



OPERATOR



February 2007 Edition

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*Better the Devil you know!!!!!!
Read more about this member on Page 6*



Great shot Rod Norman. Get all the goss from the Golf Day on Page 5.

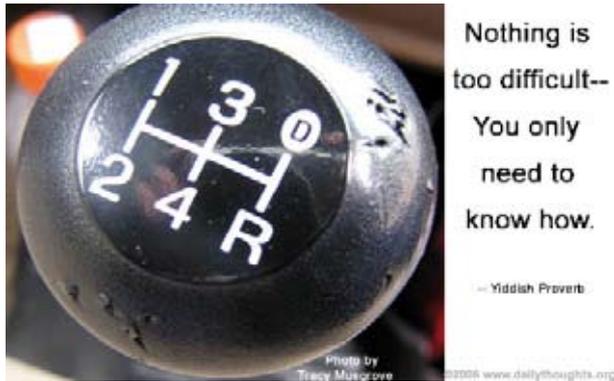


*Is this the result of Climate change?
See Page 4.*

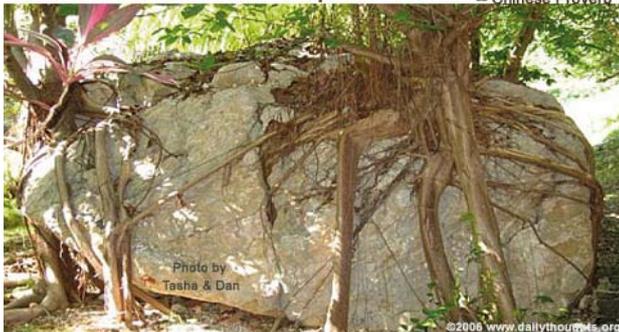
President's Farewell

I hope for those of you able to take some time off over the festive season that you are now all refreshed and ready for 2007. By the time this newsletter goes to print my time as WIOA President will be drawing to a close, so this is my last opportunity to address WIOA Members en masse.

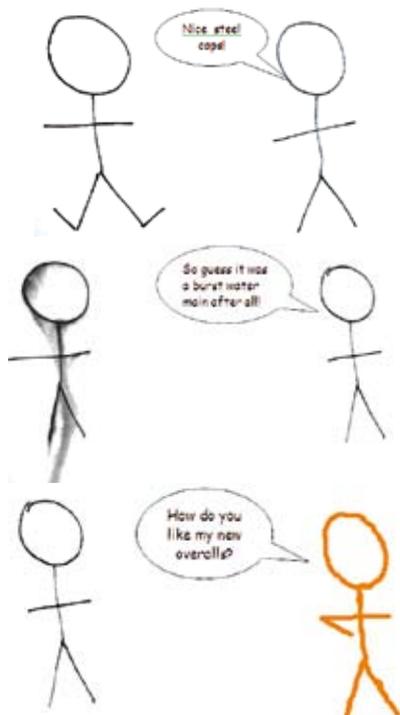
So what do I say after two years of fabulous opportunities, new skills, personal growth, meeting new people and generally a really fun time with WIOA? I could impart some useful words of wisdom:



The wise adapt themselves to circumstances, as water moulds itself to the pitcher. — Chinese Proverb



I could share my summer doodles:



Or I could just say simply say 'THANKS'. I sincerely appreciate all the support given to me by all WIOA Members and the water industry. I truly enjoyed my time as President and I look forward to continuing on the WIOA Committee. I wish the new President the best of luck!

Cynthia Lim
WIOA Prez

Thanks Cynthia

When a few of us from the Committee approached Cynthia just over 4 years ago about the possibility of taking on the role of President, we got a puzzled look followed by the firm response "NO WAY!".

Being persistent devils, we could see that Cynth had some remarkable qualities and we were sure that she would do a great job at the helm. The rest is history – Cynthia took on the role, firstly as Vice President to learn the ropes and then for the past two years as President. From her extremely nervous, even timid closing address at the 2004 conference dinner, she has blossomed into the quintessential public speaker – organized, articulate and able to command the respect that she truly deserves from any audience.

It is really enjoyable to attend WIOA events and see Cynthia engaging all and sundry with that infectious friendliness and broad smile. Cynthia has been a most positive ambassador for WIOA and its values, and I'm sure this has translated into countless new members and supporters.

Her commitment to the tasks of President has extended well beyond the normal call of duty. She has given so much of her own personal time to help us move forward at a time when we have been experiencing unprecedented growth and have had numerous operational and management issues to resolve. Cynthia has demonstrated an uncanny ability to draw the best out of our male dominated Committee, whilst at the same time keeping things under control when the boys get a bit boisterous.

