



WATER SERVICES
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



STRATEGY 2030



wsaa.asn.au

Acknowledgement of Country

Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of Country throughout Australia. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

WSAA acknowledges that water is core to life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and is essential to their identities, cultures and livelihoods. Protecting and managing water is a custodial and intergenerational responsibility

About WSAA

Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) is the peak body representing the water sector. Our members provide water and wastewater services to over 24 million customers in Australia and New Zealand and many of Australia's largest industrial and commercial enterprises.



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Our purpose

Connecting and leading the water sector to enable thriving communities

Our strategy



The WSAA Way

Who we are and how we work to deliver value to members.



We **connect and collaborate** with members, and within and beyond the water sector.

- Bringing members together to share expertise and deliver projects that benefit the water sector.
- Knowledge sharing through workshops, webinars, case studies, and projects.
- Facilitating an active online community, and knowledge hub.
- Partnering with other peak water sector bodies to deliver whole of sector programs.
- Representing the water sector at a national and international level.
- Developing strategic partnerships to support emerging opportunities.



We support our members to **create value** for their customers and communities and **lift performance**.

- Leveraging the knowledge, expertise and influence of our members to identify and implement best practice.
- Leading industry benchmarking that supports best practice performance.
- Facilitating sector awareness and collaboration on the latest research and innovation.
- Delivering product appraisals, standards and codes for planning, design and installation of technologies, including supporting confidence in the quality of new technologies.
- Providing specialist training opportunities to members.
- Supporting learning and professional development through the participation and contribution of member organisations and their people.



We lead the water sector through our **advocacy**.

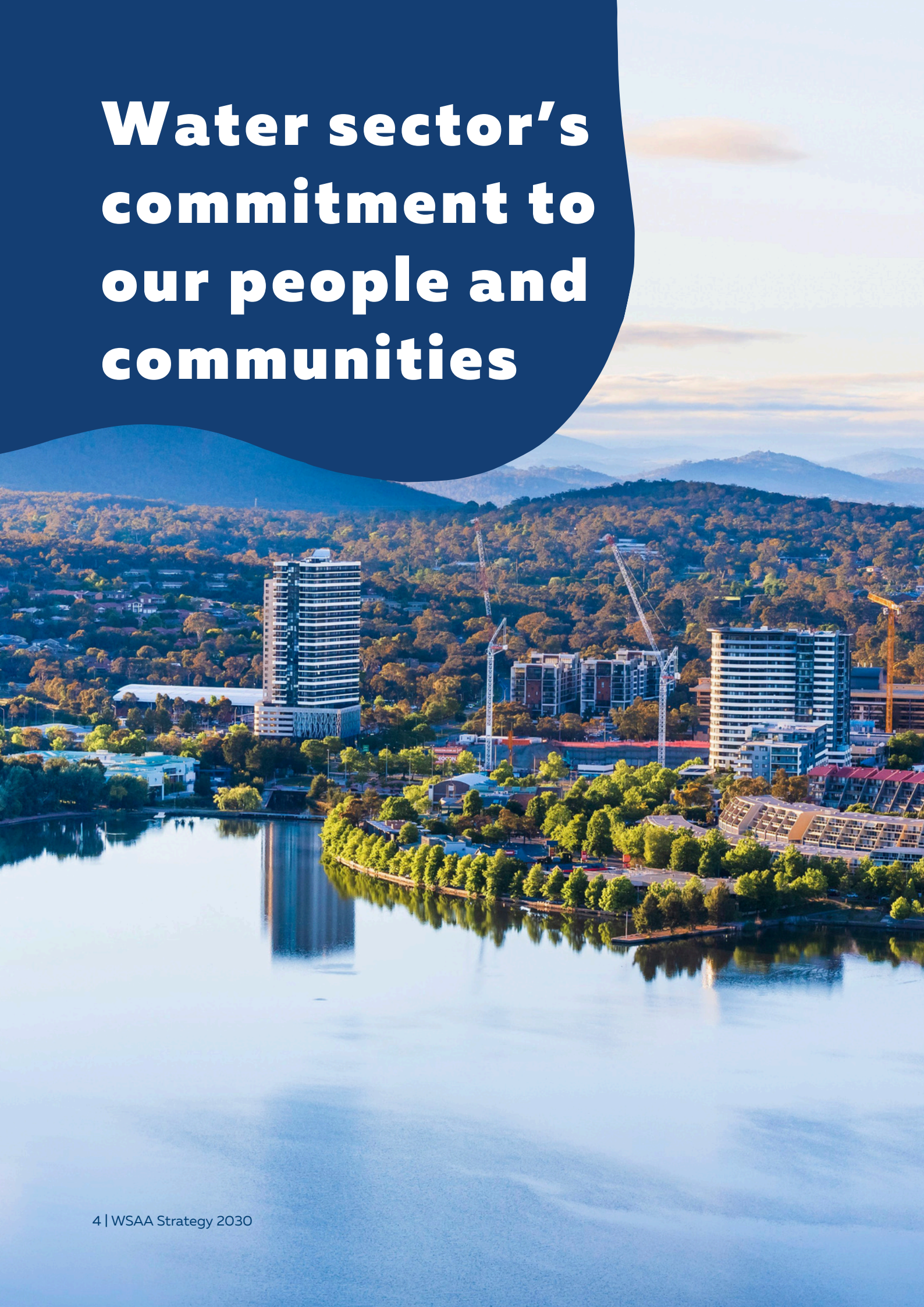
- Promoting the water sector to the wider community.
- Being the voice of the water sector for priority issues.
- Engaging with key stakeholders such as governments, policy-makers, academics, policy organisations, consumer advocates and community representatives.
- Advocating for an effective new National Water Agreement.
- Raising awareness of emerging risks and issues, and their impact on the water sector.
- Contributing to national, state and local water policies.



