National Specialist Networks

Information and Guidelines

The Australian Water Association is the national peak water organisation, delivering information, expertise and collaboration for sustainable water management.

Our membership includes professionals and practitioners working in utilities, science and research, energy and resources, manufacturing and agriculture. We have an active branch network across all Australian States and Territories and maintain extensive international links that includes the International Water Association.

Our activities include:
- A comprehensive program of conferences including Ozwater - Australia's largest water industry event
- Workshops, forums, summits and technical seminars
- Online and print technical and industry information and news including our quarterly magazine 'Current' and the water e-journal
- Industry programs and projects offering significant opportunities
- Training courses
- Professional networking
- B2B, business matching and mentoring opportunities

The Australian Water Association works to deliver programs, information, services and events that connect and communicate with members and enrich their engagement with us and the water sector as a whole. The Association is committed to building Australia's water capabilities to maintain its position as a world leader in water management.

Purpose of this document

This document provides a framework for the operation of the Association's Specialist Networks so that they run in a consistent manner, for the greater benefit of the Association's members.

Any specialist network queries should be directed to networks@awa.asn.au

Contents

Background

What are Specialist Networks?

Specialist Networks are coalitions of individual Association members who work in water related topics of common interests. Their purpose it to allow members to network, share knowledge, information, skills and make beneficial professional and business contacts across specific interest fields.

Specialist Networks help to fulfil several of the Association's core objectives:
- Provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and knowledge among people involved in the management of water;
- Improve the standard of debate on water issues so as to foster rational, open decision making and problem solving;
- Improve public, government and industry understanding of water and its contribution to economic development, quality of life and the environment;
- Meet the evolving needs and demands of an expanding and sophisticated water industry in Australia;
- Increase the technical knowledge and competence of people working within the water industry;
- Foster basic and applied research which will advance the cause of better water management and conservation;
- Serve as the principal Australian link in the international water industry network.

What do Specialist Networks do?

The Association's vision is for the Networks to be a place of vibrant discussion and active comment on water industry issues. Networks are a crucial repository of water professionals and information that should be harnessed and encouraged to work together to advance the industry.

As such, the Specialist Networks will be an integral part of the water industry discussion, producing informative content, scientific and technical reports, developing position papers, providing comment on policy & advocacy issues as well as occasional opportunities for face-to-face interaction via events such as national conferences. In this respect, the networks are an important part of the public face of the Association.

The aims of Specialist Networks are to:
- Provide career and professional development benefits to Association members through technical interaction and peer networks;
- Encourage individuals to be actively involved in the advancement of their technical area within the water industry; and
- Facilitate the contribution of members to areas such as position papers, policy development and best practice and actively disseminate these outputs.

How does the Association support Specialist Networks?

Each Network is provided a dedicated staff member from the Association in the form of a Network Coordinator, to assist with the 'day to day' running of the Network. The Association also provides a Network Manager to oversee the ongoing development and maintenance of all Specialist Networks. The Network Coordinator assists the Network Committee with development support, dissemination of content through Association channels, convening meetings, communicating with members through various media (website, email, journal etc), providing a link to the Association's Board, formal reporting, recruiting of committees and members.

In addition, other Association staff may provide support at relevant times, e.g. events staff for major events, State Managers for State based events, policy staff for advocacy work. Up to date information on the appropriate Network Coordinator for each specialist network, can be found on the Association's website www.awa.asn.au/specialistnetworks

Australian Water Association Network Coordinators will meet quarterly with the Network Manager to:
- Review progress of all networks, including activity and member engagement levels, currency of web pages, status of committees and planned work;
- Plan network committee elections and consider casual vacancies when required; and
- Provide State Managers with key points from the network's quarterly meeting for communication to State Branch Committees.

When required the Network Manager:
- Table Network Progress Reports and aggregate the information for reporting to the Board
- Review Network support arrangements and procedures
- Review the activity levels of the Specialist Networks

What are the Association's expectations of Specialist Networks?

