**Queensland Water Directorate (*qldwater*)** ***e-*flash**

**Information for Water Industry Managers and Practitioners in the Queensland Water Industry**

**(Issue #424 – 4 March 2020)**

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**More Major Report Releases**
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**Release of the SEQ National Water Account (NWA) and National Performance Report (NPR)**

The 2019 SEQ National Water Account has been released and is available from the BoM website ([www.bom.gov.au/water/nwa/2019](http://www.bom.gov.au/water/nwa/2019)).  Reports for other Urban regions (Adelaide, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney), including an urban overview summary, have also been released.

The Urban National Performance Report, which complements the National Water Account, has also been released and is located on [www.bom.gov.au/water/npr](http://www.bom.gov.au/water/npr). The NPR includes national water and sewerage data for service providers with greater than 10,000 water connections.

**NPR Review Findings and Recommendations**

Recently the National Performance Report has been undergoing a review to which many members have contributed through direct submissions, ***qldwater*** submissions or in attending workshops. The findings and recommendations of this review have now been released ([*National performance report framework review*](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.bom.gov.au_water_npr_framework-2Dreview_index.shtml&d=DwMF-g&c=tpTxelpKGw9ZbZ5Dlo0lybSxHDHIiYjksG4icXfalgk&r=tIDYC4bU3RUOrRSJiqKeO9cduxvytxKbQKoYeq9Fw9o&m=N6wcL-d2WPQj0HKsWfqT0-AKICqNHRLj50z46BD7QqY&s=o08Hht2f6qNN_hbao0TiPrzthPY2R8nXlUd-GulsYdc&e=)).

Some key findings and recommendations:

* A thorough, detailed, and independent review of the reporting themes, indicators and indicator definitions, should be undertaken
* A QA/QC strategy should be developed, including a revised audit framework
* Coverage of the Framework should be extended to include water service providers with less than 10,000 connections

**SWIM features significantly in the report**, including a specific recommendation (13) – “Where they do not already exist (e.g. SWIM in Queensland), State and Territory governments and industry should investigate opportunities for, and the feasibility of, single source of data entry for reporting entities in their jurisdictions to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of data provision and validation processes. If they determine that single source of data entry is cost-effective and desired, then the State or Territory and respective subset of industry should implement it.”

As this article was being prepared the **Water Services Association of Australia Managing Director Adam Lovell** issued a related release – apologies to those who may have already seen it but we thought the national perspective might be of interest to others.  Thanks to Adam for permission to share:

*Dear Members*

*In 2020, WSAA expects there to be a more significant national urban water agenda than previous years. One reason is the recent bushfires and drought which may lead to a more active Commonwealth Government in what are traditionally state based responsibilities. In addition, the Productivity Commission is conducting its triennial assessment of National Water Initiative, the urban water sub-committee of COAG appears to be gaining momentum with the drought as a catalyst; and building on its review last year the BOM is expected to commence a review of the indicators for the National Performance Report.*

*There were two Commonwealth Government reports released last week:*

* *Infrastructure Australia Infrastructure Priority List 2020*
* *Bureau of Meteorology’s National Performance Report.*

***INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY LIST***

*Last Wednesday Infrastructure Australia (IA) released its* ***Infrastructure Priority List 2020*** *(see media release here:* [*https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/listing/media-release/february-2020-infrastructure-priority-list*](https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/listing/media-release/february-2020-infrastructure-priority-list)*).  The full document, in keeping with the messaging from IA’s Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019, recognises the critical role urban water infrastructure plays in sustaining our communities and that more than supplying drinking water, water plays an important role supporting urban cooling and amenity.*

*IA describes the List as the authoritative guide to the priority infrastructure investments Australia needs to secure a sustainable and prosperous future. The release received quite a lot of media attention and water was a focus with two new High Priority Initiatives announced:*

* ***National water strategy -*** *Strategic planning for water capture, use and management**(*[*https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/map/national-water-strategy*](https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/map/national-water-strategy)*)*
* ***Town and city water security*** *– water supply and resilience for town and city populations (*[*https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/map/town-and-city-water-security*](https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/map/town-and-city-water-security)*)*