We **champion a diverse, inclusive, safe, and sustainable** organisation and sector.

- Delivering the water sector's commitments to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Health and Safety Leadership.
- Leading a whole of water sector approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion, in partnership with other water sector associations.
- Advancing health, safety, and wellbeing outcomes across the water sector, including our organisation.
- Supporting our members and our people to maintain a safe and respectful organisational culture.
- Fostering sustainable outcomes for the water sector, by working towards the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Leading by example with best practice employee and procurement policies.

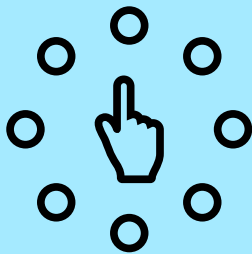
Water sector's commitment to our people and communities



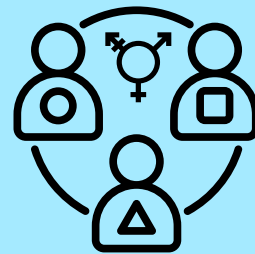
Water sector equity, diversity, and inclusion commitment

The water sector is committed to growing a diverse and inclusive workplace culture, which is reflective of the communities where we work and live.

As a sector, we will:



Strive to be the sector of choice, where our people can be their true selves at work and feel they belong.



Champion equity, diversity and inclusion at a sector level as well as at an organisational level.



Collaborate to build capacity, measure performance, influence change, and embed culture.



Encourage a sense of pride and inclusiveness.

Water sector health and safety leadership commitment

The health, safety, and wellbeing of our people, communities, and workplaces are critical. We strive to be free from harm and injury, both physical and psychological.

As a sector, we will:



Show genuine care for the health and wellbeing of others and ourselves



Achieve a culture of trust, respect, learning and accountability that moves beyond but still embraces effective compliance and risk management



Expect our leaders to proactively create safe and healthy workplace environments, and lead by example through their actions



Share our experiences and learnings from incidents and strive to stop them from recurring



Ensure effective and collaborative relationships with delivery partners, with a priority on safe and healthy workplaces



Enable and empower our people to speak up, act, and make changes to create safer situations



Ensure our people have the time, resources, and competencies to perform their job safely



Value, recognise, and celebrate safety innovation and achievement.



