

**AUSTRALIAN  
WATER**  
—  
ASSOCIATION

# Year in Review 20-21

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# Strategic Goals & Focus Areas

As part of Strategy'22, we have three overall strategic goals and 12 focus areas. Throughout this year's annual review, we have linked our initiatives and projects to these focus areas at the bottom of each page.

## Strategic Goal 1 Partnerships

### Focus Areas

#### 1. Technology Partnerships

Technology partnerships to enhance engagement between staff, volunteers and members, including a new CRM to increase effectiveness.

#### 2. Governments & Stakeholders

Consolidating our partnerships with Commonwealth and State Governments and industry allies (member organisations, universities and community groups) on programs, information and activities.

#### 3. Sustainable Development Goals

Facilitate partnerships to deliver projects on the Sustainable Development Goals in Australia, SE Asia, and the Pacific.

#### 4. Asia-Pacific

Strengthen our partnerships across the Asia-Pacific Region for trade and promotion of Australian water expertise.

## Strategic Goal 2 Extending our Reach

### Focus Areas

#### 5. Community Engagement

Develop a two-way conversation with the community to enhance water literacy and positive community engagement through our digital platforms, publications, Branches, Specialist Networks, events, and other activities.

#### 6. Model to Extend Reach

Review our model of membership, Branch, and Specialist Networks to enable the extension of our reach.

#### 7. Urban, Remote & Rural

Understand the needs of our urban, remote and rural members to better engage with them through our digital platforms, events and other activities.

#### 8. Other Industry Sectors

Engage with other industry sectors with a strong connection with water through our Branches, Specialist Networks, events, and other activities.

## Strategic Goal 3 Diversity & Inclusion

### Focus Areas

#### 9. Indigenous Water

Develop activities to improve understanding of our Indigenous water culture, including the facilitation of an Association Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan.

#### 10. Innovation

Promote innovations in management, projects, and outcomes achieved by our members and by leveraging our Specialist Networks.

#### 11. Channeling Change

Broaden our Channeling Change Program to incorporate a new range of activities to promote diversity and inclusion.

#### 12. Young Water Professionals

Review and enhance our YWP activities to encourage greater involvement of YWPs from across the water sector.

# International Programs

The purpose of AWA's International Program is to:

## SHARE

Australian water sector expertise, knowledge and technology innovation with international partners to create partnership and business opportunities

## CONNECT

Australian and international water sectors and professionals, through a mix of aid and trade activities, aligned to the Australian Government's diplomatic agenda

## INSPIRE

a sustainable water future and profile the Australian water sector's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Our International Program is funded by our partners, the Australian Government (DFAT) and Australian Water Partnership with contributions also made by our utility and private sector members involved in the program. Since March 2020, the program has primarily been delivered virtually due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. Our virtual program has been successful due to our experience and strong relationships. Highlights from the year are shown here:



### Water Utility Improvement Program

Simultaneous programs in **3** countries: Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam

**16** utilities involved in utility-to-utility knowledge sharing

Over **80** water professionals involved in the programs

Providing improved services to over **10 million customers** across Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam



### Young Water Professional Program

**34** Young Water Professionals (YWP) from Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam connecting with Australia's YWP network to share technical and policy challenges and solutions

Over **50** YWPs from across the Asia Pacific joined us online for a curated Ozwater'21 YWP International Program



### Virtual Reality Tours

Delivery of **4** virtual reality scoping tours

Showcasing Melbourne Water Western Treatment Plant and Sydney Water Fairfield Recycled Water Plant

Attended by over **500** water professionals from Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam



### Technology Demonstrations

**10** technology demonstrations in Vietnam supplying **100,000L/day** to **2,000** students and **250** teachers at schools, and **30,000** people in flood areas

