Phil the Bucket' came about following a brainstorming exercise on how GWMWater may further enhance its current educational program.

Buckets have been a long standing merchandising must for GWMWater for many years now proving to be an extremely popular item amongst adults and kids alike, hence Phil was created.

'Phil the Bucket' will play a major role in supporting GWMWater's educational programs as an interactive learning aid in teaching our younger generation the importance of water conservation in everyday living.

Phil is also the link to a specially designed kid's web page which features on GWMWater's new website launched on 22 April 2008.



Phil the Bucket with young friends

“from
the CEO’s
desk”



Welcome to the autumn edition of *Water Matter*. Hopefully, May/June/July will provide some well needed rainfall across the State.

I recently attended the Skills Forum in Canberra which was hosted by the National Water Commission to try and find ways to address the

skills shortage facing the water industry now and into the future. As a result of the Forum a senior level steering group has been established to lead a number of initiatives identified at the forum. More information will be provided directly to water businesses in the coming weeks.

Special mention needs to be made of Laurie Gleeson’s retirement from Goulburn Valley Water after 27 years at the helm. Laurie has

made a significant contribution to the industry over the years and his insight and forthright comment will be missed.

Finally, a quick reminder about the VicWater conference to be held in October: This year’s theme is ‘Facing Challenges and Seeking Solutions’. Further information is available on the Association’s website: www.vicwater.org.au

WESTERN WATER’S GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION RECEIVES ‘TOP CLASS’ RECOGNITION

Western Water’s leadership and commitment to greenhouse gas reduction sends a powerful message to other businesses in Australia,” said Ms Kathryn Anthonisz, Director of the federal government’s Greenhouse Challenge Plus Program. “Western Water’s four point strategy for achieving zero net greenhouse gas emissions is outstanding and should be used by other companies as a model to be copied,” Ms Anthonisz continued. In 2005/06 the Victorian water industry was responsible for more than 838,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions (CO₂e), equivalent to an additional 193,000 cars driving on Victoria’s roads each year. Western Water was the sixth largest greenhouse gas emitter, with 23,958 tonnes of CO₂e, or an additional 5,531 cars’ emissions. Western Water Managing Director, John Wilkinson said “In 2007, Western Water made a commitment to our staff and customers to investigate ways of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and to lead the way in reducing our environmental footprint. “Our greenhouse gas reduction strategy outlines the steps we will take towards carbon neutrality or zero net greenhouse gas emissions

for the business, he said. “The Sunbury office will reduce its net greenhouse gas emissions to zero immediately by purchasing one hundred percent GreenPower. “Forming a partnership with the federal government and joining the Greenhouse Challenge Plus program was another key opportunity identified.” The program provides reporting on greenhouse gas emissions and supports the integration of greenhouse gas reduction into business decision-making, with an aim to achieve cost effective emission reductions. “This partnership with the government will include independent validation of data, allowing Western

Water to verify claims of our progress towards zero net greenhouse gas emissions,” Mr Wilkinson said. Western Water’s other innovative initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions include recovering waste energy for the generation of electricity with biogas from sewage treatment; becoming more efficient in the operation of pumps and the use of sequestration and abatement schemes by planting trees to capture carbon dioxide gas. The strategy will be reviewed annually. Further initiatives for reductions will be identified and the strategy updated to ensure the overall target of zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2017 can be achieved.



L-R Terry Larkins, John Wilkinson, Kathryn Anthonisz, Peta Maddy

WATER CORPORATION JOY OVER EARLY BORE RESULTS

Initial results from Westernport Water test bores at Corinella show that the underground reservoir could supply up to 75% of the region's normal daily use needs if dry conditions continue. The results of the first bore drill show a daily flow rate of 1.3ML/day. Two other bores are still to be assessed but hydrologists believe they will yield similar flows.

Westernport Water customers use an average of about 5 to 6ML/day at Stage Two restrictions.