Take proactive steps to prevent harm and manage wellbeing

Water sector climate change commitment

The water sector is uniquely positioned to mitigate our impact on our climate, respond and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate on the delivery of our services, and improve the resilience of our communities and the environment in adapting to a changing climate.

As a sector, we will:

Achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. In many cases we are achieving net zero sooner than 2050.

Reduce water loss in our networks and encourage our customers to value efficient and effective water use.

Strengthen economic and environmental resilience through smarter and better use of water, infrastructure, and holistic adaptation to climate change.

Develop lasting relationships with First Nations communities and businesses to ensure a partnership and stewardship approach to our shared challenges in water resource management.

Support healthy waterways to restore and regenerate ecological and community values.

Implement circular economy principles in managing resources including water, waste, energy and natural capital, to foster the transition to a more circular future.

Leverage our unique advantage in water management to improve climate adaptation and urban liveability through green, cool and healthy environments.

Engage with customers and partner with communities and other sectors to build understanding of the trade-offs and cascading risks arising from our interdependencies, to achieve a balance between climate change costs and outcomes, including the needs of future generations.

Our priorities



Water Security

Achieve equitable access to safe and secure water and wastewater services

Water sector success looks like:

- Every Australian and New Zealand community has access to secure water supplies that meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines or New Zealand Drinking Water Standards.
- Every Australian and New Zealand community has access to adequate wastewater services that protect public health and the environment.
- Water supplies are resilient during droughts, bushfires, floods and other extreme events.
- Decision-makers and communities are confident about all water supply options.
- All options for secure water supplies are investigated, proactively discussed with communities, and implemented where suitable, including rainfall independent water sources.
- Reducing water loss in our networks and achieving efficient water use by our customers.
- Water sector recommendations are adopted by governments, with support across other sectors.

How we will measure the water sector is on track:

Access to safe and secure drinking water

Access to adequate wastewater services

Water supply resilience

All options on the table

Water literacy scores

Household water use

Water leakage rates

Water sector inclusion in policy decisions

What will we continue:

- Working with, and influencing, health and environment regulators to ensure collaboration on limits, systems and measures in managing water services for the protection of public and environmental health.
- Connecting and leading members in wastewater management.
- Promoting and advocating for all options on the table for water supply.
- Connecting and leading members to investigate, communicate and implement water security supply options.
- Publishing an educational resource documenting the global extent of purified recycled water for drinking.
- Connecting and leading members to develop water literacy programs.
- Supporting The Water Conservancy to lead the way as an independent knowledge resource and advisory hub for the education, facilitation, and adoption of a more conscious and efficient approach to water use in Australia.

What we will start:

- Collating and integrating water quality data to understand trends and address issues to continue to provide access to safe, healthy, and clean drinking water.
- Connecting and leading members to make water quality and water security information transparent and accessible.
- Developing a common definition and metrics for measuring water security.
- Develop wastewater quality guideline values to support the Australian Wastewater Quality Management Guidelines.
- Connecting and leading members in developing and implementing best practice water conservation and demand management, including best practice smart metering.