*These initiatives have been developed following IA’s assessment in its Audit that “the urban water sector faces challenges, including the impacts of climate change, population growth, ageing assets, and changing needs and expectations from users.” The Audit also stated that “without appropriately planning for these challenges, there could be severe urban water shortages or restrictions in many parts of the country.”*

***National water strategy***

*The proposed National water strategy is intended to “guide governments, the private sector and Australia’s population on how to efficiently and sustainably capture, use and manage water”.*

*IA indicates the Strategy should consider a number of areas including:*

* *the current availability, quality, regulation and use of water within various catchments and aquifers*
* *changes in run-off levels linked to changing land-uses and climate volatility/change*
* *modelling of demand, based on population, environment and industry requirements*
* *the condition and performance of existing water infrastructure, including storage, sourcing, stormwater, distribution and treatment*
* *the role of various water sources and potential opportunities, including dams, catchment transfer, stormwater harvesting, water recycling, groundwater and desalination*
* *potential regulatory and planning changes to the water sector, and have regards to the National Water Initiative*
* *potential investments, ranging from smaller augmentations of existing systems to more major infrastructure for capturing, diverting and distributing water*
* *opportunities to improve the collection, consistency, reporting and use of information and data in the sector.*

*IA recommends the Strategy is developed in the near term (0-5 years). IA does not set out any detail on this or its implementation however, the Urban Water Sub-Committee of COAG would be able to take this up if it chose to.*

***Town and city water security***

*The proposed town and city water security initiative is for a “mix of infrastructure and non-infrastructure responses, such as demand management, to efficiently meet agreed service standards for water security in Australia’s towns and cities”. IA identifies infrastructure interventions could involve new water sources, such as recycling and desalination and that collaboration and knowledge sharing will be important to achieve the best outcomes. In terms of next steps the List says that “proponent(s) to be identified”.*

*WSAA will continue to lead engagement with IA as they seek to develop these initiatives.*

*Other water references in the Priority List 2020 include five Priority Initiatives and one Priority Project:*

* ***Darwin region water supply infrastructure upgrades*** *- Ensure secure water supply to support further urban, industrial and/or agricultural development in some parts of the country*
* ***Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley flood management*** *- The Hawkesbury–Nepean Valley Integrated Flood Management Strategy presents a series of initiatives and investments to reduce flood risk in the valley*
* ***Lower Fitzroy River water infrastructure development*** *- Increasing water storage in the region by constructing a new weir at Rookwood on the Fitzroy River*
* ***Tasmanian irrigation schemes: Tranche 3****- Investment in rural water storage and delivery infrastructure to enable large-scale, multi-user irrigation schemes in rural areas in Tasmania*
* ***Tasmanian sewerage infrastructure upgrades*** *- Rationalise existing sewage treatment plants and upgrade and operate a reduced number of sewage treatment plants in Hobart, Launceston and Devonport.*
* ***Myalup-Wellington water project*** *- Integrated above and below dam components, targeted at reducing salinity in Wellington Dam and the surrounding area, and increasing the efficiency of water distribution infrastructure.*

***NATIONAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (NPR)***

*On Friday the BOM released the* [*National Performance Report*](http://www.bom.gov.au/water/npr/)*.  Unlike previous years the full data set is now being made available in a more timely manner. It was made available on 28 November 2019, five months earlier than previous years. The delay in release of the dataset and Report has been one of the persistent criticisms of the NPR. The BOM did a soft release of the Report last Friday and there was no media release.*

*The BOM’s* ***key messages*** *from the Report are:*

* *Urban water use is steady after another warm and dry year*
* *Increased production of desalination, except for Perth*
* *Typical water bills steady*
* *Increased capital expenditure on sewerage offsets a decrease in expenditure in the water supply system*

*WSAA is in discussions with the BOM and the Commonwealth Government about commencing a review into the NPR indicators. Key areas for improvement are the customer and financial indicators and bulk water sector indicators.*

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**This message may be passed on to interested individuals and organisations.**

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