The initial results were welcomed by acting CEO Keith Gregory. "This

confirms our belief in groundwater supplies as part of our augmentation project," he said. "Ever since the Candowie Reservoir levels sank to 6% of capacity last June we have been single-mindedly working towards this moment.

"The news means we can be confident about future water supplies due to the diversity of sources available to us." Mr Gregory said that rain-fed supply into Candowie Reservoir would remain the corporation's major water source. Water pumped from the Bass River during times of high flow would be one of two further options.

"And now we have the security of another back-up, a third water source from these bore pumps," he said. "It means that Westernport Water is well-placed to ride out any big dry." Mr Gregory praised the efforts of the Westernport Water engineers Helden Leereveld and Colin Bowker who scoured old maps and hydrology reports in the hunt for untapped aquifers at Corinella. "The pair took on a task that required many, many long hours and a great deal of effort to produce outstanding results."

SMART WATER FUND ANNOUNCES \$5 MILLION FOR SUCCESSFUL ROUND 5 PROJECTS

Twenty-six innovative water saving and water recycling projects have been allocated a share of \$5 million in Round 5 of the Smart Water Fund. Water Minister Tim Holding made the official announcement in April at the Metropolitan Fire Brigade's Eastern Hill Fire Station in front of grantees, the media and members of Victoria's water community.

The MFB has been successful in securing funding in Round 5 for an innovative water recycling program. Attendees at the official announcement were able to witness a demonstration of the MFB's water saving device in action. "Following 11 years of drought and with the challenges of climate change and population growth, we need to use water more efficiently," Mr Holding said at the announcement.

"Finding new and innovative ways to conserve and recycle water is essential to securing Victoria's water future. "These Smart Water Fund recipients have developed creative new solutions to saving and protecting our precious water resources and are making a significant contribution

to Victoria's collective water knowledge," Mr Holding said.

Of the 26 successful projects, eight are located in regional Victoria and take innovative approaches to water conservation and water recycling in both community and industrial settings. Russell Eddington, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of South East Water and the spokesperson for the Smart Water Fund said that the program is helping to secure Victoria's water supplies, not just for now but for future generations.

"The Smart Water Fund invests in innovative water conservation, water recycling and biosolids management projects put forward by individuals, community groups, businesses and research bodies in metropolitan and regional urban Victoria. "As an industry we are extremely proud of the Fund's achievements and value the government's commitment to innovation in the water sector," said Mr Eddington.

To view the full list of successful Round 5 projects and to learn more about the Smart Water Fund visit www.smartwater.com.au



Smart Water Fund participants

WIMMERA MALLEE PIPELINE PROGRESS

Storage levels of 3.4% capacity in mid April 2008 are keeping the pressure on the construction of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline (WMPP). Planning for water supplies to customers for 2008 is underway, with construction timelines the basis for scheduling the mix of channel deliveries and pipeline supplies for different sections of the region, given the critical storage volumes.

3,500 kilometres of the WMPP is 'in the ground'. Thirteen towns are currently being supplied from the pipeline, including Dooen, Pimpinio, Dimboola, Antwerp, Tarranyurk, Jeparit, Rainbow, Yaapeet, Brim, Beulah, Culgoa, Berriwillock and Nullawil.

Piped water supplies are now available to farmers in Supply System 1 (Yaapeet) and Supply System 5 (Culgoa). Commissioning works are almost

complete, with pump testing and storages to be finalised in late April. Many farmers are celebrating the piped supply, signifying the end to carting water for both stock and domestic use.

Construction of the Supply System 2 (Woomelang) distribution network, connecting the main trunk to farms in the area, is well advanced. Over half of the 1700 kilometre system has been constructed, with installation of meters and tapping points commencing in May. Customers in this system will receive piped water progressively during 2008, as the system is commissioned.

