

## Media Release

EMBARGOED UNTIL WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER 2014

### **Australian water sector needs to improve operational efficiency: State of the Water Sector Report 2014**

**15 October 2014:** Over 1000 water industry professionals have identified improving operational efficiency as the top issue for the sector, reflecting growing concern about the need to control costs for the benefit of consumers and demonstrate value for money within the sector.

The Australian Water Association and Deloitte today released the 2014 *State of the Water Sector Report*. The report reveals the top three issues for the industry are:

- Operational efficiency (according to 46% of respondents – up from 35% in 2013)
- Maintaining and augmenting infrastructure (according to 45% of respondents)
- Water security and supply (according to 41% of respondents)

Chief Executive of the Australian Water Association, Jonathan McKeown, said the report was based on a survey of professionals working across Australia's water industry, both urban and rural, and shows that there is a strong need for continued investment and leadership in the water sector.

“The water industry is challenged today, and will be challenged in coming years, when it comes to balancing price and affordability for consumers and industry against the need to maintain and augment existing infrastructure – which comes at a cost. It is timely to ask how the water industry is going to fund the required investment.

“At today's National Water Policy Summit we are discussing opportunities for where exactly these funds are going to come from, and given that our state governments have limited financial resources and competing demands, we need to look at the option of increasing private sector investment,” said Mr McKeown.

Deloitte National Water Leader Matt Williams, went on to say that extreme weather events remained a concern for those working in the water sector and that this added additional challenges to water infrastructure planning and development.

“Climate change was identified as posing a significant or moderate risk to the sustainable management of water by 86% of respondents. This indicates that our water utilities continue to be challenged in dealing with Australia's variable and volatile climate.

“With many areas of Australia re-entering drought or, in the case of Western Australia, having never ceased being in drought, it is always a challenge to determine the correct level of investment in drought-proofing infrastructure for our communities and industries.

“This presents the opportunity to look at diverse sources of water supply to ensure we are prepared for all climatic conditions. Those that understand these sources the best, the water sector, are confident that sources can be many and varied, with an overwhelming majority believing desalinated, recycled and urban stormwater able to be used for drinking water supply.”

The full report is available at [www.awa.asn.au/State\\_of\\_the\\_water\\_sector\\_report](http://www.awa.asn.au/State_of_the_water_sector_report)

Follow Deloitte on Twitter – @DeloitteNewsAU and @DeloitteER

Follow AWA on Twitter – @Australianwater

**For further information:**

Amanda White  
National Manager – Communications and Policy  
Australian Water Association  
M: 0403 884 485  
E: [awhite@awa.asn.au](mailto:awhite@awa.asn.au)

Simon Rushton  
National Manager Corporate Affairs & Communication  
Deloitte  
M: 0450 530 748  
E: [srushton@deloitte.com.au](mailto:srushton@deloitte.com.au)

**About the Australian Water Association**

The Australian Water Association is Australia’s leading membership association for water professionals and organisations. AWA is independent and not for profit. It plays an essential role in supporting the Australian water sector in the delivery of effective and sustainable water management practices. Our mission is to foster knowledge, understanding and advancement in sustainable water management – its science, practice and policy – through advocacy, collaboration and professional development. We operate across all Australian States and Territories through an active branch network as well as maintaining extensive international links, including with the International Water Association. AWA’s provides a comprehensive program of conferences, workshops, publications, industry programs, training courses, networking and B2B opportunities. AWA’s Annual Conference and Exhibition is Australia’s largest water industry event.

**About Deloitte**

Deloitte refers to one or more of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, a UK private company limited by guarantee, and its network of member firms, each of which is a legally separate and independent entity. Please see [www.deloitte.com/au/about](http://www.deloitte.com/au/about) for a detailed description of the legal structure of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited and its member firms. Deloitte provides audit, tax, consulting, and financial advisory services to public and private clients spanning multiple industries. With a globally connected network of member firms in more than 150 countries, Deloitte brings world-class capabilities and high-quality service to clients, delivering the insights they need to address their most complex business challenges. Deloitte has in the region of 200,000 professionals, all committed to becoming the standard of excellence.

**About Deloitte Australia**

In Australia, the member firm is the Australian partnership of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu. As one of Australia’s leading professional services firms, and winner of both the Australian Financial Review/CFO Audit Firm of the Year and Accounting Firm of the Year awards 2013, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and its affiliates provide audit, tax, consulting, and financial advisory services through approximately 6,000 people across the country. Focused on the creation of value and growth, and known as an employer of choice for innovative human resources programs, we are dedicated to helping our clients and our people excel. For more information, please visit Deloitte’s web site at [www.deloitte.com.au](http://www.deloitte.com.au)