Customer Value

Deliver long-term financially sustainable and affordable services to customers

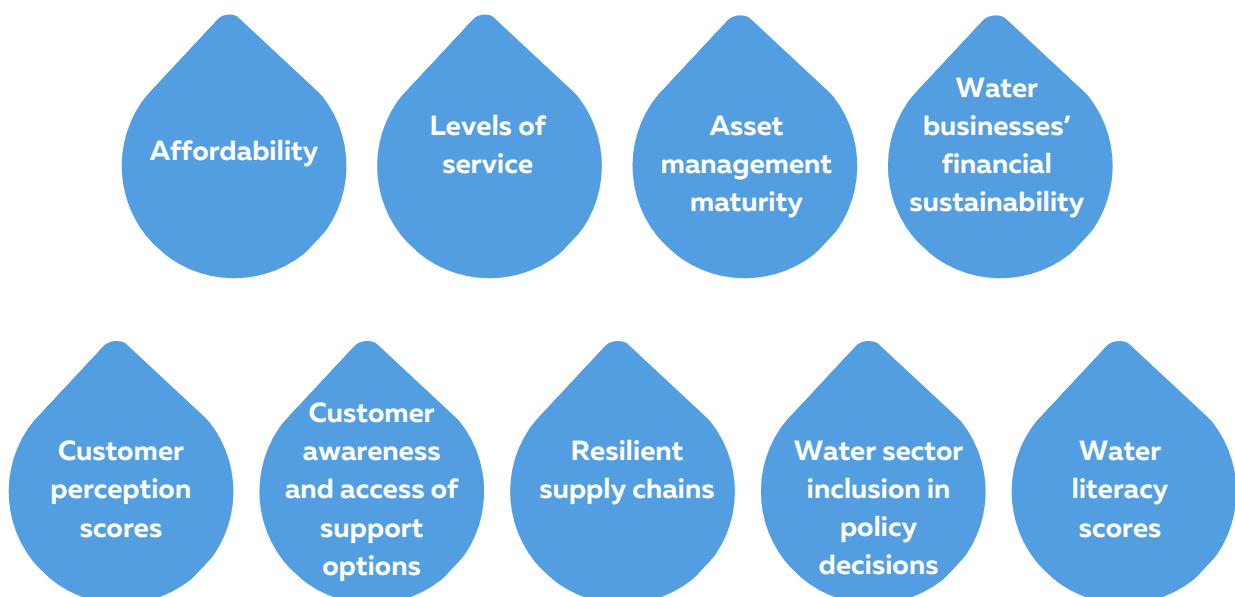


Water sector success looks like:

- Affordable and accessible water and wastewater services that meet customer and community needs, expectations, and preferences, now and in the future.
- All decisions are balanced and deliver value to customers and communities, respecting the needs of current and future generations.
- Long-term financially sustainable water businesses.
- Positive customer perceptions of water utilities and the water sector even in times of increasing bills.
- Customers who struggle are aware of and access flexible support options.
- Products, services, systems, and processes are designed to protect the safety and privacy of all our customers.
- Supply chains are resilient.
- High levels of customer and community knowledge of water and wastewater systems, and the urban water cycle.
- Water sector recommendations are adopted by governments, with support across other sectors.



How we will measure the water sector is on track:



What will we continue:

- Promoting and advocating for a long-term price path that supports affordability and financial sustainability.
- Measuring business financial sustainability, affordability, and customer debt.
- Leading industry benchmarking to support best practice, including Asset Management Customer Value, TOTEX, customer perception, and energy benchmarking.
- Connecting and leading members to support customers experiencing vulnerability.
- Connecting and leading members to protect customer safety and privacy, particularly those impacted by family violence.
- Influencing best practice as the Standards Australia nominating organisation for the water sector.
- Delivering standards for planning, design, and installation of technologies, and providing appraisals, standards, and codes to support confidence in the quality of new technologies.
- Influencing policies that affect service delivery, including wet wipes, critical infrastructure, supply chains, dam safety, asbestos pipe management, and the interface with telecommunications infrastructure.

What we will start:

- Integrating water sector data, to provide insights and lift the performance of our members.
- Connecting and leading the water sector to develop and implement best practice procurement and risk management practices, including for the delivery and operation of infrastructure and addressing supply chain risks.
- Connecting and leading members in implementing best practice cybersecurity practices.
- Connecting and leading members to accelerate digital integration
- Delivering the WSAA Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I) Ecosystem.



