

# Institute for Sustainable Water Resources



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Welcome to the ISWR Newsletter

September 2005

## Director's Note

It is a time of great change and challenge for many within the Institute at the moment. This month, I'd like to highlight a few key events.

The 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Urban Drainage, held in Copenhagen, was a great success (see André Taylor). For me, was the view expressed at the conference, that Monash's ISWR was "obviously a leading centre of expertise in integrated urban water management". Many things contributed to this perception, including a workshop on WSUD run by Tony Wong, a keynote presentation by Rebekah Brown, and presentations by other Institute staff. For me, however, the highlight was the way in which ISWR postgraduates present at the conference (Belinda Hatt, Matt Francey, David McCarthy and Dale Browne) performed, not only in their presentations, but in their contributions to discussions, and their networking with colleagues. I came away inspired by this, and wish to congratulate them.

On staffing matters, Tony Ladson has commenced a six-month scholarship, with the noble aim of writing a textbook on hydrology. Good luck with that challenge, Tony! A new Water Lecturer will soon be appointed to the Department of Civil Engineering, and will hopefully become a significant contributor to the Institute.

In recent times also, there has been much discussion of the new proposed Research Quality Framework (RQF), and its implications for Monash. Personally, my reading of it is that the RQF will provide a more flexible means of recognizing research quality and impact. I believe that it will allow good quality research to be recognized, including research which leads to high quality publications, and also research which leads to significant public or industry outcomes. Details of the RQF are available at: [http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research\\_sector/policies\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/research\\_quality\\_framework/rqf\\_preferred\\_model.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/rqf_preferred_model.htm).

I would encourage you to read it, and to become involved in discussions about its implications for your future research activities (both competitive and industry).

Tim Fletcher  
*Director*

## From Gavin Mudd:

*Water Week at Mannix College* - As part of student activities at Mannix College (on Wellington Road), I was recently invited to give a talk on Water Issues during Water Week. I broadly covered the main features of the new approach to urban water issues, ie. WSUD, as well as touching on the general debate around water going on at present. I also discussed the value of groundwater, some mining-v-water issues, and hopefully gave people a fair view of the old indigenous saying "Water Is Life".

*eWater CRC workshop* - proving a great success so far, with many ISWR'ers in attendance (physically and in spirit).

## eWater update from Grace Mitchell:

In the last few months there has been some significant milestones in the life of eWater, not less of which is the final signing of the documentation which formally creates the eWater CRC. The last minute name change of one of the partners (NSW DPNIR) caused Charlie Robinson to have to rush to adjust some of the documents but by Wednesday last week everything was signed by all.

Other events include the Research Planning Workshop, held in the Gold Coast last week. For many this was the first time they got to hear about all the details of the planned eWater product areas and research programs. So, I am sure a few suffered a bit of information overload.

The workshop brought home the size of eWater, with some 200 researchers and eWater leadership team at the workshop. It's going to be big!

Over the next weeks and months the details of the research projects are going to be fleshed out and the realities of resources will start forcing a harder consideration of priorities. So, we should progressively know a lot more about our actual research tasks and what eWater will mean for us day to day. Below is the timetable for planning and project sign off between now and November this year.

If you have any questions about eWater or ideas that you think should be thrown into the mix, just give me a yell.

### The next steps for all Project planning

- 16-29 Sep Executive review & authorisation to proceed; appointment of Project leaders; confirm Phase I products with participants
- 30 Sep Feedback/realignment to interim Project teams
- 3 Oct Project teams commence development of full plans
- Ongoing Integration team visits, R&D and Product project team meetings, Discussions with Participants
- 1 Nov Submission of final draft Project plans
- 8-10 November Integration blueprint workshop final project alignment & resource allocations
- 18 November Final Projects authorised by executive for approval by board

eWater CRC  
enterprise environment education

## Institute Members Flock to Copenhagen by André Taylor

During the last week of August, swarms of Institute staff and students invaded Copenhagen (Denmark) in a manner that reminded locals of the good old days when Vikings dominated much of Europe. Certainly there was as much enthusiasm.

The reason for this pilgrimage was the 10th International Conference on Urban Drainage. The conference was highly relevant to virtually all of the Institute's activities and consequently papers were delivered by Tim Fletcher, Ana Deletic, Grace Mitchell, Tony Wong, Belinda Hatt, Matt Francey, David McCarthy and André Taylor. Nilmini Siriwardene was also a lead author of a paper, but did not present. Rebekah Brown also presented two papers on urban water governance, including one at a keynote session.

Australia featured strongly in the conference's presentation and discussion sessions, with approximately 20 Australians being amongst the 400 conference delegates. As the conference unfolded, I'm sure delegates would have got the impression that the pockets of Australia that are starting to implement more sustainable forms of urban water management are doing at least as well as equivalent centres of activity in North America, Europe and the United Kingdom. This was encouraging on one level, but we clearly have much more work to do before water sensitive urban design becomes 'the norm' in Australia.

