

WATER MATTERS

VICTORIAN WATER INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION NEWS

Volume 7 Issue 4 Spring 2006

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

NATIONAL WATER WEEK 2006 ACTIVITIES 'PROTECT, CONSERVE AND GET INVOLVED'

A large number of water focused community and school events occurred across the State during National Water Week, 15 - 21 October 2006 hosted by water businesses, Catchment Management Authorities, Councils and Museum Victoria.

During National Water Week water businesses conducted a range of education activities to increase the awareness of water.



South Gippsland Water, Westernport Water, Southern Rural Water, Waterwatch and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority celebrated National Water Week at Coal Creek Village, Korumburra with National Water Week (Victoria) spokesperson and marathon swimmer Tammy van Wisse and 1,100 students from fifteen surrounding schools.

As part of the activities students followed a water trail around the village stopping at various points to observe presentations on important conservation projects.

Water Aid Chief Executive Chris Wootten, National Water Week spokesperson Tammy van Wisse and VicWater Chief Executive Steve Bird at the Western Water swim-a-thon.



National Water Week Educational Spectacular at Coal Creek Village.

Students earned stamps in a 'passport' for being able to answer questions on how to conserve water, water uses and the environment and at the end of the day became 'water champions'.

Western Water as part of their National Water Week activities conducted a swim-a-thon to raise money for WaterAid, a charity that helps communities in remote third world countries gain access to safe drinking water.

The event was launched by Tammy van Wisse and was well attended by Western Water staff.



“from the CEO’s chair”



Welcome to the spring edition of Water Matters. We are currently experiencing one of the driest springs on record with many parts of the State, in particular western and central Victoria continuing to face ongoing drought conditions. As a result, much of the State’s urban water customers are on increased levels of water restrictions whilst many rural customers are facing severely decreased water allocations. I am sure that we are all very conscious of the difficulties and concerns facing the industry’s customers and staff.

The increased drought conditions were the key focus of the recent VicWater Annual Conference in September 2006. The Conference was officially opened by the Minister for Water, the Hon John Thwaites MP, with Professor Ian Lowe, Chairman, Australian Conservation Foundation providing an inspiring keynote address on water, climate change and the sustainable future of the industry. By all accounts the Conference

was a great success and was well received by participants. It is important to thank all the presenters at the Conference for their efforts in providing high quality and interesting information to the industry. I would also like to thank all those from the industry that provided their support by attending. I am sure that next years event will be just as successful. The success of the Conference is a direct result of the efforts of the VicWater staff and I would like to formally pass on my thanks to Fiona, Paul, Nathan and Jason – well done.

National Water Week was celebrated on 15 - 21 October 2006 and was officially launched by the Hon Elaine Carbines MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, and National Water Week (Victoria) spokesperson and marathon swimmer Tammy van Wisse at Scienceworks on Sunday 15 October 2006. During the week water businesses conducted a range of activities to increase the awareness of water that included canoe tours, wetland walks and cruises, river snapshots, catchment tours and photo exhibitions.

The recent release of the Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy will provide

a strong focus for a large part of the industry and provide clear guidance on the actions required. The major capital projects included will assist in securing a significant part of Victoria’s water supplies. It was also very good to see the progression of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline with the announcement of the Stage 1 tenders. That project will have a significant impact on a large part of western Victoria.

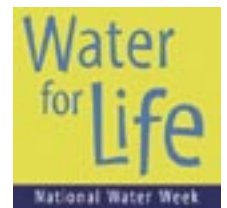
At the last VicWater Board meeting we had a change in Chairmanship with John Barnes completing his two year term. On behalf of the industry, I would like to take this opportunity to thank John for his valuable contribution as Chairman over the past two years. John will continue as a Regional representative on the Board.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Dennis Cavagna as the new Chairman of VicWater. Dennis is the metropolitan representative and is currently the longest serving Board member. I am sure that Dennis will step readily into the Chairman’s role and keep a steady eye over the functioning of VicWater and the Board.

