

MEDIA RELEASE

States recognising the need to diversify for urban water security

WSAA welcomes the release of Infrastructure Australia's 2021 Infrastructure Priority List. Across the country, Federal, State and local government are recognising that water recycling needs to play a far more prominent role in securing water supplies and creating cool green urban communities for amenity and health.

'Infrastructure Australia has identified that building resilience to climate change requires strategic planning for water capture, use and management and new and previously identified initiatives in the Priority List are meeting that need', said Adam Lovell, Executive Director, Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA).

'COVID-19 has identified a strong desire for the community to be more 'local'. It is gratifying to see the new greenfield areas, including South Creek in Sydney, identified as lead examples of using recycled water for green space and potentially purified recycled water for drinking. If stormwater is incorporated into both land use planning and water security planning, this will be a new and resilient frontier to providing water and amenity in drier and hotter parts of Sydney', said Mr Lovell.

'With challenges including climate change, population growth and changing customer expectations there is a clear burning platform for innovative approaches to urban water. Despite two record breaking droughts since the National Water Initiative was signed in 2004, urban water reform has been neglected. The recent Productivity Commission's Draft National Water Reform Report has identified why we need to kick-start action by all governments in 2021. Reform is crucial to ensuring all options are on the table when it comes to securing Australia's water supplies and we call on State and Territory Governments to maintain the momentum for a new National Water Initiative', said Mr Lovell.

The 2021 Infrastructure Priority List also identifies a range of other water recycling initiatives from south east Melbourne to Perth to help secure water supplies and healthy green spaces. Crucially, the role of local government is often overlooked. It is critical to the success of creating cool, green, liveable spaces that all forms of government work together with water utilities and the private sector to provide affordable solutions.

'We urge Federal, State and Territory governments to come together to address some of the challenges in providing water and wastewater services to remote and Indigenous communities across the Australia. Australia is a signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals and achieving Goal 6 of clean water and sanitation remains a challenge in 'closing the gap. We support the regional telecommunications transmission capacity high priority initiative which will enable regional water utilities to make a shift to be digital ready for the future', Mr Lovell said.

'It is also pleasing to see that Infrastructure Australia has identified the circular economy and in particular hydrogen as a priority initiative. The urban water sector is well placed to contribute to this important potential export for Australia', said Mr Lovell.

WSAA is the peak body representing the urban water industry in Australia. Its members provide water and wastewater services to over 24 million customers in Australia and New Zealand, including many of Australia's largest industrial and commercial enterprises.

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Media inquiries

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