Preparations for the construction of Supply System 3 (Birchip) and Supply System 4 (Wycheproof), are well advanced, with construction targeted for completion in mid 2009. A total of 3,500 kilometres of pipeline will service the communities of Rupanyup, Minyip,

Watchem, Birchip, Marnoo, Donald, Wycheproof and Charlton, as well as each farm business in the eastern part of the region.

Preliminary planning and consultation for Supply System 6, south of Horsham, has been initiated, to prepare design documents for tender later in 2008. Environmental and cultural heritage assessments are collating data for input into the design, with the land liaison process scheduled to commence in July.

Parallel planning, construction and commissioning activities are on target to deliver the project within five years. Training and planning within GWMWater is preparing for the handover of the first sections of the pipeline as it becomes fully operational, heralding a new era in water management in the Wimmera Mallee.

NEW WATER SUPPLY FOR COLERAINE

In February, the Minister for Water, Tim Holding announced that Wannon Water will construct a new \$5.2 million pipeline to provide improved security of supply and water quality for Coleraine customers.

Wannon Water has awarded the contract for a pump station and 29 kilometre pipeline from the Casterton Water Treatment Plant to Coleraine which will connect 617 urban properties and 67 rural properties to the town's new supply. "The Coleraine community will be able to enjoy a much higher quality of water and enjoy a more reliable water source than is currently available," Mr Holding said.

The existing Coleraine water supply from the Koonongwootong Reservoir has become increasingly saline and is a chlorinated supply only, resulting in variable water quality. "Having consistent water quality can be a challenge for some towns across Victoria which is why projects like this



are so important," he said. The pipeline will largely follow the alignment of the Glenelg Highway. It will divert into private property between Kantara and Munthan lanes to avoid affecting environmentally significant plants and animals.

An environmental management plan will minimise pipeline impacts and affected landowners and the community will be consulted throughout the

Looking over the plans for the new \$5.2 million Casterton-Coleraine Pipeline are Wannon Water Managing Director, Grant Green, Water Minister Tim Holding and Wannon Water Board Chair, Harry Peeters.

project. The project will be funded by Wannon Water through customers' water bills. "Wannon Water's initiative in undertaking this project shows its commitment to delivering high quality service improvements to its customers," Mr Holding said.

EAST GIPPSLAND WATER AND EPA CUTTING RED TAPE

EPA Victoria and East Gippsland Water have launched the second only corporate licence in the world that serves to cut red tape, deliver savings to business and help protect the environment.

The new East Gippsland Water corporate licence amalgamates ten EPA licences for ten wastewater management facilities into just one and reduces the amount of licensing documentation from 113 pages to nine. EPA Chairman Mick Bourke said the new licence maintains the rigour of EPA's licensing requirements, while also freeing East Gippsland Water to increase its focus on long-term initiatives designed to help reduce its overall environmental impact.

"These initiatives include, for example, cutting energy use and working more closely with developers and the tourism industry to reduce the levels of water consumption and wastewater produced

by customers," Mr Bourke said. The corporate licensing program is expected to save Victorian businesses \$3 million annually through administrative savings and at least \$12 million through compliance savings. The initiative is expected to reduce the total number of EPA licences by 30 per cent.

Through recent changes to the Environment Protection Act (1970), companies holding two or more EPA licences can now voluntarily amalgamate these into a single corporate licence. "EPA is addressing current environmental issues through smarter initiatives and contemporary licensing," Mr Bourke said. "This licence will allow flexibility and encourage a whole-of-business approach to managing and improving environmental and economic performance."

East Gippsland Water Managing Director Les Mathieson said the corporate licence

means a major cut in red tape. "It enables us to expand our focus from environmental compliance at licence sites to reducing our organisation's overall environmental footprint across all our activities," Mr Mathieson said.



Mick Bourke, Chair of the EPA and Les Mathieson, MD of East Gippsland Water sign the Corporate Licence

COUNCILS TURN ON THE PURPLE TAP AT SPORTS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Councils in the eastern and north eastern suburbs of Melbourne are accessing free Class A recycled water for use on sportsgrounds and community facilities following a \$3 million upgrade to Yarra Valley Water's Brushy Creek Sewage Treatment Plant in mid December 2007.