To ensure that Specialist Networks provide benefit to their members, the Association anticipates they will:
- Contribute across the three (3) pillars of value to provide information and advocacy; professional development and networking and industry development;
- Have an active committee of up to ten (10) members with no more than two (2) co-chairs;
- Committee to a two (2) year term;
- Communicate regularly with members through the online communities;
- Provide quarterly content for publication;
- Provide policy and advocacy support and information;
- Provide industry stories and information to be featured in the Association's national Source newsletter.

Operation of Specialist Networks

Committee Responsibilities

Network Committees are responsible for representing the interest of its national network membership and ensuring the delivery of valuable and relevant industry content in line with the Association's Business and Strategic Plans. Each Specialist Network Committee will be required to meet quarterly outputs which will allow Networks the opportunity to increase their relevance to our Members. Networks will be encouraged and welcome to add additional outputs for their two (2) year term, in additional to those outlined below.

Committee Network Outputs:

- Quarterly content for publication
    - This content can be in the form of a feature story for Source, technical paper, discussion paper, presentation or webinar
    - Totalling four (4) per year
- Development and utilisation of the online communities
    - This will encourage Members to use the online community to facilitate discussion amongst themselves that is relevant and of the moment. The result should be Members being reactive to current trends, stories and news and proactive in seeking feedback from fellow Members on topics of interest.
- Development of industry pieces for the Association's national Source newsletter
    - Networks will be on a rotating weekly roster, so will only be producing two to three industry pieces per year for Source, depending where they fall on the roster
- Policy and advocacy support and information
    - Specialist networks will be asked to comment on relevant policy issues and to provide the National Manager – Advocacy and Industry Development with regular updates on state and national policy related to that network

Note: where committee members have insufficient technical knowledge to complete the required outputs they will be asked to organise and draw on the expertise of other members of the network to complete the tasks.

Planning additional outputs

During the committee's two year term they may wish to provide the Association and members with additional outputs/goals from what is listed above. For example the Young Water Professional (YWP) Specialist Network works with the Association to develop the YWP program at Ozwater.

When planning activities and outputs outside of the quarterly outputs the Network Committee will need to discuss with the Network Coordinator how best to achieve this and if it fits in with the Associations three (3) pillars.

Where a network has identified that an **event** is the best mechanism to achieve its objective, the committee should complete the Specialist Network Event Request Template (see Appendix C or available online) and submit this for consideration. This must be done by February each year for the following financial year.

The following event elements should be taken into consideration:

- All proposed events regardless of scale will need to submit the event request template and business case for consideration. This is then submitted to the Association's Board for approval for the following financial year.
- Can the event be linked to a larger state conferences or Ozwater? By getting involved in running a session or workshop at these events, the outcome can actually be better than a stand-alone event. The Association are always open to the committee identifying these types of opportunities and talking to us about how you might integrate into an event coming up.
- Committees are responsible for formulating event themes, program content, reviewing of abstracts/papers and identifying speakers.
- The Association is responsible for all financial and logistical arrangements including budget formation, venue selection, sponsorship, marketing and communications and registration.

Specialist Network Membership

- Network membership is open to all current financial Australian Water Association members (excluding water supporter).
- Members can join or resign from a specialist network at any time by logging into the Associations website and updating their membership information.

Specialist Network Committee Members

Committee Election and Structure

- Each network will have a steering committee of up to ten (10) committed and active members
- Committee members must be current members of the Association and a registered member of that specialist network, as confirmed by the Association's membership database
- Whilst desirable to have a geographic spread, it is not a necessity to have a representative from every state and territory.
- Nominations for the committee will be called for every two years and Committee members shall hold office for a term of two years
- Nominations will be called for in October for formation in December
- The period of appointment will provide for both continuity of membership and fresh perspective
- Committee members may stand for consecutive terms
- The Association encourages the appointment of a chair or two co-chairs to share the responsibilities of the management of the network committee
- The term of a chair/co-chairs is two years.
- Chair/co-chairs shall be elected by the specialist network committee either:
  - In conjunction with the specialist network's annual meeting/conference/other event;
  - Or an online ballot, if no physical meeting is planned.
- It is the chair/co-chair's role to facilitate the involvement of all committee members in achieving Network outputs
- The Association believes that active committee members should be dedicating approximately one (1) hour a week to their network committee.
- Rotate completing the procedural elements of committee operation i.e taking minutes and chairing meetings.
- Champion the activities of the network.
- Assess and review the performance of the Network and participate in the reporting of achievements and activities on a six monthly basis.
- Should a committee member be unable to attend meetings and is no longer engaged with delivering the Specialist Network activities, the committee and Association staff will consult and the individual will be asked to step down from their position and a replacement sought.
- Committee members participate in Association activities on a volunteer basis and hence it is appropriate that they observe Australian Water Association's policies and operating procedures with a focus on financial procedures, risk management and staff-volunteer linkages policies. To view in full detail please see appendix A.

