



# Water

## Town Water Risk Reduction Program

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*Welcome to the October edition of the Town Water Risk Reduction Program newsletter.*

### Stay safe with widespread flooding in regional NSW

Many parts of the state are currently experiencing heavy rainfall and flooding. We hope you and your communities stay safe during these extreme conditions. Information about emergency relief for town water supplies and contact details for your regional DPE Water team is available on the [department's website](#).

### Register for local water utilities roadshow

Local water utilities and stakeholders are invited to attend the 'local water utilities roadshow' series. The roadshow is being hosted by DPE Water and NSW Health in November 2022 and will include five regional face to face sessions with presentations from NSW agencies and local water utilities, workshop activities and an opportunity for all attendees to listen, collaborate and provide feedback.

Sessions will be held at the following locations and attendees MUST register their details via the links below (registration only required for the event that you are attending in person):

- [Dubbo - Monday 21 November 2022](#) - 10am to 4pm
- [Tamworth - Wednesday 23 November 2022](#) – 10am to 4pm
- [Coffs Harbour - Friday 25 November 2022](#) – 10am to 4pm
- [Griffith – Monday 28 November 2022](#) –10am to 4pm
- [Queanbeyan – Wednesday 30 November 2022](#) – 10am to 4pm

A welcome morning tea will be provided from 9:30am and lunch will be provided at each venue. We look forward to collaborating with our stakeholders across NSW.

## Promoting a national approach to water operations training materials



NSW is not alone in facing water operator workforce, skills and training deficits which exist nationally. Our position paper [‘Promoting a national approach to water operations training materials’](#) sets out the case for a nationally coordinated approach to the development of water operations teaching, learning and assessment resources, recognises industry support and identifies essential elements of a national model.

The department intends to seek opportunities to raise this issue for discussion in an appropriate national forum, including potentially as part of any renewal of the National Water Initiative. We will be pursuing these opportunities in the coming months.

## Pricing and financial management draft guidance for consultation



We welcome your feedback on our [draft guidance](#) for the strategic planning outcome area 'Implement sound pricing and prudent financial management' which is open for consultation until Monday 14 November 2022.

The draft guidance provides assurance expectations, including that prices:

- recover efficient costs of providing water and sewerage services to customers
- are cost reflective, fair and equitable, and structured to promote efficient investment and consumption decisions
- are reasonably stable over time and consider affordability and impact on customers.

You can give your feedback to the Town Water Risk Reduction Program at [regional.town.water@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regional.town.water@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

## Update on strategic planning outcomes guidance

Throughout October and November we are making guidance available on [the department's website](#) to provide more information to local water utilities on the department's assurance framework for strategic planning. The team are publishing these documents as they are finalised guidance on the following outcome areas are now available:

- [Understanding water quality](#)
- [Understanding revenue sources](#)
- [Understanding other risks and challenges](#)

## Updated guidance - Applying for water treatment and sewerage works approvals



The [Applying for water treatment and sewerage works approvals](#) guidance has been updated following feedback from stakeholders on our interim guidance published in July 2022.

Thanks to stakeholders that provided feedback including the Town Water Risk Reduction Program's Stakeholder Advisory Panel and Technical Assessment and Approvals Working Group. The updates are relatively minor and include clarification on:

- delineation of the advisory services and regulatory advice for works approvals
- how the fit for purpose criterion can be met with effective, evidence based strategic planning or justification, including a decision tree
- the 'peer review' and 'internal departmental review' processes that can be initiated by a council after a decision has been made ([section 9 of the framework](#)).

## Review of local water utility dividend settings commences

The department has commenced a review, with support from Frontier Economics, of local water utility dividend eligibility criteria and calculation methods.

The review will include consultation before the end of 2022 and will involve the exhibition of a consultation paper for comment, workshops and targeted engagement with key stakeholders on pricing and financial management.

The consultation paper will be issued in the week of 7 November and submissions will close on Friday 16 December 2022. Following the consultation phase, recommendations for changes to dividend settings will be developed, implemented and gazetted (as the updated section 4 of the [Regulatory and assurance framework for local water utilities](#)) to apply from the 2023/24 financial year.

More information on the review will be available soon.

## Rous County Council Team of the Year





Congratulations to the team from Rous County Council who were recently announced as the Water Industry Operators Association Team of the Year!

They were nominated after their efforts during the 2022 Lismore flooding event, keeping their town from running out of water or being placed on boil water notices – working around the clock for days on end.

## Further information and feedback

Visit the [Town Water Risk Reduction Program](#) website for more detailed information.

### Have your say

For more information or enquires please email the team at [regional.town.water@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regional.town.water@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

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