The upgrade, launched by Minister Holding earlier this year, is the first local source of Class A water for the northern and eastern suburbs of Melbourne and has provided over 22 million litres in the first 4 months of operation, allowing community assets that have been

suffering under the drought some much needed respite from water restrictions. Managing Director of Yarra Valley Water, Tony Kelly said contractor Tenix Alliance worked in partnership with the water utility to complete the upgrades in record time, with the plant now producing approximately two million litres of Class A recycled water every day, which is free of charge to councils for the first year.

"We received strong support from local councils to provide Class A recycled water for use on community assets," says Mr Kelly.

'Our goal, in making this water available to councils at no charge, is to make a contribution to the costs that councils meet to access and transport water for sporting grounds, parks and gardens,' Mr Kelly says. The production of two million litres of Class A recycled water is the equivalent of 260 Olympic sized swimming pools every year. 102 football clubs, 193 cricket clubs, 68 soccer clubs, and dozens of community parks and gardens in Yarra Valley Water's service area could benefit from this recycled water.'

Tenix Alliance was involved in the plant's design; project, site and construction management; building of related infrastructure; procurement, supply and installation of equipment, commissioning of the plant, and validation and testing of water quality. Tenix Alliance CEO, Sean Woellner, said the plant was an important project for the community and demonstrated the company's strong capabilities delivering critical infrastructure. Being able to deliver this project within the short 15-week timeframe is testament to our excellent design and project management abilities.



Class A Tanker

TASK GROUP TOPICS

GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION WORKING GROUP

The group met on 20 March 2008. There were several speakers:

- ◆ Tony Sennitt (Diamond Energy) spoke about the Tatura renewable energy project.
- ◆ Jason Roberts (Greenhouse Challenge Plus) gave the group an update on the Greenhouse Challenge Plus Program of the Australian Greenhouse Office.
- ◆ Buck Darmon (VicWater) provided the group with a summary of the data collected on Greenhouse and Energy KPIs from water businesses.
- ◆ Steve Shinnars (Gippsland Water) gave a presentation on their water business' Sustainability Assessment Tool.

The group also discussed the summary of the interim Garnaut Report and Tim Kelly's (SA Water) paper on 'Greenhouse Confusion 2008, Renewable Energy, Smoke and Mirrors'. Members of the task group also gave feedback about the AWA Accounting for Carbon in the Water Industry seminar. Win Laing (SV) proposed to produce a progress report on the working group.

FINANCE ISSUES STEERING COMMITTEE (FISC)

The speakers and program for the annual finance issues workshop has been finalised. This year's conference will be held in Hepburn Springs on 29 and 30 May 2008.

Over the past weeks FISC members provided assistance with the discussions on the Debt to Equity issue with government.

SUSTAINABILITY TASK GROUP

The STG met on 28 March 2008 with a presentation made by Utility Services on direct metering in water businesses i.e. HydroShare and Eco Pioneer program.

The annual sustainability seminar was held on May 8 at the Jasper Hotel in Melbourne (489 Elizabeth St). The

recent Sustainability News publication continued to highlight industry sustainability case studies.

WATER EFFICIENCY TASK GROUP

The WETG met on 6 March. Andrew Fennessy (DSE) provided the group with information on the review of WaterMAPs and the setting up of a database. The task group sought reassurance from Andrew on the integrity of data, breakdown and availability of data to water businesses.

Ben Vivekanandan (REIV) spoke to the group about a streamlined water and energy approach to sustainability in homes. Ben indicated that the WETG could assist the REIV and vice versa to promote water efficiency in homes for sale or for rent.

Nicole Patterson and Brendon Clark provided the group with an update on the Behavioural Change Program. Contracts have been awarded and participating homes chosen on a volunteer basis for the program in Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Mike Paine and Buck Darmon are looking at the feasibility of a day long workshop on demand management to be held in mid to late 2008.