Committee Meetings

- The Specialist Network Committee will hold four (4) meetings per year, one per quarter
- Additional meetings may be called as necessary by co-chairs and/or committee members to help achieve the network's outputs

- Meetings may be held by video or teleconference, where such facilities exist, using the Associations teleconference facilities
- All meetings shall be chaired and minuted, by a committee member (ideally on a roster system) with a copy of the minutes kept on file by the respective Network Coordinator
- Decisions of the committee will generally be by consensus and a quorum is defined when at least one third of committee members are involved in the meetings
- Guests can be invited to participate in committee meetings, by agreement of the committee and Specialist Network Coordinator, where additional information and wider AWA member involvement is required
- Face-to-face meetings can be held at national AWA events or at the Association's Head Office. Members of the Committee will be responsible for covering their own travel costs to attend face-to-face meetings. The association will cover the costs and make arrangements for meeting facilities, catering etc (however approval must first be sought before organising)
- The Network Coordinator will relay any relevant information to other Association staff members prior to the meeting when required

Interaction with the Australian Water Association

Each Specialist Network is provided a dedicated staff member from the Australian Water Association in the form of a Network Coordinator with a specific number of hours allocated to the network per year.

The Network Coordinator should always be the initial contact for any member of the Specialist Network. The Network Coordinator takes on this responsibility as part of their wider role. As such there may times when they are unable to action your request straight away.

All interactions from members of the Specialist Network are to be sent to the Network Coordinators first and if the required information or support is outside the Network Coordinators expertise or availability they will help facilitate by putting the member in touch with the correct resources to allow them to move forward. There should be no requirement to go around the Network Coordinators.

Interaction with the Association State Branches

Whilst it is not necessary for a Specialist Network to report directly to, or have a representative on, each Branch Committee, it is essential that all Specialist Network activity is complementary to that of the State and Territory Branches. Interaction will be managed in the following ways:

- The Network Coordinator will provide each State Manager with the key points/highlights from the quarterly meeting to provide the branches with an update from the Specialist Networks prior to their next scheduled meeting;
- State Managers will provide any feedback to the Network Coordinator should anything arise from Branch Committee discussions;
- Where a Network highlights a need for an event or activity which has a specific geographical focus, Branch Committee endorsement is required and integrated into the national event calendar;

- Where a Branch Committee expresses a desire to include an event in their annual program which is on a subject covered by a Specialist Network, branches may wish to make contact with the relevant committee to tap into their specialist knowledge and contacts; and
- Any proposed network event should be flagged as early as possible and its potential location and timing discussed with the relevant branch to avoid event conflicts.

Budget and Funding of Specialist Networks

- Networks are not considered to be separate business units and hence do not hold their own budget. The Association provides funding to the specialist networks in the form of staff time, conference call costs, support material etc;
- Any activity that a Network wishes to undertake will be required to prepare a business case or use the event template including setting a budget (articulating all expenses);
- Budgets are required to be realistic and at a minimum breakeven;
- Budgets must be approved by the Association's Board or Chief Executive;

Formation

Requirements for new Specialist Networks

- All proposals for new Networks will be directed to networks@awa.asn.au before being considered by the Senior Management Team and the Chief Executive
- The following information must be supplied when submitting a proposal:
  - Proposed focus of the Specialist Network including a description of topic areas to be covered and how it is unique from existing networks; and
  - Identification of a process to assemble committee members (e.g. via a call-out to AWA members / via suggesting appropriate persons)

Committee positions

- Elections will be managed by the Network Coordinator using the standard rule for election of committee office bearers details in the Association's by-laws; and
- If committee positions become vacant during the term of the committee, and it is deemed by the Association and the Committee that additional committee members should be sought, then a member-wide call for expression of interest for new committee members will be conducted by the Association.