**2** technology demonstrations in Cambodia supplying over **120,000L/day** to more than **3,000** customers



### Policy Program

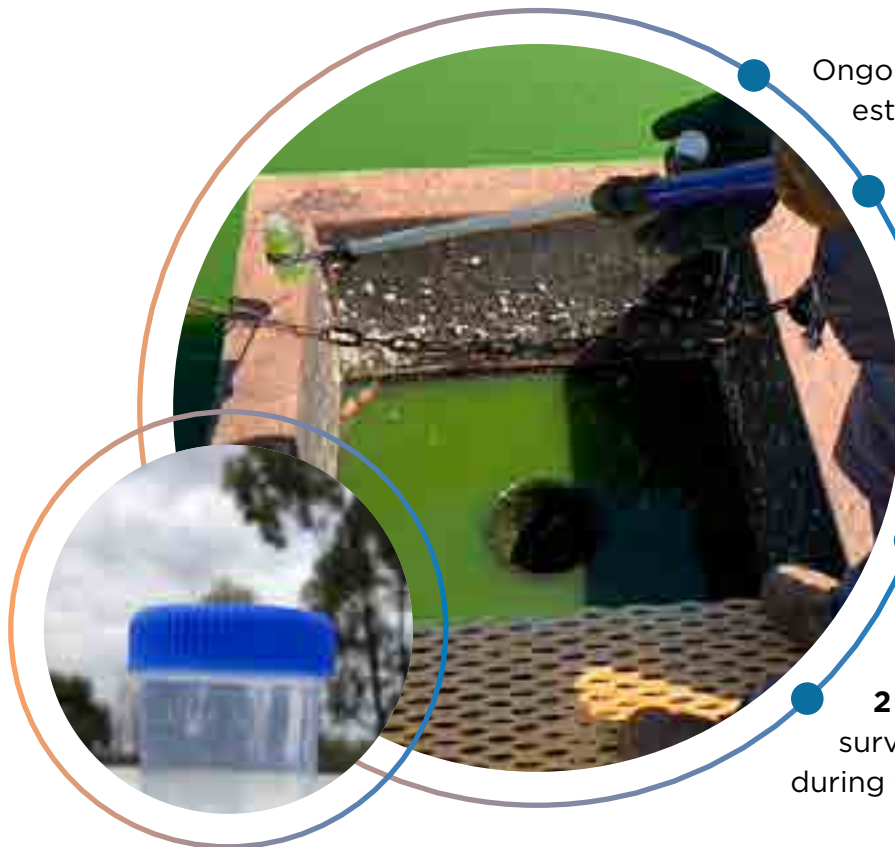
Over **50** Cambodian government officials in attendance with over **30** speakers from Cambodia and Australia at the Cambodia - Australia Urban Policy Forum

# International Programs

## Knowledge sharing across the Mekong region through the COVID-19 Wastewater Surveillance Program

In October 2020, we partnered with Water Research Australia to help five South East Asian nations develop an early warning surveillance system to track COVID-19 prevalence in wastewater.

The countries participating in the program include Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand. The program is funded by the Australian Government (DFAT) through the Australian Water Partnership's Australia-Mekong Facility Grant.



Ongoing knowledge sharing activities and program structures established in **3** countries

Partnerships established between **4** Australian agencies and over **6** international health, environmental and scientific agencies and ministries

Over **10** workshops facilitated with over **100** total attendees to transfer the sampling and analysis protocols required to accurately monitor COVID-19 infections within populations using wastewater streams

**1** pilot trial enacting the knowledge transferred and physically performing small scale environmental monitoring of SARS-CoV-2 in Vietnam

**2** program proposals drafted for future nationally scaled COVID-19 surveillance programs using knowledge and methods exchanged during the current program in Vietnam and Cambodia

## Australian & New Zealand Biosolids Partnership (ANZBP)

ANZBP is one of our Industry Programs that aims to bring together experts and participants from all parts of the biosolids value chain to promote, support and enable sustainable biosolids management in a constantly changing social and regulatory environment.

### Membership and Events

**21** Members with **2** new members across Australia and New Zealand



**Biosolids Roadshow Webinar** in July 2020 featuring an exclusive glimpse of the new Loganholme gasification facility



### Communication and Projects

**1** Preliminary Report on Microplastics Risk for the Australian and New Zealand Biosolids Industry

**1** Factsheet on microplastics in biosolids

**4** ANZBP Newsletters with important updates, news and the latest developments in biosolids

**4** ANZP Advisory Committee meetings held to guide activities and track progress

Planning for 2021 ANZBP biannual production survey, which helps to maintain our comprehensive records of production and end-use since 2009



# Ozwater'21

We were fortunate to be able to hold a very successful Ozwater'21 'Reimagining our Water Future' at the Adelaide Convention Centre. This was the largest business event in Australia since the onset of COVID-19.

Ozwater'21 included a number of firsts:



Indigenous arrival smoking & cleansing ceremony



Live-streaming of the keynotes & curated online program



Youngest ever keynote: 15-year-old Gitanjali Rao



Primary school & high school students program



A drag queen, celebrating Pride in Water!

