



STORMWATER NEW SOUTH WALES

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SIA NSW Secretariat

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2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
9.00 am – 9.30 am Thursday, 25th September 2024
Via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Aditi Verma – Camden Council
Alan Benson – Water NSW
Alexi Gilchrist – Parramatta River Catchment Group
Andre Magar – Zeal Consulting
Dr Andrew Thomas – Cooks River Alliance
Brett C Phillips - Stantec
Craig Naughton – Hornsby Shire Council
David Nixon – Stormwater Sydney
Erin Sellers – Sydney Coastal Councils Group
Hawra Al-Ebady – City of Canterbury Bankstown
Jacqueline Woodlock – WMS Engineering
Justine Barrett – CSIRO
Lachlan Shackcloth Bertinetti – Ocean Protect
Murray Powell – Optimal Stormwater
Nerida Taylor – Sydney Water
Nigel Bosworth – SLR Consulting
Revee Orozco – Infrastructure Products Australia
Yuna Chen – Aurecon

APOLOGIES

No apologies for the meeting.

PROXYS

Greg Mashiah to Brett C Phillips

2024 STORMWATER NSW ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

1. PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS

Dr Andrew Thomas, President of Stormwater NSW, gave an acknowledgement of Country and welcomed Association members attending the 2024 AGM. Dr Thomas declared the meeting open at 9.10 am.

2. MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING DATED WEDNESDAY 30TH AUGUST 2023

Motion: That the Minutes of the 2023 Stormwater Annual General Meeting held on the 30th August, 2023 be ratified:

Moved: Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti

Seconded: Murray Powell

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

GEMS declared that there was no correspondence arising from the Annual General Meeting held on 30th August, 2023.

5. 2024 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Over the last financial year, NSW has experienced relatively milder weather than it has over the last decade. Rainfall has been significantly down, and temperatures have been somewhat milder. The extreme floods of 2022 and the scorched earth fires of the summer of 2019-20 are, at least in a physical sense, behind us.

But, in the land of droughts and flooding rains, we all know that this is just a lull between one or the other. For example it wasn't that long ago that Australia was in the grip of the *millennium drought* (2001 – 2009). The Hume Dam on the Murray became critically low, threatening both agricultural and urban water supplies in the region. Sydney Water's dams also reached critical levels, as low as 33.9% in 2007, bringing in Level 4 water restrictions that effectively restricted all outdoor water use and the filling up of pools.

Fun times. Not.

So, after all this, **has NSW done the sensible thing?** Has it learnt lessons, readjusted its environment and planning policies and instruments, undertaken institutional reviews to build resilience, and updated its cost / benefit models so they reflect reality? Based on industry engagement undertaken by Stormwater NSW between 2020 and 2023, and published in the Franc Sydney White Paper (Version 1, 2023), the answer is...

... **not really.**

In 2011, I left NSW for Queensland and moved into broader environmental consultancy work, leaving behind my stormwater focus for a few years. I then moved to Melbourne and spent a few

years at Melbourne University investigating the underlying reasons why local councils struggled to maintain their Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) type stormwater assets. I learned that Victoria faced many policy, political, and funding challenges that contributed to less than optimal outcomes regarding sustainable stormwater management and the protection of their waterways.

Yet despite the shortcomings in Victoria, what struck me about moving back to NSW in 2018 was the **shear lack of progress** NSW had made since I left almost a decade before. Where Victoria had its Living Rivers Program, and its state wide commitment to Integrated Water Management in the Victorian Planning Provisions, NSW had no such equivalents. It was like NSW had forgotten its struggle during the millennium drought as soon as the rains came, and it was completely unaware of the pressures urban expansion and climate change were putting on its rivers, its water supply, its urban development, and the health of its urban dwellers. Apart from a few brave attempts at some guidelines by stalwarts in the industry (e.g. the Risk Based Framework and the O&M Manual), **NSW seemed, at best, ambivalent** to its past, and the reality of 21st Century urban development in a climate uncertain future.