WATER EDUCATORS TASK GROUP

The annual educator's forum was held at Phillip Island on 14 and 15 of February and was hosted by Westernport Water. The forum had a variety of speakers including education officers from the three industry sectors in Victoria to Waterwatch, Museum Victoria staff and the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

The VWETG met on 18 March 2008. Two members of the Early Childhood Australia special interest group spoke to the VWETG about a collaborative project on a water education resource for 3-6 year olds. The Water Learn it Live it resource will be available next month with several members volunteering to modify the resource to better suit the regional businesses.

DAMS WORKING GROUP

The Dams Working Group met in January in conjunction with a DSE presentation on the Dams Safety Reporting Project which has now been completed. At the meeting DSE flagged a new proposed Dam Safety Regulatory Review Project. This project will look at the regulatory framework for Dam Safety in Victoria.

Issues to be looked at include the effectiveness of the current regulatory framework in reducing dam safety risk, institutional arrangements, resourcing, clearer benchmarks, expenditure levels on dam safety and works, climate change and implementation of the private dams legislation.

The Advisory Panel will assist in scoping a number of sub-projects which will then be undertaken by consultants. The Advisory Panel will produce a key findings and recommendations paper to the Water Industry Division, Office of Water. Panel members will include a water corporation representative, a risk assessment expert, an economist, an ANCOLD nominee and a person with expertise in regulation outside of the dams sector.

BIOSOLIDS TASK GROUP

The newly re-formed Biosolids Task Group, chaired by Allen Gale of Goulburn Valley Water, met on 31 January and 27 March. The Group will serve as a Task Group on all biosolids related issues, including (but not limited to) influencing government on the development and implementation of biosolids-related regulation and management framework, providing advice to industry on current practices or proposed regulations, and coordinating comments from the industry.

Members of the Task Group have been drawn from Barwon Water, Goulburn-Valley Water, Melbourne Water, South East Water, Wannon Water, DSE and the EPA.

The Task Group is currently considering future research topics, possibly seeking funding in the next round of Smart Water projects.

TRAINING AND OH&S MATTERS

OH&S

The OH&S Network held a very successful seminar with around 30 participants in March at Wangaratta, hosted by North East Water. Among the presentations were Cheryl Arnott, Area Manager AI Group Training Services talking about Young Workers & Induction and Dr Tim Clune, Manager Sustainability at North East Water discussing the role of OH&S in a Sustainable Environment.

Con Mavrelis, OHS Coordinator City West Water provided an update on the OH&S Benchmarking Project and a

demonstration of the use of the on-line Database System. Phil Court from the Construction and Utilities Industry Group of WorkSafe provided an update on recent WorkSafe initiatives.

Thanks are extended to North East Water for hosting this seminar.

Training

The Water Industry Advisory Committee to Government Skills Australia (GSA) met on 2 April with Victoria represented by Paul O'Brien (VicWater) and David Roberts (Goulburn-Murray Water). GSA

reported on its expanded role under the Federal Government's new Productivity Places Program which will provide 450,000 additional training places for both jobseekers and existing workers over the next four years.

Other items included progress on the Resources Project which is developing training and assessment materials for the Water Training Package and a new project to develop a qualification for indigenous people working with water and electricity supply in remote communities.

BALLARAT TO BENEFIT FROM \$90 MILLION SUPERPIPE BOOST

Federal Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, has personally delivered Australian Government funding of \$90 million for the Goldfields Superpipe to secure the future of Ballarat's water supply.

Senator Wong was in Ballarat with Victorian Water Minister Tim Holding as workers connected the final

section of the Superpipe to White Swan Reservoir. Senator Wong said the Rudd Government's \$90 million contribution to the Goldfields Superpipe would reduce the pressure on working families as water prices increase. "Our commitment to this project means Ballarat households will be around \$180 better off each year," Senator Wong said.