National Water Week in Victoria spokesperson Tammy van Wisse with National Water Week poster competition winner Saskia Holloway



NATIONAL WATER WEEK LAUNCHED IN VICTORIA



National Water Week in Victoria was launched by the Hon Elaine Carbines MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, and National Water Week spokesperson and marathon swimmer Tammy van Wisse at Scienceworks on Sunday 15 October 2006. National Water Week provided the ideal opportunity to highlight the importance of protecting and conserving water. The winners of the National Water Week poster competition were also announced at the launch. The poster

competition has continually engaged over 6,000 primary school students across Victoria each year and in the process has assisted students learn about the importance of water. The National Water Week Poster competition was proudly supported by:



WATER INDUSTRY GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS REDUCTION INITIATIVE

The VicWater Board on the 26 October 2006 formally endorsed the water industry's *Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Framework* (formerly *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, and provide a consistent and collaborative water industry approach to the challenges of climate change.

For further information, please contact Paul Hogan from Sustainability Victoria
Phone: (03) 86268748 or Email: paul.hogan@sustainability.vic.gov.au

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.

SHARING SMART WATER INNOVATION

The Victorian water industry is encouraged to tap into the innovative learnings and outcomes of innovative Smart Water Fund projects.

The Smart Water Fund provides funding for innovative water conservation, water recycling and biosolids management projects in metropolitan and regional urban Victoria. The Fund is part of a commitment by the water industry and Government to support and encourage individuals, community groups and businesses in the development of ideas that will make a difference to the way we use our water resources.

Since the Smart Water Fund began in 2002, more than 75 projects have shared

over \$11 million in funding. Projects range from community, and research and development based water conservation and recycling projects to biosolids management projects.

One of the key aims of the Fund is to share the learnings from these projects in order to encourage widespread adoption of innovative water conservation solutions. To do this, the Smart Water Fund is building a 'knowledge bank' to provide the water industry and the Victorian community with a resource to access the knowledge gained through the projects.

Find out how the Victorian Golf Association is assisting the turf industry to survive the drought, what Melbourne



City Council is doing to save water in its city hotels or what aquifer storage and recovery opportunities have been discovered around Melbourne by CSIRO.

To access the knowledge bank which includes an extensive range of case studies, research reports and findings from these Smart Water Fund projects, visit www.smartwater.com.au, email info@smartwater.com.au or phone 1800 882 432.

VICWATER 2006 ANNUAL CONFERENCE – “LOOKING BEYOND..... NEW TECHNOLOGY, NEW CAPABILITIES, NEW PROCESSES, NEW CHALLENGES”

The VicWater 2006 Annual Conference 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 with Professor Ian Lowe, Chairman, Australian Conservation Foundation providing an inspiring keynote 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. The Conference was also an important networking opportunity that brought together over 150 representatives from Victorian water businesses, Government Departments, consultants and other stakeholders.



Professor Ian Lowe, Chairman
Australian Conservation Foundation

Dennis Cavagna, Managing Director
South East Water with conference delegates



WELCOME TO NEW VICWATER CHAIRMAN

VicWater would like to welcome Dennis Cavagna as VicWater Chairman, following his appointment on 26 October 2006. Dennis Cavagna is the Managing Director of South East Water, a position he was appointed to in 2001, following 20 years in the Water Industry at senior management levels. Prior to then, Dennis held financial and information technology positions in telecommunications and public accountancy.

Dennis has also been a member of the VicWater Board since September 2001.

VicWater would also like to thank John Barnes for his contribution to the Victorian water industry during his two year term as Chairman of the Association. VicWater looks forward to continuing to work with John through his involvement in the regional sector.



Dennis Cavagna, VicWater Chairman

JUST ADD WATER: SCHEMES AND DREAMS OF A SUNBURNT COUNTRY

MELBOURNE MUSEUM, NICHOLSON ST, CARLTON, 13 OCT 2006 – 28 JAN 2007

Water and lack thereof, is a defining element of the Australian landscape. Its uses and abuses have had a crucial role in shaping Australian society. It's been pumped up from below the earth, held in dams, piped over the landscape and even dragged down from the clouds. In the process we have destroyed ecologies, built communities and created a new country. Just Add Water explores how we have used and managed this vital source over the last 100 years and what we will do in the future. In an exciting and interactive space, visitors may engage with the topic on social, scientific and ecological levels as well as an emotional one.