Then, in 2019-20, the scorched earth fires came. And in 2022, the devastating eastern Australian floods. And then came Minister Roberts, who, **in 2022 took the bizarre step of taking out the flood, fire and blue green elements** out of the Design and Place State Environmental Planning Policy under the guise of ‘affordable housing’. And it wasn’t just us humble stormies that were horrified. The then president of the NSW chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects, Laura Cockburn, said the decision was difficult to understand “after the recent devastating floods and with bushfires still scorched in our memory”. And the excuse offered up by Minister Roberts? Affordable housing. **But the obvious retort to that is “affordable for whom?”**. Does “affordable” mean building homes in areas that attract unaffordable high insurance premiums, or become uninsurable? Does “affordable” mean building homes like those currently under construction in Schofields that have almost no yard, no trees, minimal insulation, black roofs, and minimal access to greenspace? I don’t think any reasonable person would think so. So, perhaps “affordable” means “politically expedient” or “most affordable for developers”, or perhaps both?

So, **what is going on in NSW, and, most importantly, who is to blame!?** We’ll, I could go on a rant about politicians, developer lobby groups, or the lack of state government departmental success implementing otherwise commendable strategies and plans (e.g. the “bold vision”¹ of *A Metropolis of Three Cities* – Greater Sydney Regional Plan). But irrespective of the merits of such accusations, it would be neither fair nor pragmatic. It would not be fair, because it would mean I would be avoiding an issue closer to home, i.e., the **seeming inability of our industry to work together** for our own betterment, let alone the society we should be serving. And it would be unpragmatic because, while cathartic, it would be otherwise useless. What you, me and all of us who have a stake in sustainable, sensible and humane urban stormwater management **must confront is our own hand in this**, and what you, me and all of us could do about it if we chose to.

As an industry, to date, **we’ve been pretty bad at backing ourselves**. We’ve been far more interested in fighting over the breadcrumbs that fall off the tables of government and developers, or our next paper or keynote speech, or if we are doing all we can to avoid confrontation. Meanwhile, industry bodies such as the Urban Development Institute of Australia (**UDIA**) show us where the real game is. While I am sure developers don’t always see eye to eye on everything, **you can’t fault**

¹ Quote by the Hon Gladys Berejiklian, then State MP and Premier of NSW, quoted in the now dissolved Greater Sydney Commission’s *Greater Sydney Region Plan – A metropolis of Three Cities* (2018). The Sydney Commission was dissolved by the Minns Government in June 2023, shortly after its election (25 March 2023).

them for their strategic commitment to their industry. They invest in their UDIA and back it in unity, presenting a professional, collaborative front to government that, as the Design and Place SEPP gave example to, appears to be extremely effective.

If we want to have any chance of improving our industry and making a difference, **we must do the same.**

And **at Stormwater NSW we have taken some initial steps.** We've established the franc Sydney conference to be more inclusive of other groups who have an important stake in sustainable and humane urban stormwater management. We've also established Stormwater 2030 with the support of Stormwater Sydney, an attempt at setting up a limited term collaborative entity to address the socio-political issues confounding stormwater management in NSW. And then there is commendable development of the WSUD Maintenance Compliance Framework, produced thanks to the willingness of Ocean Protect to back not just itself, but the industry as a whole, and invest in something that could be a game changer for not just the industry, but local government and the communities they serve.

But **truth be told**, what we've achieved thus far is down to just a small number of individuals in the industry that I could literally count on one hand. **This is neither fair or sustainable, nor is it smart.** Unless we, as an industry, are willing to give a bit more and take a few risks, then we cannot expect much to change. Moreover, we need to realise that irrespective of our roles and which company or sector (public, private or research) we belong to, we are all in the same industry. To pretend otherwise is to invite mediocrity and a continuation of the status quo.

