

Water Innovation

● A New Era for Australia



Water Innovation ● A New Era for Australia[®]



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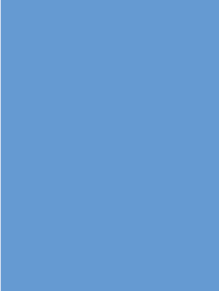
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Foreword



The challenge of providing, using and looking after water resources in a continent with a highly variable climate has been an important national priority for many years.

Water is a vital and highly valued resource and Australia's economy, the well-being of our population and environment depend on the wise use of our limited resources.

In 2003, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), comprising the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association reaffirmed its commitment to the 1994 *COAG Water Reform Framework* by developing an innovative policy approach – the *National Water Initiative (NWI)*.

The *NWI* builds on the 1994 water reforms and specifically will improve the security of water access entitlements, encourage the expansion of water markets, encourage water conservation in our cities and importantly, ensure ecosystem health by implementing regimes to protect environmental assets.

In Australia water reform is underpinned by science-based research and supported by on-ground regional programs such as the Prime Minister's *National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality* and the *Natural Heritage Trust*. Fundamental to the success of reforms is a partnership approach between government, industry and the community.

Water Innovation: A New Era for Australia describes recent innovations in water policy, promotes Australian products and technology, describes examples of leading edge best practice, and provides a directory of contacts and expertise to build further collaboration in Australia and overseas. There is much that Australian water managers, scientists and industry can add to improve the understanding of and management of water.

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is pleased to be the platinum sponsor and to provide information on the Australian Government's role in providing innovative leadership in water reform policies and programs.

Mike Taylor

Title / Dept

Introduction



Water is life!

Water Innovation: A New Era for Australia is a snapshot of Australian leadership and achievement in water resource management.

The management of water resources is a major challenge for both industrial and developing nations as the world faces unprecedented demand for water, and uncertainty due to climate change and variability. Australia is a diverse continent, with a wide range of climate and geography, and with people in urban centres, in the bush, and in the remote outback. In managing their own resources, Australians have learned many lessons which are readily transferable to international markets and aid programs.

The book is a showcase of achievements. A selection of case studies illustrates the diversity and ingenuity of Australia's extra-ordinary innovation in water resource management which have been developed to balance the demands of consumptive use and environmental protection. These include multi-jurisdictional water sharing agreements, provision of environmental flows, behavioural change methodologies, public-private partnerships, and methods for better protecting public health.

Australian leadership and achievements include the formulation of policy and new technologies for the management of urban water, rivers and catchments, and irrigation. Innovative approaches are presented in the book for the management of water supply and waste treatment; groundwater and surface water; and for urban, industrial and agricultural water.

Key government departments and agencies, successful water utilities, companies, consultants, scientists, engineers, financiers, economists and sociologists are profiled in the book. Together they demonstrate the richness of Australia's expertise that can be harnessed for international commercial and aid projects.

The book is an independent editorial text, supplemented by sponsored pages. The publisher, editor and authors, assisted by an eminent advisory panel, have sought to achieve appropriate breadth and depth in this complex issue of water resource management and to fairly present the diverse views of stakeholders.

I am privileged to commend the book **Water Innovation: A New Era for Australia**.

Paul J. Perkins
Chairman, Editorial Committee