



AUSTRALIAN  
WATER  
ASSOCIATION



WICD Subscribers Priorities Survey 2006 Report

# WICD Subscriber Priorities December 2006

Prepared by the Australian Water Association

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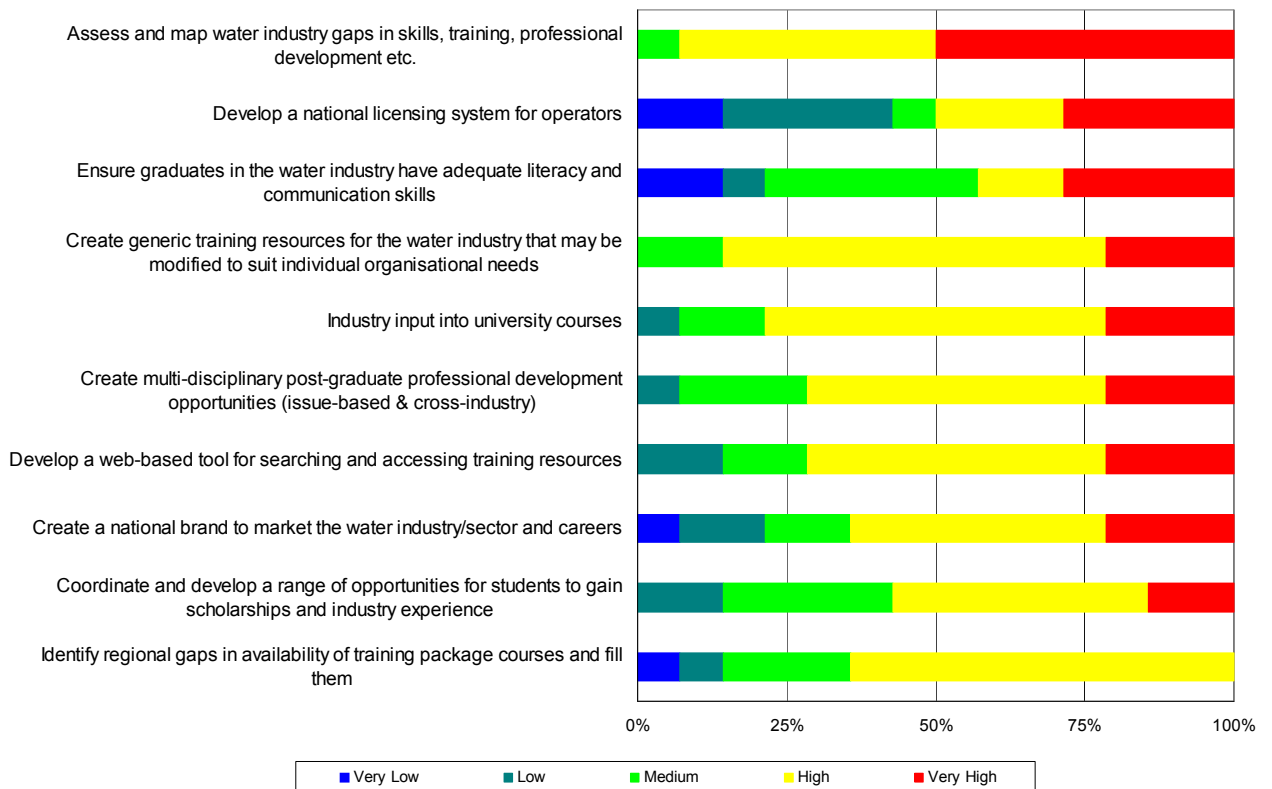
## Introduction

In December 2006, 22 organisations subscribing to the Water Industry Capacity Development (WICD) initiative were invited to participate in an online survey. The survey was designed to assess subscribers current priorities, particularly with respect to the tasks identified earlier in mid -2004 by a group of industry representatives for water industry training and professional development. The ultimate purpose of the survey is to gain feedback as to where WICD subscribers funds should be invested. The WICD Steering Committee will be reviewing the feedback from the survey during the February meeting and discussing investment for 2007.