The Central Highlands Water Plan 2008-2013 released last year showed a failure to deliver the full \$90 million from the Australian Government for the Superpipe would increase average household water bills by around \$180 a year. "Securing new water supplies for communities is a key priority for the Rudd Government."

Victorian Water Minister Tim Holding said the Goldfields Superpipe would provide much needed water security for Ballarat, with local storages currently at 8.3 per cent. "We commenced this project in 2006 with no support from the Howard Government," Mr Holding said.

"The Goldfields Superpipe is a key link in Victoria's Water Grid and will secure water for households and regional development in the Ballarat area. The 87 kilometre Ballarat link of the Goldfields Superpipe runs from Sandhurst Reservoir in Bendigo to Ballarat's White Swan reservoir. The Goldfields Superpipe has already linked Bendigo's water supply to the Goulburn system".



Connecting the final section of Superpipe are, from left, Pipecon Managing Director Andrew Mahar, State Water Minister, the Hon. Tim Holding, Federal Minister for Climate Change and Water The Hon. Senator Penny Wong and Central Highlands Water Chairman John Barnes.

WINNER ANDREW SCORES PIPE HYPE

Pipes are pipes, whether they carry gas, water or sewer ... and plumber Andrew Dean knows more about pipes than most people. Earlier this year he topped his gas operations course at the GippsTAFE Chadstone campus. An employee of Westernport Water, Andrew accepted his award in front of 170 industry representatives and colleagues in Melbourne.

He was selected from about 30 candidates and received a certificate as the outstanding Department student. A qualified plumber and carpenter, Andrew has worked at Westernport

Water for almost 10 years. The water corporation paid for his additional training in gas distribution and maintenance.

Steven Porter, Westernport Water's Manager - Assets and Operations said: "It was more than just an investment in skilling-up our staff. "There are many similarities between water and gas supply systems. The pipes are the same and many of the concepts are the same, so Andrew's learnings are relevant for both. His training overlaps both water and gas supply; there are a lot of complementary skills between the two systems."

Andrew said he was surprised to have gained the award. "But now I realise that working at Westernport Water helped reinforce the study I was undertaking at TAFE. It's been invaluable experience and puts me across even more of the operations at my workplace. "I'd like to thank Westernport Water not only for the gas training but also for the other training I have received in personal and career development."

PETERBOROUGH SEWERAGE SCHEME OPENED

April saw the Minister for Water, Tim Holding, officially open the Peterborough Sewerage Scheme.

Wannon Water completed the four-year Peterborough Sewerage Scheme project, which was first undertaken by the predecessor Authority, South West Water. The scheme was initiated by the Moyne Shire Council to reduce the environmental impact of effluent leaking from septic tanks into the Curdies River estuary.

Wannon Water undertook community consultation throughout the scheme.

Community members and local government stakeholders provided their input into the scheme through the Peterborough Sewerage Scheme Project Monitoring Committee, which was formed in 2003. The Project Monitoring Committee provided valuable input into the development and construction of the scheme and kept residents informed on the progress of the sewerage scheme.

The new \$6.4 million Peterborough Sewerage Scheme will connect 261 properties to the reticulated sewerage system. The scheme has been

completed with funding of \$900,000 from the State Government under the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program, \$200,000 from the Moyne Shire Council and \$5.3 million provided by Wannon Water.

Sewerage will be treated at the new Peterborough Water Reclamation Plant through a series of three lagoons which utilise an aerobic treatment process. Following treatment the reclaimed water is held in the winter storage before being reused in the local dairy industry. The total holding capacity of the lagoons is 141 megalitres, including the winter storage.

This important infrastructure will assist in the continued growth of this coastal community and reduce septic tank pollution of the Curdies River estuary.



L-R Wannon Water Chair Harry Peeters and Water Minister Tim Holding unveil the commemorative plaque to mark the opening of the Peterborough Sewerage Scheme. Image supplied by Western District Newspapers.