So, over the next 12 months, **as the President of Stormwater NSW, I've set myself the challenge of growing the Stormwater NSW Committee** to take the pressure of those poor sods who are currently holding things together, and to build our industry's power accordingly. This is because I believe that if you want to address the kind of issues we are facing in NSW concerning urban expansion, climate change, and human health and wellbeing, then **we must first take account of ourselves.** Only then will we have the moral authority, not to mention the resources, to address the other issues we love to point the finger at.

Hence, **my challenge to 'the industry' is this.** If you want to grow the industry's market, if you care about our urban waterways and humane urban development, and if you want to make a difference beyond personal advancement, then **get behind Stormwater NSW** by not just maintaining your membership (or joining), but also help the committee (who are all volunteers) by helping to fund events and advocacy work, and, most important, sign up to the Stormwater NSW committee, and share the load. **If we do this, we will succeed.** But if we don't, we won't, and that's on all of us. So, don't be surprised if you hear from me soon.

Andrew Thomas
President, Stormwater NSW

Motion: That the 2024 President's Report be accepted.
Moved: Andre Magar
Seconded: Nerida Taylor
Vote: 16 For 0 Against 0 Abstained

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti, Treasurer of Stormwater NSW provided the Treasurer's Report.

It is my pleasure to present the Treasurer's Report for the Stormwater Industry Association of NSW (SNSW) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. This report outlines the financial performance of the association, focusing on income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, and the challenges and goals for the upcoming year. Despite facing various challenges, SNSW remains financially stable and continues to fulfill its statutory obligations.

The financial position of SNSW at the close of FY24 remains solid. The association's total net assets stand at \$108,050.00, and while we experienced fluctuations in both income and expenses, we continue to maintain a healthy level of reserves. This ensures that SNSW is well-positioned to manage future operational costs and continue delivering value to its members. As always, the committee's focus remains on prudently managing expenses and ensuring the sustainability of its activities.

Income Overview

The total income generated by SNSW for FY24 primarily stems from two major sources: membership dues, and the sale of operational and maintenance (O&M) manuals/events. Membership remains the primary revenue stream for SNSW accounting for approximately 72% of the association's Income.

- For the first time since FY20 the association experienced growth in total membership revenue (+2.2% year on year), however the gross figure of \$47,120 is still below the preceding 6 years.
- After decreases in the preceding 3 financial years (-10.7%, -2.5%, -6.1%) revenue from corporate memberships was relatively unchanged year on year at -0.2%

It is critical for the association to focus on retaining and growing its member base, given the importance of these memberships in supporting our core activities. The O&M Manual events hosted by SNSW remain a key source of revenue generation, whilst simultaneously delivering an important resource/service to the industry. Importantly income from these events \$17,165 exceeded associated costs of \$7,860 generating a gain of \$9,305 in FY24.

Expense Overview

The financial performance of the association in FY24 was heavily impacted by rising expenses in several key areas. The association's commitment to running high-quality events for its members, as well as its ongoing operational expenses, contributed to a significant portion of the total costs. The secretariat services, provided by GEMS, is the largest cost incurred by the association in FY24. The services continue to be provided in a highly professional and efficient manner, ensuring the smooth functioning of SNSW's operations.

Accounting fees were significant for FY24 at \$10,560, this can be attributed to costs associated with FY23 falling into FY24. Closer analysis of the average over the last 2 years (FY24-FY23) compared with the preceding 4 years (FY22-FY19) reveals an approximate increase of 47% on the fees. It is recommended that accounting services for future periods be reviewed by the committee. Other major expenses in FY24 included:

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- Awards for Excellence \$4,138
- Conference & Events \$7,860
- Facilitation \$2,750
- National Levies \$3,564
- Publication Fees \$4,499

Financial Reserves

As of June 30, 2024, SNSW holds a total of \$124,832 in its chequing and savings accounts, distributed across multiple accounts.

- NAB Account: \$13,242
- Commbiz Cheque Account: \$12,186
- Term Deposit 50248913: \$60,155
- Term Deposit 50256892: \$39,249

The association's financial reserves are critical in ensuring its ability to meet future challenges and fund initiatives. The term deposits have been reviewed by the committee and due to minimal interest rate gains and the need for financial liquidity, the committee has commenced the process of closing both term deposits and placing funds into a daily accessible account. It is recommended that the committee review high interest earning financial instruments available on the marketplace in the coming financial year.

