



AUSTRALIAN & NEW ZEALAND BIOSOLIDS PARTNERSHIP

A proposal for Subscribers



**Australian Water Association Limited
June 2010**

Proposal

This proposal is for funding support to help sustain the Australian and New Zealand Biosolids Partnership (ANZBP).

The ANZBP is designed to place the beneficial use of biosolids on a sustainable footing across Australia and New Zealand. In 2007, initial funding for the initiative was sought from major stakeholders from the water utility and regulatory sectors. Thirty-three organisations across the region originally made the commitment to support the ANZBP for three years. Membership has steadily grown and now numbers forty-five organizations.

This proposal seeks to present to those utilities, regulators, contractors, research houses and other groups not yet part of the partnership, the opportunity to join the ANZBP. It is hoped to bring together a diverse and changing industry to tackle projects and issues that would be difficult for any one organisation to address.

Summary

The ANZBP resides with the Australian Water Association (AWA) which has taken responsibility for implementing the partnership, and its agreed business plan.

The objectives of the ANZBP are to:

- Support public engagement with respect to the sustainable management of biosolids in both Australia and New Zealand
- Support the Australian and New Zealand water industry on technical components of biosolids management
- Establish a global network of parties interested in the sustainable management of biosolids.

These objectives will be achieved by:

- Interaction with national organisations to promote awareness of biosolids management
- Engagement with stakeholders to help them make informed decisions regarding biosolids management
- Development of community engagement tools for subscribers
- Connection with international organisations similar to the ANZBP to establish a global network of those interested in the sustainable management of biosolids
- Formation of relationships with technical experts from across Australia and New Zealand
- Provision of contacts for technical advice on biosolids related concerns/issues.
- Linkages with companies working in all areas of biosolids production and management
- Maintenance of the ANZBP Website – both the subscriber and public sites
- Provision of legal support and tools for subscribers
- Advocate for the regulatory consistency throughout the region
- Liaison with relevant Cooperative Research Centres, Crown Research Institutes and like research organisations

Why should my organisation support the ANZBP?

- Opportunity to play a key role in the future of biosolids management in Australia and New Zealand
- Demonstrate your organisation's commitment to operating in a sustainable manner and willingness to interact with the community you serve
- Help direct key research projects overseen by the partnership, including an Australian and New Zealand-wide review of regulation governing the management of biosolids and a Community Attitudinal Survey
- Membership gives you access to the ANZBP website which is great source of tools and resources on many aspects of biosolids management
- Opportunity for your biosolids staff to build and engage with a technical support network and enhance their own knowledge

How is the ANZBP funded and what does it cost?

In order to provide resources to engage a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties across Australia and New Zealand, provide technical support to members and to continually update and maintain the ANZBP website requires over \$200,000 per year. By spreading the costs across the Australian and New Zealand water industry the contribution from individual organisations is quite small.

The amount being sought as an annual subscription, to be paid for the period of three years, is based upon the number of employees in the enterprise. Organisations with business units that do not work in the water industry can exclude these when determining organisational size.

Small organisations (<10 staff)	\$ 2,000 per year for three years
Medium organisations (10-100 staff)	\$ 5,000 per year for three years
Large organisations (100+ staff)	\$10,000 per year for three years

Please act on this request for membership and the associated financial support by responding favourably as soon as possible.

Which organisations have already joined the ANZBP?

The ANZBP is supported by the following organisations:



Context

There are enormous social pressures on beneficial uses of biosolids in Australia, New Zealand and internationally. Australia and New Zealand currently produce approximately 360,000 dry tonnes of biosolids annually. Approximately 35% is applied to agricultural land and 30% is disposed of in landfill. The remaining 35% is used in composting, forestry, land rehabilitation or incineration. Currently, the average cost for biosolids management is in the order of \$300/dry tonne, which equates to about \$100m per year. Victoria alone has a stockpile of some 1.7 million dry tonnes of biosolids, which suggests that about \$500m is needed to address management of that stockpile alone.

Those beneficial uses which are currently well accepted must be maintained, and investigation undertaken into novel technologies and other alternatives.

The cost of managing biosolids in Australia and New Zealand will increase dramatically if fit-for-purpose uses (e.g. application to agricultural land or composting) are derailed by misinformation. Being forced to provide the highest quality biosolids to meet ill-informed public perceptions has the potential to double the cost of managing biosolids. If this situation became the norm in Australia and New Zealand then the annual operating costs for biosolids management could increase by \$100M. This, unfortunately, is the trend in the USA and Europe.

Background

A Biosolids Steering Committee working with funding from the Water Services Association of Australia and VicWater, proposed that the Australian and New Zealand water industries establish the *Australian and New Zealand Biosolids Partnership* (ANZBP) for effective public engagement of all stakeholders in the production, management and use of biosolids in Australia and New Zealand.

As the ANZBP's primary purpose is to support the water industry in informing both the industry and the wider community on appropriate biosolids management, The Biosolids Steering Committee recommended that ultimate ownership should reside with the water industry. It follows that it is the responsibility of the Australian and New Zealand water industry to provide the majority of the financial support to enable the ANZBP to undertake the components required to achieve its purpose.

In 2007, the Australian Water Association (AWA) took up that proposal and secured funding support from 33 industry organisations to make the ANZBP a reality.

