

AUSTRALIAN WATER

ASSOCIATION

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all international projects undertaken by the Association comply with the criteria set by the Board.

2. Commencement of Policy

- 2.1 This Policy will commence on 1 January 2017. It replaces all other previous versions (whether written or not).

3. Scope

- 3.1 This Policy covers all employees of the Association (whether full-time, part-time or casual) and all persons performing work at the direction of, in connection with, or on behalf of the Association (for example directors, volunteers, contractors, subcontractors, agents, consultants, and temporary staff) (collectively '**workplace participants**').

4. Background

- 4.1 As a part of the Networking and Industry Development Pillar in its business strategy, the Association is working to grow opportunities for its members in both the domestic and international context. A number of international organisations and kindred water and wastewater bodies historically have engaged with the Australian water sector on a regular basis. These international organisations include, but are not limited to, those from the public, private and academic sectors. The purpose for seeking engagement with the Association includes to:

- a) develop partnerships within the Australian water sector
- b) seek Australian water capability and expertise
- c) promote the exchange of ideas, knowledge and learning with the Australian water sector
- d) promote international opportunities to the Australian water sector
- e) request study tour opportunities to learn from the Australian water sector
- f) seek water utility twinning/pairing opportunities to exchange personnel and experience
- g) access networking opportunities with the Australian water sector
- h) promote research and development across the water sector (including educational institutions)
- i) participate in global dialogue on water issues including regulation, governance and leadership

- 4.2 Through this engagement, the Association has the opportunity to fulfil its constitutional objective under Rule 3 of the Constitution "to serve as the principal Australian link in the international water network." In pursuit of this objective the Association has developed specific working alliances with overseas water sector peak industry bodies, utilities and government departments in the urban and rural context. The Association has also established a special Branch (IWAA) to represent the interests of the International Water Association in Australia. These international alliances are used to facilitate the exchange of information, research, technology, and opportunities for the Association's members.

- 4.3 Water scarcity is becoming a global issue with a 40% deficiency in the water balance predicted by 2030. The Australian water sector, led by the Association's members, is a global leader in water resource management, urban water quality management, rural and remote water management, and the economic, social, and environmental governance of water. As part of its Networking and Industry Development pillar, the Association is embracing the issue of water

scarcity, in order to provide further opportunities for its members. The Association is mindful and respectful that pursuing international opportunities for its members may not be of interest to all members and has hence adopted a policy that any international initiative should be self-funded through financial contributions of participating members, government grants, and/or corporate sponsorship. By adopting this approach, the Association's international program will maintain a full cost recovery business operating model without the need to rely on the Association's membership subscriptions or capital assets. To that end, the following principles have therefore been drawn up to provide governance, structure and guidance.

5. Oversight

- 5.1 The International Sub Committee of the Board has oversight of the international activities with the Association's Chief Executive having full responsibility and accountability to ensure compliance with the policy. The International Sub Committee will provide quarterly updates to the Association's Board with a summary of all current international activity, funding and costs.

6. Services offered

- 6.1 The Association will not enter into any form of undue commercial risk via contracting or consulting. From time to time Australian Government, Asian Development Bank, or World Bank funded advisory opportunities may arise for the Association to facilitate training for capacity building, knowledge transfer, improved governance, customer/community/stakeholder engagement, and leadership in water management. The Association will only contract with the Australian Government or Board-approved contracts with the Asian Development Bank or the World Bank or organisations funded by them. The Association will not contract with foreign governments or foreign companies or organisations for delivery of consulting or contracting services unless either the contract is under a program funded by the Australian Government, or there is a fully bonded/secured payment guarantee preferably from the Australian Government. The primary role for the Association, in a commercial context, will be to facilitate the involvement of the Association's members to deliver project milestones as set out and agreed in specific project contracts.
- 6.2 The Association will not allow staff or volunteers to travel on Association business to high risk areas or situations (for example where DFAT advises against travel to a country or region).
- 6.3 The Association's International Program may well introduce parties that subsequently develop business on an 'at arm's length' basis from the Association. Parties introduced by the Association will be free to engage in commercial arrangements with no on-going commercial involvement of the Association. The Association will take special care and caution not to jeopardise or place at risk its reputation through association with parties entering into commercial arrangements following the Association's facilitated introductions.
- 6.4 All international opportunities that arise are to be made available to the Association's members in a fair and open manner via promotion on the Association's website and via calls for expressions of interest in the Association's publications. Where the Association has been requested to conduct paid work as the peak water body in Australia, such as to provide reports, and/or facilitate the involvement of Australian expertise then this will only be done on proviso that such work remains within the context of facilitation to benefit and/or profile its members.

7. Child Protection Safeguards

- 7.1 When working on Government funded projects All AWA staff are expected to act in accordance with the policy principles outlined in DFAT Child Protection Policy 2017.
- 7.2 Where working with children is identified, AWA staff must undertake an assessment of child protection risk and apply the necessary safeguards and child protection standards that are relevant to the activity to manage the risk.

7.3 All AWA staff and volunteers working on Government funded projects will be briefed in child protection awareness to understand their obligation to protect children when carrying out their work overseas.

7.4 Where AWA staff are working with children, they are to immediately report any suspected or alleged instances of child abuse, exploitation, harm or child protection policy non-compliance to the relevant Conduct and Ethics Unit within Government.

8. Costs

8.1 The overall philosophy is that the Association’s International Program should be delivered on a full cost recovery or positive basis. The use of the Association’s resources for conducting outbound trade delegations, exchange programs, and/or study tours will be conducted on a fee for service basis with funding to be agreed in advance from participating members, Government grants, or sponsorship. In the case of inbound delegations, the Association will seek to recover costs where possible, but may undertake some unfunded activities as part of its host country obligations (for example meeting delegates from overseas water associations).

8.2 Individual international requests for introductions to the Association’s members or requests from individual Association members to access the Association’s alliance partners overseas can be facilitated without fees provided all such services are made in an open and fair manner without undue use of the Association’s staff resources.

Variations

The Association reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

Policy version and revision information

Name and Version	Revised	Introduced
International Engagement Policy v1		15 February 2017
International Engagement Policy v2	29 May 2020	