**2,736** Participants

**1,025** In-person delegates

**87** individuals + **4** hubs  
Online delegates

**86** YWP program

**160** Exhibitors

**219** Presentations

**268** Presenters

**6** Keynote speakers

**5** Accent speakers

**14** Workshops & panels

**11** National award winners

**23** Water Source articles published

**64,750** Number of people reached  
with Ozwater bulletins

### Highest attended workshop:

Panel 6 - AWA Water Recycling Specialist Network presents: Purified Recycled Water for Drinking: The Need for a National Approach? **(103 attendees)**

### Highest attended session:

Planning and Strategy **(187 attendees)**

### Best Paper Award:

Follow the Pollution - Real Time Data Exposing Waterway Vandals

Heath Baker, Melbourne Water Co-authored with David McCarthy, Monash University & Jason Morris, Iota Services

### Principal Sponsors

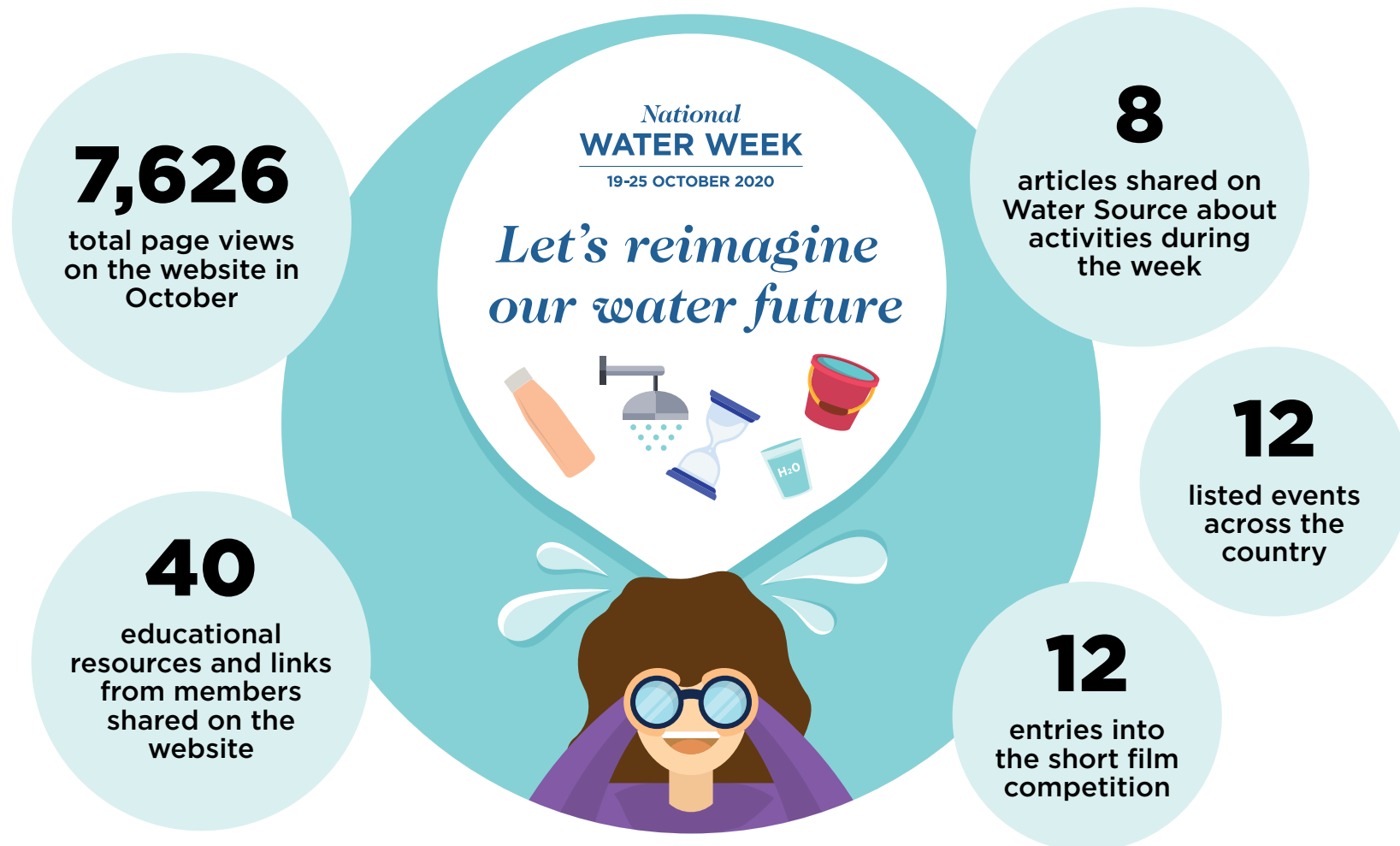


### Major Sponsors



# National Water Week

National Water Week makes a splash across Australia every third week in October. Our goal is to reach the wider community to raise awareness about water and increase engagement through events and competitions held during the week by our members. The theme for 2020 – **Let's reimagine our water future** focussed on building a sustainable and resilient water future.





