

**SOUTH EAST COUNCILS
CWMS
JOINT SERVICES
INVESTIGATION**



Why Joint Services?

- ▶ Initial discussions between Wattle Range & Robe – improve compliance and maintenance of CWEMS Schemes
- ▶ Joint management options explored with the LGA through the CWMS Management Committee
- ▶ Existing CWMS Operations and maintenance programs did not satisfy modern statutory compliance requirements.
- ▶ Tonkin Consulting commissioned to carry out a first phase investigation in 2008.
- ▶ Reported in November 2008 - maintenance shortcomings and offered a number of model options which would enable formalisation of a Joint Services Agreement.

Increased Quantum

- ▶ Recommended options were too complex and potentially too costly for the two Councils to initiate
- ▶ Four other South East Councils in the region expressed an interest in pursuing further investigation into the potential for initiating joint service arrangements
- ▶ The 6 Councils involved are – DC Grant, Kingston DC, Naracoorte Lucindale Council, DC Robe, Tatiara DC & Wattle Range Council.

The CWMS Schemes

- ▶ The combined CWMS statistics for the 6 Councils are –
 - 14 Existing CWMS Schemes with 7,200 live connections
 - 5 schemes currently undergoing renovation through the Statewide Wastewater Recycling Scheme to upgrade the schemes and to improve and/or enable reuse of treated wastewater.
 - Construction of two new CWMS will soon commence bringing the total number of CWMS to 16 and the number of live connections to 7,700
 - The combined expenditure on CWMS maintenance (Not Capital) in 2008-2009 was \$962,427 (direct and contractual expenditure, no allocation of administrative and indirect costs)
 - The estimated cost of providing a sustainable and compliant CWMS service is between \$1.3 to \$1.5 million.

What are the issues?

- ▶ All 6 Councils involved have made steady progress toward ensuring that revenue raised from the provision of CWMS services will ultimately meet sustainability expectations.
- ▶ All 6 of the participant Councils currently account for CWMS costs differently. Adoption of a common costing regime will assist in determining actual cost of service provision and provide meaningful benchmarking data
- ▶ On completion of the Statewide Wastewater Recycling Project most schemes will meet statutory compliance obligations with a few exceptions in the areas of -
 - ▶ · Operations and Management Plans
 - ▶ · Identification of the operational storage capacity of their existing systems and lagoons, (particularly emergency storage),
 - ▶ · Having viable Contingency Plans for emergencies.

What are the issues?

- ▶ Few of the Councils have Infrastructure Asset Management Plans, Capital Expenditure Plans or Operation and Maintenance Plans for their CWMS. Development and adoption of a common approach and standard documentation for these needs has the potential for considerable one off cost savings for each Council compared with “going it alone”.
- ▶ Most of the Councils call and let individual tenders for various aspects of their CWMS operations, i.e. Septic Tank Pump-outs, Line Flushing, Pump Maintenance & Repairs
- ▶ The CWMS data held by the 6 Councils is fragmented, (including within individual Councils), with only 1 Council having digitised their CWMS network and transferred it to a computerised mapping system.

What are the issues?

- ▶ Most of the 6 Councils employ individuals with significant skills in some aspects of CWMS operation. However, because CWMS forms only one component of their daily work the skill sets available to the 6 councils vary significantly.
- ▶ Creation of a regional CWMS Skills Register would offer the potential for opportunities of skills sharing and also to initiate/facilitate joint training programs.

Where to from here?

- ▶ A final report from the investigation phase is scheduled to be submitted to the CEO's of the 6 Councils and the LGA CWMS Management Committee shortly.
- ▶ The objective of a joint service agreement can be –
 - to minimise costs
 - to improve the standard of CWMS operation and maintenance by ongoing efficiency of operation and statutory compliance
 - to meet statutory compliance obligations and to minimise future operational costs
 - the potential benefit of planned Capital Renewal using regional experience built through the regional association. (User Groups and the like), i.e. spending the right amounts in the right place at the right time.

Where to from here?

- ▶ A formal Joint Regional CWMS Joint Services Arrangement, serviced by a regional co-ordinator.
- ▶ Significant benefits from establishing a strong regional CWMS user group with agreed terms of reference and an approved works program designed to ensure that the identified common advantages prioritised and approved by the participating Councils are pursued and adopted.