Resilient and Regenerative future

Embrace resilience through circular design, safeguarding the wellbeing of future generations in our cities and towns

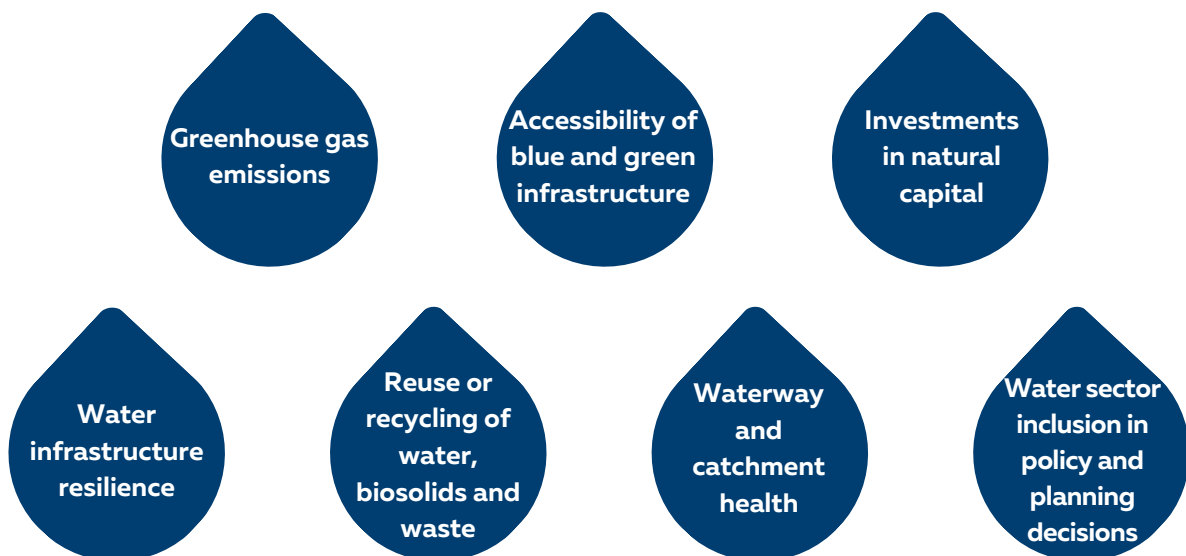


Water sector success looks like:

- Collectively achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 or earlier.
- Communities are resilient and liveable, supported by cool, active and healthy environments.
- Water infrastructure is adaptive and resilient to climate change impacts.
- Circular economy principles are applied to manage resources including water, waste, energy, and natural capital, fostering the transition to a more circular future.
- Waterways and catchments are healthy, and protect and restore ecological and community values.
- Water sector recommendations are adopted by governments, with support across other sectors.



How we will measure the water sector is on track:



What will we continue:

- Connecting and leading members to achieve net zero commitments.
- Connecting and leading members to identify and implement opportunities to finance, implement and scale blue and green infrastructure.
- Connecting and leading members to develop strategies and implement circular economy initiatives.
- Supporting members in response to management of PFAS and other emerging contaminants.
- Promoting and advocating the role of the water sector in contributing to community resilience, well-being and fostering intergenerational equity in response to climate change.
- Influencing policies that affect the water sector, including greenhouse gas emissions management and reporting, climate change adaptation, circular economy transition, energy transition, management of PFAS and other contaminants, waterway and catchment management, blue and green infrastructure, nature positive initiatives, and city shaping.

What we will start:

- Developing best practice for monitoring and measuring nitrous oxide emissions, and exploring application for other fugitive emissions.
- Supporting members to enhance community resilience to the increasing coincidence of extreme events.
- Contributing to national and international standards that enable the delivery of blue and green infrastructure.
- Partnering with the Australian and NZ Biosolids Partnership and other international partners to develop best practice biosolids management, including a focus on PFAS and other contaminants.
- Connecting and leading members to identify and implement nature-based initiatives, and to understand water sector nature-related disclosure requirements.
- Exploring measurement tools and frameworks in use globally to track the rate of circularity and consider their applicability locally.
- Exploring strategic partnerships beyond the water sector to support emerging opportunities, including biodiversity, nature-based solutions, circular economy initiatives, carbon markets and nutrient trading markets.