# Specialist Networks

Following a board subcommittee review that engaged our Specialist Networks Committees, we updated our Specialist Networks model. This led to the confirmation of **11 Specialist Networks**, a call for nominations where committees had vacancies and a dedicated staff contact through our Member Engagement Managers. Our Specialist Networks are:



Asset  
Management



Catchment  
Management



Desalination



Industrial Water  
& Trade Waste



Operations



Regional, Rural  
& Remote Water



Water  
Efficiency



Water for All



Water Quality



Water Literacy  
& Education



Water  
Recycling

**134**  
committee members  
across Australia



## Water Quality

Specialist Network trialled the first exclusive member circle facilitating peer to peer online connections and sharing of information



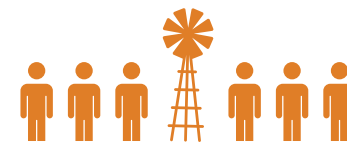
## Source Water Protection Statement

released by the  
**Catchment Management**  
Specialist Network



## 859 members

subscribed to the  
**Regional, Rural & Remote**  
Specialist Network,  
representing the highest  
number of subscribers  
across our networks



## 2 workshops

presented at Ozwater'21

## Water Recycling

Specialist Network had the highest attended workshop discussing 'Purified Recycled Water for Drinking: The Need for a National Approach'

## National, State & Territory Events Program

Due to COVID-19, many of our events moved from face-to-face to digital or hybrid, with a number of face-to-face events returning in the latter part of the year, including Ozwater'21. Building on our digital event offering in 2020, the six-part 'Inspire Online Learning Series' was introduced to connect members far and wide. The series covered a range of topic areas which were developed with our volunteers from across various committees.



Focus areas: [Government and Stakeholders](#) | [Model to Extend Reach](#) | [Urban, Remote & Rural](#) | [Channeling Change](#) | [Young Water Professionals](#)

# Digital Channels

Our digital channels have enabled us to extend our reach. We've seen growth in all our social media channel followings, with dramatic growth in Youtube and Instagram, a growing number of newsletter subscribers, and more podcast downloads and video views.

## water source.

**202,048**  
site users

**333,116**  
page views

### Top 3 most popular stories

Seqwater deploys mini helicopters to fight a war on weeds  
8,918 page views

'Eggcellent' research puts Australian scientist on the 2020 Stockholm Junior Water Prize shortlist  
7,454 page views

This technology desalinates water using sunlight - in less than 30 minutes  
6,255 page views

## source.

**11,606**  
newsletter recipients

**33%**  
average open rate for member version

**25%**  
average open rate for non-member version



**506**  
subscribers  
(up from 364)



**5,235**  
followers  
(up from 4,545)



**757**  
followers  
(up from 208)



**18,482**  
Company followers  
(up from 14,813)

**16,249**  
Group followers  
(up from 14,002)



**6,078**  
AWA followers  
(up from 5,926)

**2,760**  
Ozwater followers  
(up from 2,695)

**43** new videos uploaded

**21,423** total video views

**35** new podcasts

**7,222** podcast downloads

**248** downloads of top podcast

## Branch Achievements

### Water Leaders Gala Dinner



- Celebrated the outstanding contribution of ACT members
- Recognised the importance of cultural water values with keynote speaker, Ngunnawal woman Mary Mudford
- Four award winners announced
- 94 attendees including the AWA Board



### Virtual Reality Site Tours



- World Class VR technology enabled
- Featured a 3D reconstruction of a water treatment plant that participants experienced as a site tour
- Digital avatars represented the participants who were able to point to objects within the virtual space and speak to and collaborate with other avatars for a shared experience
- Australian and international participation



### Minister's Breakfast



- Run as a hybrid event for the first time with in-person and online attendance, resulting in a 100% increase in attendance
- Announcement by the Minister on development of the first Territory Strategic Water Plan
- Water defined as a key enabler in the Territory, to achieve a targeted \$40B economy by 2030
- Panel discussion on Water Growing our Economy explored the importance of community trust in managing water resources