Challenges and Goals for FY25

Looking ahead, the financial challenges for SNSW in the upcoming year are clear. To ensure long-term financial sustainability, we must focus on several key areas:

1. **Membership Retention and Growth:** Total membership income has been declining for several years, and reversing this trend is essential for the association's financial health. Whilst noted previously that this year that trend has been alleviated, it will be important to ensure continual growth and retention of membership. Ensuring that both corporate and individual members receive tangible benefits from their membership will be crucial in achieving this goal.
2. **Diversification of Revenue:** Identifying new income streams from non-traditional sources will be a focus in FY25. This could include expanding our digital offerings, developing new training programs, holding more paid events or pursuing partnerships with industry stakeholders.
3. **Event Profitability:** While events play a vital role in member engagement and education, they need to start generating a net positive income. The continued financial loss from events cannot be sustained long-term. A reassessment of event costs, pricing strategies, sponsorship opportunities, and marketing efforts will be essential in reversing this trend.
4. **Cost Control:** As our association continues to grow and evolve, it is essential that we maintain a forward-looking approach to financial management. Managing future costs is crucial for ensuring the ongoing viability of our operations and achieving our long-term goals. By carefully assessing potential future expenses, making informed decisions, and setting aside reserves for unforeseen circumstances, we can safeguard the financial health of the association.

Conclusion

While SNSW faces several challenges, the association remains in a strong financial position with ample reserves to support its activities. Moving forward, our focus should be on optimizing event

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profitability, continuing growth in the memberships, and ensuring that all financial commitments provide value to our members.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to my predecessor, **Dr. Brett C. Phillips**, who has served as the Treasurer of SNSW for the past 16 years. Dr. Phillips has played a pivotal role in stewarding the association's financial health, overseeing a period of significant growth in our reserves, and ensuring the sustainability of SNSW during times of economic uncertainty. His leadership, dedication, and commitment to the association have left a lasting impact, and we are grateful for his many years of service.

As we look forward to the future, I aim to build upon the strong foundation that Dr. Phillips has laid, working with the Executive Committee and members to continue delivering valuable services and achieving the association's strategic goals. I am confident that with careful financial management and strategic initiatives, SNSW will continue to thrive and fulfill its mission to promote best practices in the stormwater industry.

Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti
Treasurer
Stormwater Industry Association of NSW Inc.

Note: The Treasurer's Report and Audited Financial Statements are included in the 2024 Stormwater NSW Annual Report which will be available on the Stormwater NSW website following the AGM and are included as Appendix A to these minutes.

Motion: That the Treasurer's Report be accepted.
Moved: Andrew Thomas
Seconded: Brett C Phillips
Vote: 15 for 0 against 2 abstained

7. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE AND OFFICE BEARERS

The term of a committee member is two years and half of the committee stand for re-election each year while the terms of the second half's is continued until the following year.

Action Arising from Non- attendance at Committee Meetings

All members must attend at least 60% of meetings (Committee and Sub Committee Meetings) to be eligible for the Committee the following year.

There were no members seeking re-election who have fallen under the previous requirement of 60% attendance for the 2023 – 2024 year.

The following serving member has advised that they would not be nominating for the Stormwater NSW Committee for the 2023/2024 year.

1. Craig Bush

Category: Water Authority

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Appointment to the Committee for 2024/2025

A ballot was not required to be carried out as nominations were not in excess of the number of members required to fill all vacant positions on the Committee nor in excess of representatives from any one industry category as agreed in the Association Rules.