Inactive Specialist Networks

Members who join Networks expect to be provided with a minimum level of service through an 'active' network. To be considered an 'active' Specialist Network, the Association anticipates each will need to meet the quarterly outputs outlined in this documentation.

If a Specialist Network does not meet these criteria, the following actions shall be taken by the Network Manager:
- Convene a committee meeting to discuss means by which the network may be re-invigorated;

- Assist with elections of a new committee including suggesting additional and/or new members for the committee;
- Suggest and support activities to raise interest in the topic area in forming a new program plan;
- If the decision is made to dissolve a network, the Network Manager will prepare a report for the Senior Management Team, detailing the reasons behind the decisions, and any proposals for establishment of alternative specialist networks. If approved, the board will be advised, and members of the Network informed of the decision.

Communication

To ensure that all Association members can easily access information provided from Networks the primary form of communication will be through online communities and the national 'Source' e-newsletter. The Association wants to continue to encourage content sharing amongst members and these platforms allow for this to occur regardless of location.

Website

The Association provides each specialist network with its own information page and online community page within the Association website.

- Each Network homepage follows a standardised layout and can contain information provided by the committee members;
- It is the network committee's responsibility to ensure that all information contained within the specialist network web page, is kept up to date;
- All amendments to web pages will be coordinated through the relevant Network Coordinator;
- The Association also has a LinkedIn group page that networks can use as a platform;
- To retain specialist network participation as a member benefit, certain areas of the webpage will be available to members only.

Email and Lists

- Any mass communication with specialist network members will be coordinated by the Network Coordinator and the Association's marketing team;
- All network member contact information shall be held and administered only on the Association member database;
- Any separate lists of persons and contact details held by committee members or individuals, shall be passed onto the Network Coordinator, for addition to the Association database and then destroyed to ensure compliance with current privacy legislation;
- No official communication shall be made directly by committees or branches to specialist network members, so as to avoid breaches of anti-spamming/privacy legislation. This method will also ensure that there is clear coordination and communication between committees and branches.

Delegated authority

Specialist network committees can email Elizabeth McGregor, Manager – Governance & Administration for a copy of the Associations Financial Delegations Policy and Schedule.

In summary, Specialist Networks and/or their committees are not separate legal entities to the Australian Water Association and, therefore, cannot be a party to any agreement in their own right.

In respect of financial delegations, there is no authority to incur expenditure unless there is an approved source of funds (i.e. a budget allocation). A delegate who incurs expenditure beyond or without an approved source of funds is personally liable for that expenditure.

Appendix

Appendix A – Code of Conduct for Volunteers

AWA members when volunteering for branch, event organising or specialist networks/interest group committee will comply with the following code:-

- A volunteer must recognise that the primary responsibility is to the Association members as a whole, but should, where appropriate, have regard for the interests of all stakeholders of the organisation.
- A volunteer must act honestly, in good faith and in the best interest of the Australian Water Association as a whole.
- A volunteer has a duty to use care and diligence in fulfilling the functions of office and exercising the powers attached to that office.
- A volunteer must use the powers of office for a proper purpose, in the best interest of the Association as a whole.
- A volunteer must not make improper use of information acquired as a volunteer.
- A volunteer must not take improper advantage of the position as volunteer.
- A volunteer must not allow personal interests, or interests of any associated person, to conflict with the interests of the Association.
- A volunteer has an obligation to be independent in judgement and actions and to take all reasonable steps to be satisfied as to the soundness of all decisions taken.
- Confidential information received by a volunteer in the course of the exercise of volunteer activities remains the property of the Association and it is improper to disclose it or allow it to be disclosed unless that disclosure has been authorised by the Board, or the person from whom the information is provided, or is required by law.
- A volunteer should not engage in conduct likely to bring discredit upon the Association.
- A volunteer has an obligation, at all times, to comply with the spirit, as well as the letter of the law and with the principles of this code.

Whilst volunteers are not covered by awards or work place agreements they do however have rights enshrined in legislation and some which could be considered moral obligations. The Australian Water Association promotes the following as the basic rights of volunteers.

