



Water Industry Operators Association Inc.

Inc No. - A12314

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Mr Ian Dundas
Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Committee on Environment and Heritage
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Secretary: *George Wall*

RECEIVED

30 AUG 2002

29 August 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

Dear Ian,

Re: Submission to House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage.

The Water Industry Operators Association (formerly the Australian Water and Wastewater Operators Association Vic. Branch) is an incorporated body, the membership of which is drawn from individuals and businesses involved in all facets of the water industry.

The Association is committed to preserving the environment and protecting public health by improving the skills of members through the promotion of education and training.

A survey of Association members conducted in November 2001, indicated that of the 100 respondents, 66% were in 31-50 year old age bracket. A trade qualification was the most common educational standard attained (34%) with a water industry specific certificate held by only 10% of respondents. The Association believes that its members reflect the broader industry in terms of age and skill distribution.

Our survey results indicate the water industry has an aging workforce and the challenge for water business managers, as well as Associations such as ours, is to ensure that access to appropriate skills development and training courses is available. Clearly, suitable courses and seminars must be provided for the existing employees and all new entrants to the workforce must be encouraged to undertake training which will fast track their level of competence and skill development. This is considered vital to meet the ever increasing expectations of our stakeholders (the public) and to develop the skills necessary to meet the challenges associated with the competent operation of the more technologically advanced treatment processes and systems now being developed.

The drivers for these advanced treatment processes is the requirement to comply with:

- i) more stringent licenses for discharges to the environment,
- ii) greater re-use of treated wastewater, and
- iii) the need to deliver potable water that is safe and of consistently high quality.

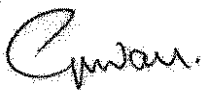
To enable these requirements to be met, the quality of treated water and wastewater has to be continually improved. This improvement typically leads to additional or more advanced treatment processes being employed and therefore a greater training need.

The Association has played an active role in the development and revision of the National Water Industry Training package. This package has recently been released to the water industry and training providers, and the challenge now for each State is the development and provision of courses meeting the outcome requirements of the package. Integral to this is the need for acceptance of the package by the water business managers and a commitment to the provision of access to ongoing training for their staff.

Additionally, the Association is actively involved in organising and funding seminars and training for its members and actively encourages dissemination of industry related information through the Victorian Water Industry Engineers & Operators Conference which it convenes annually. A further recent initiative is the biannual production of "WaterWorks", a magazine included within the AWA Water Journal devoted to provision of practical information which may assist operational staff with content sourced from all Australian States.

We would be most pleased to forward any findings from your inquiry to our Members in the future, and we wish you every success in your inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



George Wall
Secretary/Treasurer
Water Industry Operators Association (WIOA)