The following committee members were not required to renominate:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Nerida Taylor (Sydney Water) | Category: Water Authority |
| 2. Andre Magar (Zeal Consulting) | Category: Engineer |
| 3. Anna Thompson (Sydney Water) | Category: Water Authority |
| 4. Phi Do (McGregor Coxall) | Category: Consultant |
| 5. Erin Sellers (Sydney Coastal Councils) | Category: Catchment Management |
| 6. Louis Nguyen (Woolacotts) | Category: Consultant |
| 7. Jacqueline Woodlock – WMS Engineer | Category: Consultant |
| 8. Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti | Category: Manufacturer |

The following nominations for the 2024 – 2025 Committee were tabled at the meeting:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Dr Brett C Phillips (Stantec) | Category: Practitioner |
| 2. Murray Powell (Optimal Stormwater) | Category: Consultant |
| 3. Dr Andrew Thomas (Cooks River Alliance) | Category: Catchment Management |
| 4. Craig Naughton (Hornsby Shire Council) | Category: Local Government |
| 5. Justine Barrett (CSIRO) | Category: Scientific Organisation |
| 6. Hooman Khakzad (City of Canterbury Bankstown) | Category: Local Government |
| 7. Aditi Verma (Camden Council) | Category: Local Government |
| 8. Reeve Orozco (Infrastructure Products Australia) | Category: Manufacturer/Supplier |
| 9. Leanne Niblock (Sydney Water) | Category: Water Authority |
| 10. David Nixon (Stormwater Sydney) | Category: |
| 11. Yuna Chen (Aurecon) | Category: Consultant |

As the nominations received were not greater than the number of members required to fill the vacant positions, all nominations were accepted.

Each committee member should be reminded that there is an expectation from every committee member that they be actively involved in a Sub Committee, which involves approximately 4 hours per week on average.

Resolution: That the 11 nominations for the 2024/2025 Stormwater NSW Committee be accepted for a period of 2 years.

Move: Murray Powell
Second: Andrew Thomas

Vote: 17 For 0 Abstained – Carried

Nomination of Office Bearers

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Nominations were tabled for the Management Committee positions.

- Andrew Thomas was nominated for the role of President (unopposed)
- Andre Magar, Murray Powell and Nerida Taylor have nominated for the role of Vice President
- Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti was nominated for the role of Treasurer (unopposed)
- Erin Sellers nominated for Secretary (unopposed).

Due to three people nominating for the position of Vice President, Murray Powell withdrew his nomination and Andre Magar and Nerida Taylor were elected to the role of the Vice President. Andrew Thomas thanked Murray Powell for his years of service in the roles of President, Vice President and Secretary.

As the nominations for executive positions did not outnumber the available positions, it was moved that the Management Committee of Stormwater NSW for 2024/2025 be approved as follows:

Dr Andrew Thomas	President
Andre Magar	Vice President
Nerida Taylor	Vice President
Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti	Treasurer
Erin Sellers	Secretary

Moved: Murray Powell
Seconded: Alexi Gilchrist
Vote: 17 For 0 Against – Carried.

8. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

Resolution: That while E H Tan is currently been appointed as the auditors for the Stormwater NSW for 2023/2024 that the Executive review the arrangement for 2024/2025 and determine if a more cost effective solution be sourced.

Moved: Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti
Seconded: Murray Powell

Vote: 14 For 3 Abstained - Carried

9. GENERAL BUSINESS

BP raised the issue that Stormwater NSW should consider disassociating from Stormwater Australia due to the financial drain on the NSW association. AT and AM have indicated that with the new Stormwater Australia Executive Officer and proactive efforts of the Stormwater Australia Board, there are moves underway to improve the representation by Stormwater NSW on the Stormwater Australia board. GEMS noted that Stormwater NSW have not paid levies to Stormwater Australia over the past 12 months.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Annual General Meeting for Stormwater NSW will be held in September 2025.

11. CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no further business, the President, Andrew Thomas closed the meeting at 9.49 am.

These minutes form a true record of the business of Stormwater NSW 2024 Annual General Meeting held on Thursday, 26th September 2024.

Prepared by: Julie McGraw, GEMS Event Management Australia

Date: Thursday, 26th September 2024