As an AWA volunteer you have the right

- To work in a healthy and safe environment
- To be elected/appointed in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- To be adequately covered by insurance
- To be reimbursed for approved out of pocket expenses
- To have access to the organisation's policies and procedures and strategic objectives
- To be provided with a specific role and a realistic expectation of the time commitment
- To sufficient orientation and information to do the job
- To have access to suitable support and mentors familiar with the role

Principles of Volunteering for AWA

- Volunteering benefits the organisation, community and the volunteer
- Volunteering is not compulsory and is always a matter of choice
- Volunteering is unpaid, is not a substitute for paid work and will not replace paid workers or constitute a threat to job security of paid workers
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others
- Volunteers must be financial members of AWA
- Volunteers will be familiar with the purpose, goals and rules of the AWA
- AWA's Board, through the CEO has ultimate discretion in deployment of effort and resources to deliver AWA's Vision, Mission and Objectives.

Appendix B – Weekly Source

Source material due	Publishing Date	Allocated Specialist Network
Friday, 3 February 2017	Monday, 6 February 2017	Asset Management
Friday, 10 February 2017	Monday, 13 February 2017	Water Education
Friday, 17 February 2017	Monday, 20 February 2017	Operations
Friday, 24 February 2017	Monday, 27 February 2017	Membranes and Desalination
Friday, 3 March 2017	Monday, 6 March 2017	Young Water Professionals
Friday, 10 March 2017	Monday, 13 March 2017	Biosolids
Friday, 17 March 2017	Monday, 20 March 2017	Environmental water
Friday, 24 March 2017	Monday, 27 March 2017	Source Management
Friday, 31 March 2017	Monday, 3 April 2017	Water Efficiency
Friday, 7 April 2017	Monday, 10 April 2017	Water in Mining
Thursday, 13 April 2017	Tuesday, 18 April 2017	WASH
Friday, 21 April 2017	Monday, 24 April 2017	Water Retail
Friday, 28 April 2017	Monday, 1 May 2017	Water recycling
Friday, 5 May 2017	Monday, 8 May 2017	WQMA
Friday, 12 May 2017	Monday, 15 May 2017	Water Management Law & Policy
Friday, 19 May 2017	Monday, 22 May 2017	Sustainability
Friday, 26 May 2017	Monday, 29 May 2017	Small Waste and Wastewater Systems
Friday, 2 June 2017	Monday, 5 June 2017	Catchment management
Friday, 9 June 2017	Monday, 12 June 2017	Rural Water
Friday, 16 June 2017	Monday, 19 June 2017	Asset Management
Friday, 23 June 2017	Monday, 26 June 2017	Water Education
Friday, 30 June 2017	Monday, 3 July 2017	Operations
Friday, 7 July 2017	Monday, 10 July 2017	Membranes and Desalination
Friday, 14 July 2017	Monday, 17 July 2017	Young Water Professionals
Friday, 21 July 2017	Monday, 24 July 2017	Biosolids
Friday, 28 July 2017	Monday, 31 July 2017	Environmental water
Friday, 4 August 2017	Monday, 7 August 2017	Source Management
Friday, 11 August 2017	Monday, 14 August 2017	Water Efficiency
Friday, 18 August 2017	Monday, 21 August 2017	Water in Mining
Friday, 25 August 2017	Monday, 28 August 2017	WASH
Friday, 1 September 2017	Monday, 4 September 2017	Water Retail
Friday, 8 September 2017	Monday, 11 September 2017	Water recycling
Friday, 15 September 2017	Monday, 18 September 2017	WQMA
Friday, 22 September 2017	Monday, 25 September 2017	Water Management Law & Policy
Friday, 29 September 2017	Monday, 3 October 2017	Sustainability
Friday, 6 October 2017	Monday, 9 October 2017	Small Waste and Wastewater Systems
Friday, 13 October 2017	Monday, 16 October 2017	Catchment management
Friday, 20 October 2017	Monday, 23 October 2017	Rural Water
Friday, 27 October 2017	Monday, 30 October 2017	Asset Management
Friday, 3 November 2017	Monday, 6 November 2017	Water Education

Friday, 10 November 2017   Monday, 13 November 2017   Operations
Friday, 17 November 2017   Monday, 20 November 2017   Membranes and Desalination
Friday, 24 November 2017   Monday, 27 November 2017   Young Water Professionals
Friday, 1 December 2017   Monday, 4 December 2017   Biosolids
Friday, 8 December 2017   Monday, 11 December 2017   Environmental water
Friday, 15 December 2017   Monday, 18 December 2017   Source Management

Appendix C – Specialist Network Event Request

All applications need to be submitted no less than 6 months prior to the proposed date of the event.