First Nations

Reduce disparity of First Nations peoples' access to services and increase engagement with First Nations peoples



Water sector success looks like:

- Every Australian and New Zealand community has access to secure water supplies that meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines or New Zealand Drinking Water Standards.
- Every Australian and New Zealand community has access to adequate wastewater services that protect public health and the environment.
- Partnering and collaboration with First Nations communities means their voice is embedded in water service delivery.
- The water sector applies a partnership and stewardship approach with First Nations communities to shared challenges in water resource management.
- Water management practices incorporate cultural flows and integrate Indigenous knowledge and practice.
- Water sector recommendations are adopted by governments, with support across other sectors.

How we will measure the water sector is on track:



What will we continue:

- Implementing our WSAA Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Supporting members in their engagement of First Nations communities.
- Partnering with The Energy Charter to share leading First Nations engagement practices.
- Developing further policy and evidence to advocate to Close the Water for People and Communities Gap.
- Partnering with the Australian Water Association to deliver the Voices from the Bush event.



What we will start:

- Establish the WSAA First Nations Clean Water and Sanitation Network to support members and governments to deliver equitable water and sanitation services.
- Establishing national water and wastewater design guidelines and codes of practice for First Nations and non-Indigenous remote communities.
- Embedding First Nations engagement protocols in WSAA meetings and events.
- Connecting and leading members to apply a partnership and stewardship approach with First Nations communities to shared challenges in water resource management.
- Connecting and leading members to incorporate cultural flows and integrate First Nations knowledge and practice into water management.



People and Capability

As a sector of choice, ensure our people and organisations are ready now and for the future.



Water sector success looks like:

- The water sector is the 'essential sector of choice', attracting and retaining talent that are their true selves at work and feel they belong.
- An equal, diverse and inclusive water sector, where our organisations reflect the communities where we work and live.
- Our people, communities, and workplaces are free from harm and injury, both physical and psychological.
- Key capabilities and gaps are understood, with a plan for the future.
- Robust future talent pipeline, including young professionals.
- Skills to meet the expectations of customers and regulators, and to manage risks.
- Water sector recommendations are adopted by governments, with support across other sectors.

How we will measure the water sector is on track:

Worker satisfaction and belonging

Workforce diversity

Health and safety maturity

People productivity

Strategic Workforce Planning maturity

Skills gap



What will we continue:

- Co-leading the Careers in Water initiative with the Australian Water Association, including a sector-wide employee value proposition, promotional resources, educational materials, and website.
- Investing in the next generation of leaders through the WSAA Young Utility Leader program, and including the voices of young professionals in our work.
- Leading industry benchmarking and assessment that supports best practice, including health and safety, people productivity, mental health and safety maturity.
- Connecting and leading members to collaborate in addressing fatal risks, including psychosocial risks.
- Hosting the Pride in Water initiative.
- Partnering with the Water Industry Operators Association on an operator exchange program.
- Supporting members in strategic workforce planning and critical skills analysis.
- Providing specialist training opportunities to members.
- Supporting learning and professional development through the participation and contribution of member organisations and their people.
- Influencing policies that affect the water sector, including health, safety and wellbeing, skills and training.



What we will start:

- Partnering with other water associations to establish a water sector coalition progressing equity, diversity and inclusion outcomes.
- Establishing a First Nations Peoples network to create a sense of community and belonging for First Nations water professionals.
- Supporting a sustainable governance and business model for Pride in Water.
- Connecting and leading members in implementing equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Developing strategic workforce planning toolkit and resources.
- Analysing strategic training and development needs and assessing opportunities to partner with other organisations and sectors to deliver training and build competency frameworks.
- Exploring opportunities to co-design capacity building and training programs to support our members.
- Supporting the development of a National Skills and Training Strategy.
- Exploring contemporary and leading indicators to measure health and safety performance.





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