



Water

Town Water Risk Reduction Program

NEWSLETTER ISSUE #10 | FEBRUARY 2022

Welcome to the February 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. Please contact us if we can provide support.

Welcoming and inducting new Councillors



Photo credit: LGNSW Annual Conference (supplied by LGNSW)

Congratulations to all new and returning Councillors.

To support new Councillors in their roles in regional NSW water utilities, the department is creating a suite of resources to support education and decision-making. The materials include an induction document, an induction webinar for newly elected councillors and case studies that highlight the roles of decision makers and water utilities that in various scenarios in managing water services. All materials will be made available on our [webpage](#).

The [induction handbook](#) is now available in a PDF and an editable [Word version](#) as a resource for decision makers operating in a regional Council-owned local water utility, especially for councillors in councils and county councils.

The handbook contains an overview of the objectives for managing a local water utility, planning and reporting, legislation and responsibilities, strategic planning and pricing, asset management and so much more. By posing a series of questions and considerations the handbook provides guidance on some of the decisions a new Councillor may need to make.

The induction webinar ‘Water: make it your business’ is part of the Office of Local Government’s Hit the Ground Running webinars. More information including how to register is available on the [OLG website](#).

Riverina Water wins the Sam Samra Award



Congratulations to Riverina Water winner of the 2021 Sam Samra Award, which was presented at the LGNSW Water Management Conference in Narrabri.

The Sam Samra Award was established in 2017 as a memorial and acknowledgement of the late Sam Samra’s long-term contribution, passion and dedication to the water industry.

The judges applaud Riverina Water’s development of the Integrated Water Cycle Management issues paper and strategy which involved collaborating with a broad range of stakeholders, now complete and recently adopted.

Riverina Water has developed a 30-year capital works programme (and supported a 30-year long term financial plan) to accommodate:

- Water supply demand growth
- Replacement of assets
- Levels of service improvements
- Meeting governance requirements.

The Sam Samra Award is co-sponsored by the department, Local Government NSW and the Water Directorate.

LGNSW Water Management Conference



Photo credit: Jim Bentley CEO NSW Water Sector at LGNSW Water Management Conference

(supplied by LGNSW)

The LGNSW Water Management Conference in Narrabri from 9 – 11 February lived up to all of our expectations and more. It was fabulous to get together as a local water utility sector face-to-face again – even if it took four attempts!

The opening plenary session saw The Hon. Kevin Anderson MP, Minister for Lands and Water share an update on what the NSW Government is doing to for safe and secure water supplies in regional communities. The CEO NSW Water Sector Jim Bentley reflected on what he heard at previous LGNSW Water Conferences and how we are working in partnership with the local water utility sector to address that feedback.

The Town Water Risk Reduction Program team also shared updates on the progress of the Program, and a specific session on our upcoming councillor induction webinar.

We look forward to more face-to-face events in 2022.

Alum supply chain update



Photo credit: [ARTC](#)

On 2 February we alerted local water utilities to a risk of a shortage in Aluminium Sulphate (Alum) in the eastern states of Australia. Alum is a water treatment

chemical critical to the maintenance of safe water. The potential shortage was apparent due to disruptions to the East-West rail link between the eastern states and Western Australia.

Although the East-West rail link was re-opened on 15 February following emergency repairs, there remain a freight backlog with contingency transportation measures required to be in place until at least April 2022. The department is liaising with the Australian Department of Home Affairs through the National Coordination Mechanism to prioritise water and sewage treatment supplies amongst the freight backlog.

We are monitoring the situation and providing routine updates. Local water utilities have been urged to be ready to activate your business continuity plans as required, to stay in close contact with your Alum suppliers and escalate any concerns about local shortages with their your local DPE Water regional contact.

Technical advice and assistance is available from DPE Water and NSW Health. Councils should contact their NSW Health Public Health Unit and local DPE Water inspector if critical limits are exceeded or where there are raw water quality problems that mean treatment processes may not be effective.

Local water utilities' planning data sets



The department has started generating the Planning Data Sets for all the local water utilities in regional NSW.

The Planning Data Sets, containing validated historical annual performance data for a large number of performance indicators gathered over the period from 1994-95 to 2019-20, have been sent to each local water utility.

This data can inform a local water utility's strategic planning, pricing and other critical business decisions. This data can also be used to support utility's future planning by analysing the comprehensive data reported in the NSW Water Supply and Sewerage Performance Monitoring System. The included data in the Planning Data Set covers the different information areas, including assets, customers, environment, financial, health, pricing and water data.

The Town Water Risk Reduction Program is also working to improve the performance monitoring of the sector to ensure it is streamlined and can identify performance trends over time to facilitate a partnership approach to addressing challenges. This includes a review and rationalisation of the performance indicators collected and reported by local water utilities.

Please email us at LWU.PerformanceReporting@dpie.nsw.gov.au with any feedback regarding the Planning Data Sets.

Welcome Sonya and Tim



We are excited to welcome Sonya Cochrane and Tim Stevenson to the Town Water Risk Reduction Program team.

Sonya joins us from the Office of Local Government, where she has worked on a wide range of statutory and policy reviews, programs and projects. Sonya will be working on our improvements to the regulatory framework. Born and raised in regional NSW, Sonya is passionate about supporting and strengthening regional communities. She could be considered sports mad and loves nothing better than a road trip across the country or out of the country to watch a favourite team.

Tim joins us as part of the NSW Government Graduate program and will be working primarily on our skills and training focus area. Prior to joining the Department Tim operated restaurants and a marketing agency. He is passionate about ensuring all voices are heard and included. Tim is also a Rugby League fanatic and a golf caddy for his 3 sons.

We are excited to have Sonya and Tim join our team and use their skills and experience to make a positive impact on the local water utility sector.

Further information and feedback

Visit the [Town Water Risk Reduction Program](#) website for more detailed information including a fact sheet that sets out the Program scope and proposed focus areas.

Have your say

For more information or enquires please email the team at regional.town.water@dpie.nsw.gov.au

Visit the website



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