In order to evaluate your proposal, please provide all the required information in its entirety. Be specific and state clear goals and objectives.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

SPECIALIST NETWORK	
NETWORK CHAIR/S	
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE	*Please list Name, Organisation, State* 1. 2. 3.

EVENT CRITERIA

1. Overall Objective including proposed event outcomes
2. Define target audience & market opportunity
3. Identify any conflicts with other activities/events (internal and external)

AWA STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

1. Relevant Information *ie: Relevance to water sector, representing the sector as a trusted voice, ability to share information from the conference post the event)*	
2. Professional Development *ie: Building knowledge & skills in the water sector*	
3. Networking and Collaboration *ie: engaging more members with valued services, extending AWA reach to more water professionals*	

EVENT OVERVIEW

Proposed Event Title	
Proposed Location(s)	
Main reason for the Location	
Preferred time of year	
Event Duration *e.g. evening, ½ day, 3 day etc*	
Event Format	
Expected Delegate Numbers (Note: to be eligible for a national conference, the event must be able to attract in excess of 100 people)	
Trade Exhibition *size of stands, shell scheme, space only*	

Expected Number of Exhibitors	
Identify Potential Sponsors	
Suggested Registration Fee	

TECHNICAL PROGRAM

Proposed Themes	
Number of Concurrent Sessions	
Proposed Keynote Speaker(s)	
Proposed Invited Speakers	
Call for Papers	
Poster Presentations	
Site Tour(s)	
Network Collaboration	*Please indicate below other AWA Specialist Networks your network could collaborate with to run your event* • *Asset Management* • *Biosolids* • *Catchment Management* • *Environmental Water Management* • *Membranes & Desalination* • *Operations* • *Rural Water* • *Small Water & Wastewater Systems* • *Source Management (Liquid Trade Waste)* • *Sustainability* • *Water Education Network* • *Water Efficiency* • *Water Management Law & Policy* • *Water in Mining* • *Water Quality Monitoring & Analysis* • *Water Recycling* • *Water Retail* • *Water, Sanitation & Hygiene in Developing Communities (WASH)* • *Young Water Professionals*

SOCIAL PROGRAM

Social Functions you would like included *e.g. Welcome Drinks, Conference Dinner*	

Suggestions on how this event will be promoted. Please provide recommendations on channels outside of the AWA networks

Any other information to assist approval process

Submitted by:

Completed information should be sent to your AWA staff representative and a copy to Kiri Goschnick E: networks@awa.asn.au for approval and consideration.

Recd:	Events:	Approved:

Specialist Network

Teleconference Meeting Agenda
XX pm (AEST)

Toll Free Number: 1800 896 323
Teleconference Participant Code: 9938705966

ACT	02 6169 3788	SA	08 8312 8988
NSW	02 8088 0900	TAS	03 6285 8788
NT	08 8921 7888	VIC	03 8648 8889
QLD	07 3036 8888	WA	08 6311 8988

Attendance:

Apologies:

Agenda

No.	Action	Responsibility
1.01	Welcome/Apologies	
1.02	National Source Newsletter Content - Reviewed of previous content - Key dates - Topic - Responsibility	
1.03	Publication Output - Review of previous quarter - Agreement on what the output will be (technical paper, discussion paper, webinar, podcast, video, Source feature story) - Topic - Responsibility - Ideas for remaining quarters	
1.04	Online Communities - Review of most recent content - Topics for discussion, blogs	
1.05	Policy & Advocacy - Association feedback sought - Issues/updates to be communicated to the Association	
1.06	Other business	