SHOESTRING STEPS TO SAVING WATER

Museum Victoria in conjunction with the VicWater Water Efficiency Task Group has developed 'Shoestring Steps to Saving Water' that provides simple low cost steps to save water both inside and outside the home. The brochure is available on the VicWater website at www.vicwater.org.au.

Shoestring Steps
to Saving Water

simple steps at home
can help save a precious resource

WIMMERA MALLEE PIPELINE – PHASE 1

Construction on Australia's biggest water infrastructure project – the \$501 million Wimmera Mallee Pipeline – has begun,

after the award and signing of contracts for its first stage of construction. On the 20 October 2006 the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister with

Responsibility for Water, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP and Minister for Water, the Hon John Thwaites MP jointly announced that Mitchell Water has been awarded the contract for this initial construction stage. Signing contracts for the first stage of construction is an important milestone in the landmark project that will upgrade water supply, return tens of billions of litres of water to the environment and provide 20,000 Megalitres of water for economic development in the region.



*The Hon John Thwaites MP, Minister for Water and the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister with Responsibility for Water
Image source: Wimmera Mail-Times*

SAHARA LEAK DETECTION SURVEY

City West Water in conjunction with other Melbourne water businesses and Sydney Water recently took part in a water conservation project using leak detection technology imported from the United Kingdom.

The system is specifically designed to survey large water mains (>300mm) and locates leaks that do not come to the surface to help reduce water main leaks and save billions of litres of water each year.

Detecting leaks on larger water mains is very difficult, due to the relative lack of surface fittings and poor noise

propagation from leaks. The Sahara system surveys a water main while it is in service so there is no disruption to a customer's water supply. A miniature electronic acoustic device is placed into the main via pre-tapped entry points and is connected to a parachute which has a light-weight cable attached. The water velocity in the main then conveys the parachute and the acoustic device down into the main. The system is retrieved via recoiling the cable. Inside the main the sensitive acoustic device will pin-point even very small leaks.

City West Water surveyed approximately 6.5 kilometres of different pipe types

and sizes and located a total of 15 leaks. The leak detection equipment proved extremely accurate with all leaks located within half a metre. By fixing these leaks, it will save nearly 250 Megalitres per year with a total cost-saving of \$120,000 per annum.

The information obtained during the trial will be collected and exchanged between the water companies who undertook the trial. This information will assist the water companies to better understand the performance of larger mains in regard to leakage and the potential of the Sahara system for further surveys.

TRAINING AND OH&S MATTERS

WATER INDUSTRY OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY NETWORK

The Water Industry OH&S Network met in Ballarat on 4 and 5 October 2006. The meeting was very well attended with over thirty participants over the two days. Of note was the announcement by Tony Smith that he would not seek re-election as Chair of the Network. Nominations were sought and as a result congratulations are extended to Karen Willis of Central Highlands Water who will be the new Chair of the Network and to Luke Haines who will continue in his position as Deputy Chair. Thanks go to Tony for his efforts in getting the Network up and running over the last 4 years.

There were more items on the agenda than can be listed here but reference should be made to Barry Sheriff of Freehills presentation on "Reasonably Practical".

In regard to Working Group activity:

It was agreed that an industry position should be developed on the issue of whether electricity could/should be switched off prior to replacing water meters, particularly if the owners were not at home. A Working Group set up consisting of Con Mavrelis, Dean Barnett, Andrew Hardy, Diane Boede and Mike Buseti will work on this issue and report back to the Network.

With the imminent release of the new consolidated WorkSafe Regulations, as an alternative to everyone reviewing the whole set of regulations, it was decided that small groups would be given the responsibility of looking at and advising on the respective sections.

In regard to the Terms of Reference of the Network a Working Group consisting of Karen Willis, Luke Haines,

Jim Watt, Andrew Hose and Paul O'Brien will meet to finalise the Network Charter and clarify the Terms of Reference.

TRAINING SEMINAR

VicWater and Government Skills Australia (GSA) hosted a Training Seminar on 19 October at the Treacy Conference Centre in Parkville. GSA is the national Industry Skills Council for the water industry (together with local government, public safety, defence and corrections). The main role of GSA is the maintenance of the national Water Training Package while VicWater's role as the Industry Training Advisory Body for the water industry in Victoria is the implementation of the Training Package.