Congratulations and thank you Cynthia, it has been our pleasure to have you in the chair for the past couple of years and we look forward to building on your great work in the future.

George Wall
WIOA Executive Officer



*Cynthia Lim
and her snowman
Nick on the NZ tour
in 2006.*

VICTORIAN OPERATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD 2006

Rod Curtis from Western Water was presented the 2006 AWA Victorian Operator of Year Award at the September 2006 conference. Rod has worked for Western Water for 9 years and is the Acting Team Leader – Melton Purification Team.

Rod is an electrician by trade but has embraced his new wastewater treatment role completing a Certificate III in Water Industry Operations and he is currently working towards a Certificate IV.

Rod has developed a strong environmental and people focus and regularly demonstrates a unique ability to effectively combine the management of multiple projects with the development of his staff, whilst maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of treatment plant operations.

Western Water is very pleased that Rod and his team have achieved 100% EPA compliance for their two licensed treatment plants, largely due to the team's innovative efforts throughout the year and despite the fact that both plants were loaded above their hydraulic and biological capacity. The Melton Purification Plant is the subject of a major augmentation project over the next couple of years.

Rod has actively used his electrical and water industry training. He has been heavily involved in the development and implementation of Western Water's SCADA system, was able to provide advice on the upgrade of the electrical system at Melton following a power spike which burned out some of the electrics, and has sourced and fitted a range of more power efficient machinery and instrumentation for the plant including implementing operating systems which have significantly reduced power consumption.

On the process side, Rod has assisted in the development of a sustainable biosolids management program for the Melton purification plant allowing 100% of biosolids produced to be beneficially used. He has also altered the operation of the sludge digester to produce an estimated increase in biogas production of between 15 to 20%. The biogas volume, quality and consistency of generation is now expected to tip the scales in favour of co-generation feasibility.

Rod has instigated of a number of Occupational Health & Safety risk assessments relative to his plants including; dam safety assessment for lagoons, a project to combat Workshop subsidence and the replacement of eroded masts servicing safety lighting.

Whilst raising a young family, Rod has also found time to be an integral member of;

- A biosolids study group working in consultation with RMIT looking at the feasibility of biosolids to

agriculture;

- An integral member of the Design, Construction and Commissioning working groups, which have the responsibility for the plant augmentation and proposed Class A treatment plant;
- The Class A HACCP working group.

Rod is meticulous about the facilities and treatment plants his team manages, not only from an operational management view but also the aesthetic and environmental aspects and is a worthy winner of the 2006 Victorian Operator of the Year Award.



Rod Curtis proudly displays his award

Employees Convicted In Tennessee Wastewater Case

The former director of Mount Pleasant's Department of Public Works in Columbia, Tenn., and his son have been found guilty of falsifying documents associated with the town's sewage treatment plant.

According to *The Daily Herald*, James Michael Holden, plant manager, was found guilty of falsifying water testing data. He could face up to five years in prison, and up to a \$25,000 fine. He was also found guilty for impeding an EPA investigation by attempting to cover up his crime. This charge could lead to 20 years in prison.

Holden's father James Larry Holden, Mount Pleasant public works director, was convicted only of falsifying data.

During the trial, prosecutors showed evidence of the plant's monthly operating reports, signed by Mike Holden. The EPA auditors found the reports to be abnormally consistent and improbable.

In addition, during an EPA inspection of the plant in August 2003, agents found the June bench sheets to be blank. However, when the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation agents searched the plant in April 2004, the sheets were no longer blank.

One of the sewage department employees, Matt Roddy, testified that the Holdens and City Manager Bob Murray instructed him to falsify data.

Sentencing will take place December 18.

Source: *The Daily Herald* September 29, 2006

Editor's Note: We are trying to track down the sentence handed out and will report in the next edition of Operator.

Freak Storm at Griffith WTP

A freak storm hit the Griffith water treatment plant around 12.30am on 24 September 2006.

Jim Henderson the plant operator discussed the storm with our roving reporter Cynthia Lim, and the responses to her hard hitting questions are provided below.

CL: How long did the storm last?

JH: Not really sure, possibly only 30 minutes or less. It was closer to a mini tornado than a storm. It ripped out 8 or 9 large trees near the plant, as well as affecting the treatment plant.

CL: What damage did it do?

JH: Blew the roof off, with the hand rails, penstock shafts – drives all bent. The roller doors blew out in the PAC shed. The plant was still running when I got there though!