Focus areas: [Governments & Stakeholders](#) | [Technology Partnerships](#) | [Extend our Reach](#) | [Other Industry Sectors](#) | [Indigenous Engagement](#)



# Branch Achievements

## Regional Engagement Program



- Regional Liaison position created on the QLD Committee
- Regional Engagement Strategy developed and a Regional Subcommittee formed
- Introduction of a regional hub model for all events taking advantage of live streaming technology
- Strategy adapted by the NSW Branch with further collaboration on regional hubs through regional champions



## Ministerial Breakfast



- Focus on Water Security in South Australia
- Featured The Hon. David Speirs, Minister for Environment & Water and David Ryan CEO, SA Water
- Platform for the launch of 'Water for Growth'
- 135 attendees with high-level networking



## Young Water Professional Program



- New series that has grown engagement of YWPs and enhanced corporate membership value
- Themed around the 4P's - **People** (networking event with panel discussion), **Product & Place** (Water Cycle Site Tour from reservoir to sewerage treatment plant) and **Promotion** (professional development workshop on creating a resume and interview skills)
- Has resulted in more YWPs participating in core branch activities including Industry Breakfast and special YWP presentation slots at the annual state conference



Focus areas: [Governments & Stakeholders](#) | [Partnerships](#) | [Urban, Remote & Rural](#) | [Other Industry Sectors](#) | [Extend our Reach](#)



# Branch Achievements

## YWP Regional Conference



- Adapted to fit COVID-19 restrictions with rescheduling required multiple times
- Live and virtual presentations and workshops from Sunbury and across Victoria
- Live streamed to a YWP Hub in Tasmania
- 90 participants including the National YWP of the Year from 2019 & 2020



## South West Study Tour



- Two-day regional site tour to the greater Bunbury and Busselton regions
- Eight sites visited including a power station, mine site, groundwater treatment plant and water filtration plant
- Speakers from regional utilities and local businesses who shared growth opportunities and challenges
- Opportunity to connect and network for metropolitan and regional attendees



## Ozwater'21 Panel



- Connected IWA global speakers and Specialist Group chairs into an AWA event.
- Themed 'Leading Global Practices in River Basin Management' with a conversation framed around the Murray-Darling Basin
- Moderated by IWA President Tom Mollenkopf and featuring speakers from four different countries: Dr Jane Doolan (Australia), Prof. Norbert Jardin (Germany), Dr Inga Jacobs-Mata (South Africa) and Julian Williams (New Zealand)



Focus areas: Governments & Stakeholders | Urban, Remote & Rural | Other Industry Sectors | Young Water Professionals | Indigenous Water

## Diversity and Inclusion

To deliver on our strategic goal to *Promote Diversity and Inclusion* we expanded our focus to include the LGBTIQ+ community by signing on as a Pride in Water supporter. We hosted Pride in Water at our Ozwater'21 stand and AWA's CEO provided a video message at IDAHOBIT Day Pride in Water event. We will continue to provide opportunities for inclusion and engagement through collaboration with Pride in Water.

We have also focused on Indigenous engagement in water – all of AWA's major events included a Welcome to Country and other events had an Acknowledgment of Country. At Ozwater'21 we had a female Indigenous keynote speaker, Tanya Hosch, and 13 Indigenous papers. All major State Branch events included at least one Indigenous presentation.

From a gender perspective we have featured female speakers and panellists at Ozwater and other events across the country. We have also featured strong female representation in Water Source articles.



**41%**  
**female**  
Water Source  
articles

**42**  
Water Source  
articles with  
Indigenous  
content

**41%**  
**female**  
Ozwater  
speakers

**39%**  
**female**  
Technical  
speakers

**46%**  
**female**  
Panellists

**>20**  
Indigenous  
papers at AWA  
conferences



## Young Water Professionals

The YWP Program exists to attract, engage and empower young water professionals and emerging leaders and is supported by the **YWP National Taskforce** and all Branches. YWP initiatives engage all professionals across the water sector in Australia, although the activities focus on professionals below the age of 35 or with less than 10 years of experience.

Internationally, we facilitate the Online Emerging Water Leaders Program (supported by AWP) to build the professional capacity of 31 young water professionals from Australia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines and Cambodia. These emerging water leaders will be tasked with identifying opportunities for greater youth engagement and collaboration in our water sectors moving forward into the future.