Nick Crosling, CEO of GSA, was introduced by John Harris of Wannon Water. John, who is a Director of GSA representing the water industry at the national level, has had considerable involvement with the national training developments for the water industry including as a former Director of the National Utilities and Electrotechnology ITAB. Nick gave an overview of the role of GSA including the Review of the Water Training Package and the setting up of the Industry Advisory Council (IAC) which will advise GSA on projects and activities involving the water industry. David Roberts of Goulburn-Murray Water and Paul O'Brien of VicWater are the two Victorian representatives on the IAC. Prue Madsen of GSA is the Project Officer servicing the water industry and she outlined the procedure to complete the Review of the Training Package and possible projects for 2007.

Nick Dudley is the National Industry Careers Specialist, funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training and employed by GSA to foster careers information for the GSA sectors including the water industry. Nick showed a promotional video made with SunWater in Queensland featuring a young man working as an irrigation supply operator. Nick took the opportunity to talk to Victorian water authorities about making a similar video in Victoria.

George Wall of the Water Industry Operator's Association and Paul O'Brien presented on the main changes coming out of the Review of the National Water Training Package and the morning session concluded with Michael Murphy talking about the work of the Centre for Environmental Technology at Gordon TAFE in Geelong.

In the afternoon session, Geoff Foster of the Office of Training and Tertiary Education spoke on the current consultations on Competency-Based Completions being undertaken for COAG while Ken Mann of City West Water presented on the City West Technical Development Program for newly-graduated engineers. The day concluded with a plenary session conducted by Paul O'Brien and Prue Madsen.

Participants at the Training Seminar



WATER RESTRICTIONS FACT SHEETS

As a result of the ongoing dry conditions being experienced in many parts of Victoria, many urban water businesses have implemented water restrictions.

VicWater has developed a set of water

restriction fact sheets that provide a summary of the key restrictions that may be place for urban water business customers under Stage 1 to Stage 4 water restrictions.

The information is provided as a guide

only and it is important that you contact your local water business for information on water restrictions that may be in place in your area.

The fact sheets are available on the VicWater website at www.vicwater.org.au.

TASK GROUP TOPICS

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT TASK GROUP (PMTG)

Production of the 2005/2006 Victorian Water Review is currently underway. The Report will be available on the VicWater website (www.vicwater.org.au) in late December 2006.

Further details will be provided in the summer edition of 'Water Matters'.

FINANCE ISSUES STEERING COMMITTEE (FISC)

FISC, in partnership with Deloitte, conducted a Financial Model Training Course for finance personnel within the industry on the 16 and 18 October 2006.

The seminar enabled participants to develop and build on their current financial modelling and Excel skills.

SUSTAINABILITY TASK GROUP (STG)

The STG met on the 10 October 2006 where they approved their 2006/2007 Business Plan. Key projects for the STG in 2006/2007 include the Sustainability Seminar and the Sustainability Training Course. At the meeting Francis Pamminger (Yarra Valley Water) provided the Task Group and other industry representatives with an update on the latest sustainability issues/challenges facing the industry. The Task Group also welcomed Dr Tim Clune (Sustainability Coordinator, North East Water) as a new member.

WATER EFFICIENCY TASK GROUP

The WETG met on the 6 October 2006 and its 2006/2007 Business Plan is currently on track. The 'Shoestring Solutions for a Water Smart Home' brochure has been finalised. This brochure provides simple and concise

information about low cost and effective water saving options in the home and garden. The information bulletin is currently available on the VicWater website (www.vicwater.org.au).

VICTORIAN WATER EDUCATORS TASK GROUP

The VWETG and the Victorian Water Educators Network met on the 22 September 2006 to judge the National Water Week poster competition. The VWETG are currently conducting a review of National Water Week and planning for the 2 day water educator's forum to be held in the Grampians in March 2007.

DAMS WORKING GROUP

The Dams Working Group is currently focussed on renewal of the Seismic Monitoring Contracts with Environmental Systems and Services (ESS) and completion of the project to develop a course in Dams Emergency Exercising.