Damage to the rails caused by the Freak Storm.

CL: Is this water treatment plant the main one for Griffith?

JH: It's the only plant in Griffith

CL: Was water quality affected?

JH: Luckily no affects noted at all.

CL: Has such an event like this happened before in Griffith that you are aware of?

JH: First ever to my knowledge.

CL: What else was affected in town and close by?

JH: The worst property damage was at the water plant with little damage anywhere else.

CL: Did emergency response procedures in place take affect and were they successful? ie. generators starting up if power was down?

JH: Luckily everything at the plant continued to operate and was not affected. The SES came in next morning and put up tarps etc. Fix up and repair is currently happening with the lab and control room currently covered by tarps.

CL: How long till the plant is fixed again?

JH: It should be all repaired fairly soon (maybe when this is printed)

CL: For those unfamiliar with Griffith – what is the population of Griffith?

JH: About 28,000 in surrounding area and population on town water is about 20,000

CL: How long have you worked as Operator?

JH: Since 1989, always at Griffith mainly in water and I had a stint in wastewater.



Roof damage at the Water Treatment Plant

The Lighter Side



New Party Game - First one out loses

2006 Golf Charity Day

The eighth annual Victorian Water Industry Charity Golf Day was held at Kilmore Golf Club on Sunday 29 October 2006. In all 40 players teed off and they were greeted by a fantastic day weather wise. The course was in excellent condition despite the drought and there could be absolutely no excuses for poor scoring.

There were numerous companies who generously sponsored the day and we wish to recognise the support and generosity of the following organisations:

Major Sponsors

Gippsland Water, Environmental & Process Technologies, RTUnet & ITT Flygt.

Gold Sponsors

Bell Environmental, Australian Pollution Engineering, ProMinent, By-Jas Engineering, Alldos, ABB Australia, Acromet, Lisa Rawlinson & Associates, Omega Chemicals, Heraeus-amba, United Water, Haulton Construction Services, Utility Services and Merck.

Silver Sponsors

Unimin Australia, Nordical Diving Services, ATMR, MJK Automation and Piping and Automation Systems

Special thanks to ITT Flygt for sponsoring the BBQ before and after the golf, to Biolab who supplied the "booze buggy" and kept the players well lubricated on the way round and to Sharon for driving it all day.

As with last year, the format of the day was "ambrose" with the players in each team drawn out of a hat. To give all teams a reasonable chance of winning, there was at least one player with a handicap placed in each group. The scores were all reasonably close at the end of the day so the system seemed to work OK.

To the results -

Overall Winners and Winners of the Tradies Cup – The team representing Bell Environmental comprising Mike Bell, Peter Bourke, Mark Samblebe and George Wall with a score of 66 less 8.5 – net 57.5

Runners-up - The team of Allan McIntyre, Stuart Cluning and Matt Collins with a score of 67 less 8.2 – net 58.8

Nearest the pins – Ian Storey, David Wigg and Ray Wiseman

Longest Drive – Brett Hare.

The ninth annual golf day will most likely also be staged at Kilmore GC, we anticipate in early October 2005 and we look forward to the industry continuing its strong support of the event.



*Winners are Grinners at the Charity Golf Day
The Bell Environmental team*

Masters Games

Congratulations to Anthony Evans who won gold, silver and bronze medals at the Masters Games, held on 21 – 28 October 2006 in Alice Springs. Anthony competed in a variety of shooting events and won gold in the Sporting Clay event, silver in the Single Barrel and bronze in the Double Barrel shoot. Out of a total of 84 competitors Anthony came second in the overall Sporting Clays event. Competitors battled through hot conditions with the average daily temperature being 40 degrees. Congratulations Anthony on your outstanding efforts.



*Anthony Evans
receiving a bronze
medal presented by
Daryl Somers.*



*Anthony Evans competing in one
of his events.*

Profile of a Member

Name: Peter Jackson

Position: Works Co-ordinator.

Employer & Location: Goulburn Valley Water; Central Wastewater Management Facility Group. Shepparton.

How long have you been a member of WIOA? Ten years.

How long have you worked in the Water Industry and where?

I commenced work in the water industry about 13 years ago as Supervisor for Wastewater Reuse and Farming Operations at the Shepparton, Mooroopna, Tatura, Kyabram, Tongala, Girgarre, Murchison and Rushworth/Stanhope Wastewater Management Facilities.

