

## 2020 President's Report

2020 will be widely recognised as a year of turmoil, and Stormwater Australia has not been immune to the challenges of COVID-19.

Our thoughts go out to anyone in our industry if they or their loved ones have been affected by COVID-19. I'm also mindful that the impacts of COVID-19 have affected the commercial environment that many of us work in, with impacts to many people's employment and businesses. I wish anyone affected in this a speedy return to normality.

The most significant impact on Stormwater Australia has been the postponement of the National Stormwater Conference, which is normally held once every two years. This meant the loss of a key opportunity for the industry to gather, share knowledge, network, develop strategies to advance the sector, and to recognise excellence through the National Stormwater Awards. The conference will now be held in 2021, in a hybrid format allowing both virtual and face-to-face. Thanks to Director Ann Shaw-Rungie for Chairing the Conference Committee through these uncharted waters.

I have been impressed by the way our industry has adapted to virtual meetings and webinars, and it's been great to see that the State Associations have been particularly effective in ensuring there is an ongoing stream of professional development opportunities for members.

I've been proud that we've been able to help get stormwater in the spotlight, with feature stories on ABC News, and coverage in Sydney print and radio. I have been privileged to help create new urban typologies for Western Sydney, Australia's largest urban growth area equivalent to a new city the size of Adelaide. This work uses best practice stormwater management to drive urban cooling, urban greening and waterway health outcomes, and demonstrate the benefits of having stormwater professionals leading major urban design projects. I am hopeful that one of the positives to come out of COVID-19 is a greater appreciation for the value of a clean and healthy local environment, with healthier waterways, less litter, and more opportunities for the community to meet and interact (safely).

More than ten years in the making and three years of consultation, SQIDEP was released. I have been encouraged by the broad support of local governments, with many already referencing SQIDEP in plans and policies.

The first SQIDEP assessment was completed, and I congratulate SPEL on receiving certification for the SPELBasin. I would particularly like to thank Chris Bradshaw and Mark Leibmann for their professionalism in undertaking the review, and the Governance Panel for providing oversight of the process.

The Technical Review Panel is now actively considering the next round of technical edits to SQIDEP, a process that will ensure the Protocol continues to reflect the latest knowledge with regard to the testing and performance of stormwater products.

As the impacts of climate change become more apparent, the need to diversify our water supplies is becoming increasingly important, and stormwater harvesting has a key role to play in this regard. A

key initiative of 2020 has been to partner with Water Research Australia to update the Stormwater Harvesting Module of the Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling.

### **Board and Team**

Robert Stribling and Robert Gale joined the Stormwater Australia board, and bring an expansion to the board skillset and geographical coverage (being from Perth and Cairns respectively).

In 2020 we farewelled Directors Megh Thakkar and Peter Coombes, and I thank them for their service to the association.

I'd like to thank Darren Drapper for his diligent service to the association as Secretary and stepping in to help with key aspects of the Treasurer role following Peter Coombes' departure.

We close the year welcoming Sadbh (Sive) Duffy to the role of Administration Officer.

Thanks to everyone for their support in 2020.

Kind regards

Alan Hoban  
National President