Focus areas: [Asia-Pacific](#) | [Young Water Professionals](#)

**86** delegates at Ozwater'21  
YWP Program

**8** YWP events across  
Australia

**144** mentoring pairs across  
the country

**106** YWPs represented on  
committees

**13** Australian YWPs participating in  
AWA's international activities

**8** article contributions to  
Water Source



## 2021 Australian Water Awards

Our annual Australian Water Awards aim to recognise and promote the outstanding achievements and contributions our members make to the water sector and wider community. Below are the winners.

**223**

award submissions  
received



### Water Professional of the Year Award

**Dr Annette Davison**

Principal and Director, Risk Edge

Annette is the embodiment of professional excellence in water quality risk governance and is an ambassador for the water industry who is dedicated to building a secure water quality future for all. Throughout her career, Annette's passion for a risk-based approach to water safety has changed the industry focus from end-point testing to a preventative approach. She has innovated within and beyond her own company and sector, founding three organisations over the last five years to help improve and transform water quality data and information governance, leading to tangible public health outcomes and achievement of SDG 6.



### Customer Experience Award

**Customer Experience Program**

Barwon Water

In February, Barwon Water's customers rated them as number one for trust, reputation, value for money and satisfaction. This is a testament to their strong customer focus and the success of their Customer Experience program, which has been founded on extensive customer and employee engagement, bringing to life their CX Brand "I care, We Care".



### Water Industry Safety Excellence Award

**Confined Space Entry Simulator**

Melbourne Water and Deakin University

Melbourne Water, along with their partners at Deakin University have built a world-first simulator which will change how people perceive and receive training forever. The immersive experience provides an engaging way to learn about what good, confined space entry preparation looks like and why it is necessary - before giving trainees the opportunity to see, feel and smell what it's like to be lowered by a harness into a live sewer.

## 2021 National Award Winners



### Individual Award Winners

#### Young Water Professional of the Year

[Simon Roberts](#)

Senior Integrated Water Management Planner,  
City West Water

#### Water Professional of the Year

[Dr Annette Davidson](#)

Principal and Director, Risk Edge

#### Best Water e-Journal Paper (in honour of Guy Parker)

[Contaminants of Emerging Concern](#)

Laura Kuskopf, Dr. Madoc Sheehan and Anna Whelan

#### Student Water Prize

[Zhiyao Wang](#)

University of Queensland



### Organisational Award Winners

#### R&D Excellence Award

[Northern Australia Water Resource Assessment](#)

CSIRO and collaborators, supported by the Australian Government through the National Water Grid Authority

#### Organisational Excellence Award

[Wara Paring Indigenous Civil Construction Project](#)

Aqua Metro Services and Melbourne Water

#### Infrastructure Project Innovation Award (Regional)

[Port Stewart Water Supply](#)

Arup and Centre for Appropriate Technology

#### Infrastructure Project Innovation Award (Metro)

[Deriving Value Through Remote Access to Asset Information](#)

CH2M Beca and Western Water

#### Water Industry Safety Excellence Award

[Confined Space Entry Simulator](#)

Melbourne Water and Deakin University

#### Customer Experience Award

[Customer Experience Program](#)

Barwon Water



### Stockholm Junior Water Prize 2021

#### Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize 2021

[Lemon Peel Bioflocculation](#)

Annabelle Strachan, Meriden School





# Publications

Our print and digital publications are channels to showcase what our members are doing across the industry. Current magazine has featured stories on Indigenous topics, industry mentoring and international outreach. The Water e-Journal continues to publish case studies and research on a variety of water issues.

**Current magazine published in April 2021**



**1**

Indigenous focus feature



**1**

Mentoring pair feature



**1**

International focus story



**25**

**papers published**

Volume 5 Issues 3 and 4  
Volume 6 Issues 1 and 2

**17,875**

views of technical papers on Water Source

2020 Best Water e-Journal Paper was awarded to **Laura Kuskopf, Dr Madoc Sheehan and Anna Whelan** for their paper on

**'Contaminants of Emerging Concern'** which evaluated the potential environmental risk posed by municipal contaminants of emerging concern present in discharged wastewaters.



water  
e-journal

## Water Leaders Forum

Each year, we bring senior leaders from our [Principal](#) and Platinum members together at Ozwater. In 2021, more than 40 leaders came together in five hubs - connected virtually in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney. They heard from Troy McCann, a space engineer and inventor, about innovation and the space industry, which inspired a discussion on future vision themes for water.

Dr Jane Doolan, Commissioner for Water at the Productivity Commission, advised the 100+ senior water leaders who came together at Ozwater: have a shared vision; develop policy nous; break down barriers through diplomacy and collaboration, and be lean and efficient.