AQUALITY CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT



WATER SERVICES ASSOCIATION
of Australia

The Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) will be releasing 'Aquality', a systematic process to examine, in detail, the implementation of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) Framework for the Management of Drinking Water Quality in November 2006. To WSAA's knowledge, it is the first attempt anywhere in the world to examine in detail and report on the strength of a drinking water quality management system being used by a utility. Each of the ADWG elements is systematically broken down into a hierarchy of parts; elements,

components, actions and measures. These parts can then be assessed, scored and aggregated to give an overall score for the element. Ultimately, a water quality management profile can be established for a utility. The scoring methodology has been developed to allow reporting to a wide range of staff management levels within the utility and is equally useful to Boards and chief executives as well as line managers and operational staff. Regulators should also gain confidence in the ability of utilities to manage water quality. The methodology also allows measurement of the progress of quality systems over time. Regular

use of this system by water utilities will lead to a continuous improvement of management systems over time by directing resources to areas of weakness in a prioritised manner. Aquality directly extends the ADWG Framework by adding a series of 187 generic 'measures' (currently) that tighten and clarify the definition of the 76 actions in the ADWG Framework.

Aquality will be useful to all utilities with the responsibility for managing drinking water and will greatly assist prioritisation of work to address matters raised in the Australian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines. As each measure has been assessed as relevant (or not) to the Victorian Safe Drinking Water regulatory framework, the methodology will also be very useful for utilities undergoing regulatory audits in Victoria.

For further information contact Peter Donlon, Technical Director, WSAA on (03) 9606 0678 or peter.donlon@wsaa.asn.au.

Craig Heiner from North East Water here. Well, after surviving a 10-day rally through the Aussie outback we not only have memories that will last a lifetime, we are also proud that we played a part in raising \$350,000 for Cystic Fibrosis. A big thanks must go to our gold sponsors Water Industry Operators Association, Environmental Group Limited and ITT Flygt - and of course the many helpers who got the car to the start line. Our rally car was serving as a large mission brown kennel housing a couple of farm dogs less than three months before the start!

If you've ever said 'I'd love to do one of those events' - do it. It was a blast. We overcame blown tyres, running out of fuel, a breakdown, thinking we were on

fire and of course the occasional navigational challenge (don't say lost, we ah just found alternative routes!). The highlight of the trip was the people, folk from all walks of life playing their part in raising funds for a good cause. The common thread among us all was that raising funds for Cystic Fibrosis was 'the best excuse ever' for justifying such a trip. Our team included a concreter, a farmer, a boilermaker and an accountant; and for some reason most things ended up being the accountant's fault!

Now that we have the car, and we brought it home almost straight, we can sit back and look forward to next year's Great Escape. The Cystic Fibrosis



Association also has a corporate car for hire, meaning you can have all the fun without the hassle of trying to build a rally car.

Check out their web site if interested www.thegreatescape.org.au.



Proud mum Kym with baby Sophie

NEW ARRIVAL

Former VicWater staff member Kym Nixon has had a baby girl, Sophie Maxwell born on Friday 20 October 2006. Congratulations to Kym and husband Daniel.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE FOR VICTORIAN FARMERS

The Victorian Government is to provide an additional \$114 million in drought assistance to help farming communities battling the worst drought on record. The multi-

million package includes immediate relief for irrigators via a \$5,000 rebate on rural water bills where the allocation of water is less than 50 per cent. The one-off payment will provide relief

for irrigators in the Goulburn Valley, Werribee, Bacchus Marsh, Coliban, Macalister and Wimmera Mallee regions in 2006/2007.

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS WATER OH&S COMMITTEE WINS WORKSAFE VICTORIA AWARD

Central Highlands Water's Health and Safety Committee has won the WorkSafe Victoria Health and Safety Committee of the Year Award. The 'Awards' on the 26 October 2006

recognised the intranet site developed by Central Highlands Water that provides access to work procedures and safety information for everyone - even on remote worksites via laptop

computers. The system has engaged and empowered the whole organisation in improving safety on the job. Congratulations to Central Highlands Water and their OH&S Committee.