Thirteen years ago my place of work was the S—t Farm. I have since worked at the Sewerage farm and the Waste Water Treatment Plant. I currently work at Wastewater Management Facilities. A similar transition has occurred with S—t Water through its various upgrades to Reclaimed Water.

What fields of the water industry have you worked in?

All my time in the Water Industry has been spent treating wastewater for either reuse to land or discharge to local water ways.

How did you get into your current role?

I was selected from an impressive group of applicants, by a forward thinking and intelligent manager. This bloke was the playing Secretary of the Tallygaroopna Football Club; he has since moved on to a more challenging role within the Water industry.

What does your current job involve?

Our group are responsible for treatment of both domestic and industrial wastewater at the 8 Treatment plants. Treatment is either in lagoon based detention systems or covered anaerobic lagoons.

The reclaimed water produced is Class “C” and is supplied under strict EPA Guidelines to 1st 2nd and 3rd party reclaimed water irrigators.

To balance inflows during the irrigation off season, secondary treated reclaimed water is tertiary treated for discharge off site.

What have been some of the big changes in recent years?

The emphasis on OHS and Environmental aspects of our business has increased substantially over the last 8 years. These represent a huge impost on resources. I wonder what small business/Industry, may be around in years to come!

What do you think you will be doing in 5 years time?

If I am to live in the outrageous manner that I have become accustomed; off my superannuation, I will be working until I am 89 years old; I guess Johnny will still be President then!

Ok, a few quick questions to finish with.

Age: 58
Nickname: Jacko or if you are a New Zealander – Jicko!
Family Status: Two sons and a daughter; 35, 33 and 30.
Pets: N/A
Favourite Food: Sea-food, beef lamb.
Least Fav Food: Cauliflower
Favorite TV Show: Enjoy Monty Python and recent Carlton v Collingwood grand finals.
Worst TV Show: Any reality show, most American comedy and the 1990 Grand Final.
Favorite Movie: Shawshank Redemption.
Current C.D in stereo: “Slade” I copied from somewhere on the internet.
Ambition in Life: To be not too disappointed at the finish.
Hobbies: Fishing, historic Australiana.
Best Trait: Sublime sense of humour.
Worst Trait: Far too generous.
Favourite Book: I will read anything; Wilbur Smith is a favourite.
Four People to invite to a BBQ: Four of Hugh Hefner’s ex wives.



Peter Jackson

Wannon Water Power Barrow

Innovation: The Central Systems Team from Wannon Water in Warrnambool have major concerns in conducting hazardous manual handling tasks, particularly in carrying numerous heavy items into backyards for repairs.

The team purchased a power barrow to assist in conducting repairs which are well away from their vehicles.

An excellent innovation and ownership of a risk. Please contact Paul English for further details.



Wannon Water Power Barrow

Victorian Recycled Water Field Days

Two Northern Victorian Water Authorities, Goulburn Valley Water and North East Water, joined forces recently to stage a two day recycled water use field trip.

Both Authorities have extensive agricultural reuse developments on their own properties but both also supply recycled water to a variety of end users including farmers, golf courses, sporting fields, dual pipe schemes and for industrial reuse.

The aim of the field day was to showcase the positive environmental and financial contribution that the correct use of recycled water was making at the Water Authority sites and to increase public awareness of the benefits of using recycled water.

The event kicked off at North East Water's Wangaratta wastewater treatment plant where approximately 45 interested people inspected the water recycling operation where the benefits of the efficient use of recycled water on a range of crops was demonstrated. In particular, the difference in the quality of the recycled water and normal irrigation water was explained and the issue of management of nutrients and salts highlighted.

North East Water has been involved with a great deal of research into crops and irrigation systems at the Wangaratta site and was happy to provide the benefit of the knowledge gained over a number of years with the field day participants. In particular the agronomics of growing lucerne with recycled was highlighted. This focus demonstrated the benefits of growing this crop with not just being able to maximise recycled water use but also being profitable.

North East Water owns several properties and grows lucerne and maize where suitable, with the help of recycled water from a number of municipal waste water treatment plants. All up, North East Water has around 7 pivot irrigators and an extensive area set out for flood irrigation.



Harvesting the maize at Wangaratta

The second day was at Goulburn Valley Water's Kilmore Recycled Water Facility with a number of presentations coordinated by the Department of Primary Industries. About 40 people attended the day to look over the agricultural recycling initiatives including the cropping, dairying and grazing aspects. Guest speakers included Rob Rendell from RMCG Consulting and Dennis Watson from the Department of Primary Industries.