The benefits to the water industry are enormous. More informed regulators; improved perception of biosolids by all stakeholders, efficient use of industry resources (across New Zealand & Australia); more effective community engagement strategies, a comprehensive biosolids knowledge base; and a network of biosolids experts.

The key communication and information sharing component of the ANZBP is the website www.biosolids.com.au, launched in April 2008. The website is structured with a section open to the general public and a section that is password-protected and is available only to Subscribers. The information on the website was developed by an industry steering committee and is extremely comprehensive and building. The website is regularly updated with material including technical data, latest research, case studies and other reference material from Australia, New Zealand and internationally. The website ensures the community and all stakeholders have easy access to factually correct information and help the water industry to provide informed input into biosolids management projects in affected communities. It will also identify key spokespersons, outline a community engagement framework and provide a toolbox for community engagement.

Ultimately, the ANZBP will protect water authorities and the general community from poor decisions by poorly informed biosolids managers. Such decisions can result in bad biosolids practice and bad public perception of biosolids management, ending with a detrimental impact on the biosolids management industry in Australia and New Zealand.

ANZBP Governance and Management

As the ANZBP's primary purpose is to support the water industry in informing both the industry and the wider community on appropriate biosolids management, the ultimate ownership resides with the water industry which provides the majority of the financial support to enable the ANZBP to undertake the many components of the program outlined above.

It is important to demonstrate regulator and government support at both federal and state levels and maintain close liaison with relevant research and academic institutions whose research outcomes will be critical in establishing the technical credibility of biosolids management approaches. The AWA has a Biosolids Specialist Network with several hundred members and holds a biennial Biosolids Specialty Conference. In addition, AWA's Water Education Network provides an important and complementary function for industry and the wider community.

The ANZBP is guided by an Advisory Board, which includes representatives from key participants including AWA, utilities, regulators, research organisations and others. It comprises:

- Kevin Conna – Manager, Operation Services, Sydney Water Corporation
- Paul Darvodelsky – PSD Ltd
- Brendan Hanigan – Southern Water (Tasmania)
- Karen Campisano – Team Leader, Strategy Development, Melbourne Water
- Stephen Lansdell – Project Officer, Water Industry Team, Water & Catchment Unit, EPA VIC
- Michael Makestas – Principal Wastewater Process Engineer, SA Water
- Mike McLaughlin – Chief Research Scientist, CSIRO Land and Water;
- Michael Naughton – Coordinator, Recycled Water and Biosolids, Barwon Water (Victoria)
- Nancy Penney – Biosolids Strategist, Water Corporation (Chair)
- Tom Mollenkopf – Chief Executive, Australian Water Association (ex officio member)

Nancy Penney is the Advisory Board's Chair. The ANZBP Project Manager is Gregory Priest, AWA Project Manager - Sustainability.

Business and Funding Structure

The funding model is a subscription structure. The water industry provides the greater portion of the operational funding, with contributions from regulators, research institutions, private companies involved in biosolids management and other firms. Regulator support is also important and some state government departments have already committed support for the Partnership. It is recognised that research institutions are net seekers of funds rather than providers, but nominal financial support is desirable to demonstrate commitment to the ANZBP.

By spreading the costs across the Australian and New Zealand water industry the contribution from individual organisations is quite small, between \$2,000 - \$10,000/year for three years depending upon the size of the enterprise. The sum of money being asked from each organisation is small in comparison to the overall cost of effective biosolids management. Further, it is a minimal outlay considering the potential financial and environmental cost of biosolids management if this issue is not promptly and effectively addressed.

The current subscribers of the ANZBP are:

[Australian Water Association](#)

[Hunter Water](#)

[Advanced Water Management Centre](#)

[Ipswich Water, QLD](#)

[Arkwood Organic Recycling](#)

[Lower Murray Water, VIC](#)

[Barwon Water, VIC](#)

[Melbourne Water, VIC](#)

[Cairns Regional Council](#)

[New Plymouth District Council, NZ](#)

[Central Highlands Water, VIC](#)

[North East Water, VIC](#)

[Coliban Water, VIC](#)

[Pollution Solutions & Designs](#)

[CSIRO](#)

[Power and Water, NT](#)

[Curtin University](#)

[RMIT - Biotechnology & Environmental Biology](#)

[Department of Environment and Conservation, WA](#)

[SA Water](#)

[Department of Health, VIC](#)

[South East Water, VIC](#)

[Department of Sustainability and Environment, VIC](#)

[South Gippsland Water, VIC](#)

[Devonport City Council, TAS](#)

[Southern Water \(Tas\)](#)

[DLA Philips Fox](#)

[Sunshine Coast Water](#)

[East Gippsland Water, VIC](#)

[Sustainability Victoria](#)

[Environment Protection Authority, Vic](#)

[Sydney Water, NSW](#)

[Environment Protection Authority, Tasmania](#)

[Tauranga City Council, NZ](#)

[Gippsland Water](#)

[VicWater](#)

[Gladstone Regional Council](#)

[Wannon Water, VIC](#)

[Gosford City Council, NSW](#)

[Water Corporation of WA](#)

[Goulburn Valley Water, VIC](#)

[Watercare, NZ](#)

[Grow Green Agri, VIC](#)

[Western Water, VIC](#)

[GWM Water, VIC](#)

[Westernport Water, VIC](#)

[Yarra Valley Water, VIC](#)

Further Information

If you have any queries regarding this proposal, please contact Gregory Priest at the Australian Water Association on 02 9467 8432 or gpriest@awa.asn.au.