There was clearly great interest in the technical and governance-related research activities that are occurring in Australia and strong links were built between Institute delegates and leading researchers in Europe, the UK and North America.

Some general points that I took away from the conference included:

- How fortunate Australia is to have very few combined stormwater and sewer systems and *relatively* large areas to manage stormwater at the lot, streetscape or estate scale.
- How much activity (and funding) there currently is, particularly in Europe, in developing decision support systems to help people make better decisions about urban water management options. It was a challenge just keeping up with all the acronyms of these systems and projects (e.g. DayWater, WaND, IBOS Regenwater, SWARD, etc.).
- The growing and high level of interest in identifying and overcoming institutional impediments to improved urban water management (as well as technical impediments).
- That all of the institute's work that was presented appeared to my 'generalist's eye' to be at the cutting edge of current research.

Away from the conference, Copenhagen was found to be a delightful, 800 year old city. The city is lined with cobblestone streets, narrow alleyways and some canals. Busy town squares, popular shopping precincts and copper-clad domes were features of the city. The traffic within the central business district was dominated by bicycles rather than cars, which was a refreshing experience (and one we may have to get used to if petrol prices continue to climb in Australia!). The commitment to cycling may be one of the reasons why the local Danish people appeared so happy and healthy (Dear Director/Editor: is it politically correct to say "gorgeous"? Director's response: no it is not, but they were "gorgeous", as an informal survey of all ISWR staff – male and female - revealed).

The field tours were memorable too. Those that caught a bus to Malmö in Sweden saw an impressive research and educational centre where 1 ha of vegetated roofs exist (see photo). The remaining elements of the "Eco-City Augustenborg" were less impressive, as the water-related infrastructure at the housing estate included rather more concrete than expected.

For those that didn't make the conference, I encourage you to scan the papers on the conference CD. I've recently printed out about 12 to read in full – a crude indicator that tells me that on the 'Taylor scale of conference relevance' it rated a 9/10 for me.



**The Augustenborg botanical roof garden research centre in Malmö (Sweden) - a short drive from Copenhagen (nb. I think we should be careful not to use the term “green roofs” from now on!)**



**Nyhavn – an attractive restaurant district in Copenhagen that has changed little since the 12<sup>th</sup> century**

### **Travelling with David McCarthy**

From December 2004 to February 2005 I was fortunate enough to obtain a studentship from the CRC for Catchment Hydrology to work on a stormwater reuse project with Grace Mitchell. The work completed during this period was made into a conference paper that was accepted for presentation at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Urban Drainage in Copenhagen, Denmark. The conference was very interesting and it was a great place to meet all those researchers I had been reading about over the previous four months. I figured whilst over that side of the world I might as well travel around a little bit! After the conference I decided to travel to Amsterdam. All I can say is that I didn't get a chance to go to a “coffee shop” as I travelled with a friend's mother. Madrid was the next city on my list and was by far my favourite. I'll set a scene – wake up around 11am, have some breakfast, do some sight seeing, have a siesta at about 2-3pm, go to a café for lunch, do some more sight seeing, eat dinner at about 11pm and party till 4am (no mother this time!) Next on my list was my cousin's wedding in Ottawa, the capital of Canada. Finally, my father's birthplace, Newfoundland was my last destination. Newfoundland is an island located on the eastern coast of Canada and it houses Cabot Tower which, in 1901, Marconi received the first transatlantic wireless message sent from Cornwall, England.



## **STI - FAWB update from Ana**

FAWB is now up and running! We had the first meeting of the Stakeholders Advisory Panel mid September and 2 reps from this body have been elected into the Board of Management. The Project Leaders have produced the drafts of the project plans (after long consultations with the researchers). The first Board meeting was held on 16th September. The budget for Year 1 was approved as well as the project plans discussed. The key personnel were appointed as follows:

1. Chair of the Board - Russell Mein
2. CEO - Tony Wong
3. Business Manager - John Molloy
4. Research Manager - Ana Deletic
5. Project 1 (Technology) Leader - Tim Fletcher
6. Project 2 (Risks and Policies) Leader - Rebekah Brown
7. Project 3 (Design Tools) Leader - Ana Deletic
8. Project 4 (Demonstration and Testing) Leader - Tony Wong

On 23rd of September we were visited by DIIRD officials. They seemed happy with the action in the Hydraulic Lab. And a lot is happening there! The prototype of the testing columns is ready and is being tested at present. 150 columns have been built and hopefully we'll get them out soon.

We should also have our office soon. The ex CRC Office is to become officially FAWB main quarters. So Tony and Russell will share the old CRC Director's office, while Maryann will move to the front office. This is all happening in October.

I hope that all researchers will start enjoying what is to come next - that is doing research!