Participants at the field day were informed about the regulatory requirements, the EPA approval process for the use of recycled water and the additional control measures put in place as a result of a community engagement process at the Kilmore site. The day included a tour of the facility and an information session on the management of the site. Centre pivot irrigation was chosen for this site because it operates at low pressure with large droplets resulting in reduced aerosol drift while applying recycled water evenly over the undulating surface. There are soil moisture sensors to ensure that the site is not over or under watered and a computer controlled irrigation system connected to a weather station that turns the centre pivot off when rainfall or wind speed reaches set limits.

Sustainable irrigation practices are very important when irrigating with recycled water, requiring good irrigation scheduling which optimises the application of recycled water to balance both the water and nutrient application.

The Wangaratta and Kilmore sites are good examples of the benefits that accrue from well managed irrigation systems, and attendees at the field days were impressed by the sites and the quality of the presentations.

If you are interested in finding out more about either recycled water project you can contact Ian Reimers at North East Water on ireimers@nerwa.vic.gov.au or Stuart Harris at Goulburn Valley Water on stuarth@gvwater.vic.gov.au



Inspecting the centre pivot irrigator at Kilmore.

Victorian Storage Operators Reference Group

The Victorian Storage Operators Reference Group (VSORG) was established in 2005 with a vision of creating a state-wide body of Storage Operators to unite and share information and best practices.

The group has representation from Goulburn-Murray Water, Central Highlands Water, Barwon Water, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water, Southern Rural Water, Coliban Water and WIOA and would welcome staff from any other Authorities with similar interests to come along to the meetings. Recently the VSORG formed an affiliation with WIOA which will no doubt raise the profile of the VSORG and ensure its continued growth.

Meeting No 8 was hosted by Coliban Water at Lauriston Dam near Kyneton in Central Victoria. The following items were discussed:

- **Office bearers** – Chris Perks (Chair) and Jim Wheelhouse (Secretary) both stood down. New office bearers are Andrew McPherson (Chair) and George Wall (Secretary)
- **Required to occupy housing** – A draft document setting out minimum housing standards was tabled for comment and the final recommendations will be presented to the Victorian Dams Working Group for approval.
- **National Training Package Review** - George Wall delivered a presentation on changes to package and showed a number of careers videos developed recently.
- **Interchange of staff** - Coliban Water and Southern Rural Water have undertaken for special maintenance activities and it has been beneficial to both authorities and the staff involved.
- **Torrumbarry fish ladder** - Terry Holt delivered a presentation on the development and operation of the Williams Carp Sorter.
- **Replacement of the Lauriston flood gate turnbuckles** - Shane Edwards delivered a presentation on the successful job completed under cramped and difficult working conditions.

An inspection of the Lauriston Dam structure and Upper Coliban Dam followed the meeting. The next meeting will be conducted at Torrumbarry Weir on the 28th March.

Lauriston Reservoir

Lauriston reservoir was built between 1938 and 1941 to augment supplies to Bendigo, Castlemaine and surrounding areas which were already served by the Upper Coliban and Malmsbury reservoirs.

The dam is a massive buttress type, of which there are three similar in the world. The dam is concrete construction, with earthen flanking walls. There is a concrete cored earthen wall 600m to the West of the main structure.

The storage capacity is 20,000 megalitres. It currently holds about 10,000ML.



Lauriston Reservoir



New Members

Welcome to the following people and companies who have recently joined our Association as a Member or Corporate Supporter.

New Individual Members include David Dickson, Peter Bench, Dion Bull, Damien Abbott, Nilesh Patel, Dick Van Den Bosch, Kriston Nilsson, Kevin O'Brien, Grant Simpfordorfer, Rick Ziarkowski, Simon Wilson, Darren Davies, Mark Swadling, Andrew McPherson, Jim Blakeney, Peter Griffiths, Wayne Watson, Darren Lyndon, Luke McCormick, Broc Mulcair, Muneeb Sunna, Garry Graham, Craig Thornton, Shane Thornton, Jeffry Manks, Zane Lorimer, Dean Gillespie, David Morgan, Greg Bear, Amber Robinson, Danielle Anderson, Mark Closter, Danny West, Quentin Goodhand, Noel Roulston, Sven Linde & Greg Ryan.

New Corporate Members include Intercapital Property Services, Corrosion Engineering Australia, Whitsunday Shire Council, Griffith City Council, PMP Environmental, ActewAGL and Prime Water Technology.

WIOA

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WANTED

Any articles, news snippets, information on improved work practices, etc as contributions to your magazine

NEXT EDITION

**Article Contribution Deadline
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