The Water Leaders Forum participants considered these to 'reimagine our water future' and the major themes to emerge were:

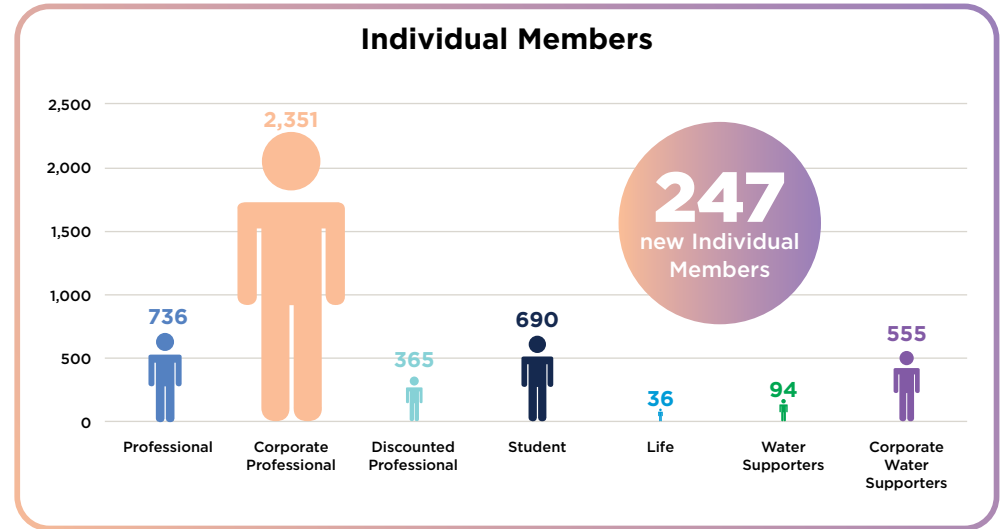
- Community empowerment, capturing hearts and minds for community-driven change
- Interests of our customers and communities
- The value of water is appreciated
- Bipartisan approach to water
- Open-source data analysis driven by stakeholders' needs and aspirations

Proudly sponsored by:



# Membership

Overall our Corporate Membership had a net +1 change during the year. COVID-19 had a negative impact on international Corporate Members due to border closures restricting them from travelling to Ozwater'21 but we gained several new members domestically and had a number of upgrades. We increased the number of Individual Members by >5%.



## Our Principal Members

We would like to thank all of our members for their ongoing support. In particular, we thank our Principal Members, who provide the highest level of membership support to the Association.

**AECOM**



**aurecon**

 **eurofins**



**Jacobs** Challenging today.  
Reinventing tomorrow.

**JOHN  
HOLLAND**

 **Melbourne  
Water**  
Enhancing Life and Liveability

 **SMC**  
Member of the Surlana Jurong Group

 **suez**

Sydney  
**WATER**

  
**TRILITY**

  
Unitywater

**ventia** 

 **VEOLIA**

**Vinidex**  
by aliaxis

**WSP**

**xylem**  
Let's Solve Water

## Financial Performance Overview

We had a successful year and achieved a **surplus of \$1.6M**, including \$0.8M from Government payments such as JobKeeper and grants.

The positive outcome is primarily contributed to by Ozwater'21, which was held as a face-to-face conference and exhibition in Adelaide. A new marketing and engagement approach, plus an appetite by delegates to attend a live event, following the move to online in 2020 due to COVID-19, meant delegate numbers exceeded our expectations.

This surplus recovers the Association's \$1M deficit from FY2019-20.

Financial performance for the year ending 30 June 2021 was:



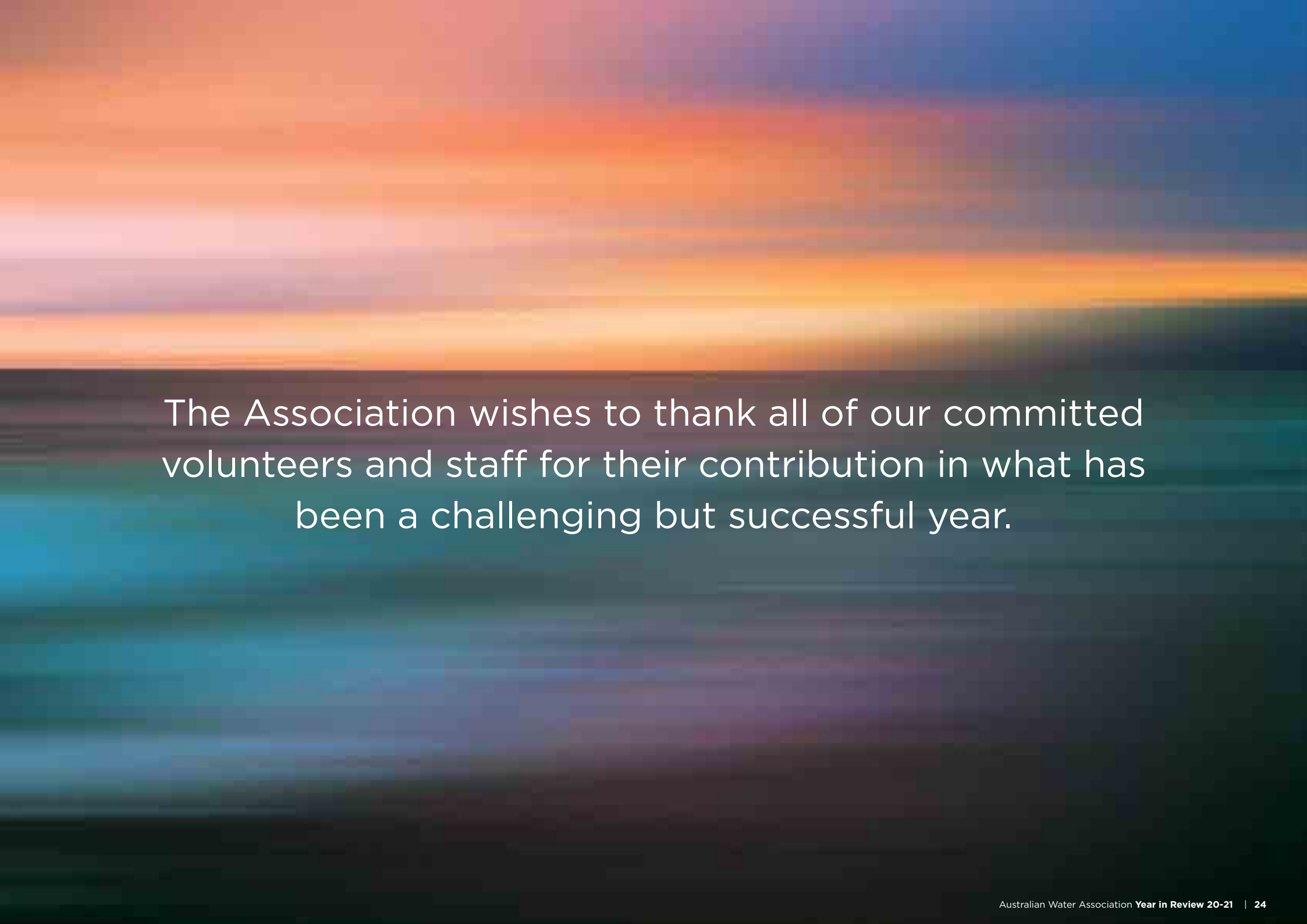
Our five-year financial performance summary is detailed below:

\$'000	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
<b>Revenue</b>	\$7,696	\$8,050	\$8,507	\$5,317	\$7,638
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	\$7,461	\$7,418	\$7,792	\$6,332	\$6,006
<b>Operating Surplus</b>	\$235	\$632	\$715	\$(1,015)	\$1,632

Our Balance Sheet remained strong with net assets worth \$5,385K (total assets of \$8,067K less total liabilities of \$2,682K). This was primarily due to a stable capital structure and income-generating investments. This indicates the sustainable financial health of the Association. The primary sources of revenue were membership subscriptions, International Program, and revenue generated through our events; ticket & exhibition sales and sponsorship income. Overall revenue generated by events increased by 78%, attributed to the success of Ozwater'21 Conference and Exhibition. The International Program revenue was down by 11% due to delay in travel-related milestones due to COVID-19. Advertising revenue was up by 13% due to an increased appetite for digital advertising and the lack of face-to-face promotion opportunities. Membership subscription revenue dropped by 3%; however, there was an overall increase in individual membership. Closed state and international borders impacted international membership and attendees to Ozwater – which also contributed to the dip membership subscription. We expect improved member engagement and increased membership revenue with the implementation of our new CRM platform.

Full details on AWA's FY20 financial performance are available in our Annual Report.





The Association wishes to thank all of our committed volunteers and staff for their contribution in what has been a challenging but successful year.



**AUSTRALIAN  
WATER**  

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**ASSOCIATION**

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