## Survey Results

Of the 22 organisations that were invited to contribute to the survey, a total of 14 subscribers participated in the survey. The highest priority task identified by 50% of the respondents, was to assess and map industry gaps in skills, training and professional development (Figure 1).

**WICD Subscribers Survey of Priorities 2006**



**Figure 1.** Comparison of responses to Question 1 of the survey where subscribers were asked to prioritise the tasks identified in 2004 by a group of industry representatives for water industry, training and professional development (n = 14).



This was followed by developing a national licensing system for operators and ensuring that graduates in the water industry have adequate literacy and communication skills, both tasks were given a “very high” priority by 21% of the respondents.

However, **when categories “high” and “very high” priority are combined**, there are some changes in the order of priority. Mapping gaps in skills is still ranked as the most important task by 93% of respondents, whereas developing a national licensing system for operators and ensuring that graduates have adequate literacy and communication skills are both now ranked with the lowest priority of the 10 tasks, replaced by creating generic training resources for the water industry (85% of respondents) and industry input into university courses (78% of respondents).

The three tasks ranked with the lowest overall priority were: creating a national brand to market the water industry; coordinating and developing a range of opportunities for student scholarships / experience; and lastly, identifying regional gaps in availability of training courses.

Subscribers were also asked if they would like to make any additional comments regarding the priorities for each of the ten tasks (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Additional comments from Question 1.

TASK	COMMENT
Assess and map water industry gaps in skills, training, professional development etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Top priority I would think.</i></li> </ul>
Develop a national licensing system for operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Care needs to be taken when considering 'grandfathering' clauses. I believe this to be inevitable, and for the industry to take hold of, before COAG does.</i></li> <li>• <i>Wait until the industry matures further in provision of training materials and courses</i></li> </ul>
Ensure graduates in the water industry have adequate literacy and communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Amongst other priorities, this is a definite also-ran!</i></li> <li>• <i>surely this is inherent in any qualification</i></li> </ul>
Create generic training resources for the water industry that may be modified to suit individual organisational needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>High priority to develop national learning resources to address the operations training package.</i></li> <li>• <i>As long as the product is easily modified. SunWater has developed a lot of material in e-learning format for the bulk water service delivery modules of the WI training package, and is willing to discuss licensing arrangements.</i></li> </ul>
Industry input into university courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>High priority to address this in a nationally coordinated way</i></li> </ul>
Develop a web-based tool for searching and accessing training resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Links with current organisational approach</i></li> </ul>

Table 1. Continued...

TASK	COMMENT
Create multi-disciplinary post-graduate professional development opportunities (issue-based & cross-industry)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs to focus on core water industry specific technical expertise</li> </ul>
Create a national brand to market the water industry/sector and careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified at HR Network forum - need to progress.</li> <li>Yes, across disciplines e.g.: water service delivery, trades, technical, engineering</li> </ul>
Coordinate and develop a range of opportunities for students to gain scholarships and industry experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely to be enterprise-driven, rather than at the industry level.</li> <li>Include school based trainee and apprenticeships and graduate programs.</li> </ul>
Identify regional gaps in availability of training package courses and fill them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WA will always suffer from critical mass constraints in the Regions.</li> <li>This needs to be industry led. e.g.: there was no provider in Queensland delivering bulk water competency units of the WI Training Package until SunWater developed a partnership (after open tender) with Wide Bay TAFE.</li> </ul>

## Other Priorities

Five subscribers responded to Question 2 contributing suggestions for other priorities regarding training and professional development that they felt were important and should be added to the list of priorities in Question 1.

- Establishing and making available links and references with international best practice and programs in water industry education and training would be useful.*
- Career pathways mapping needs to be accelerate to close-out.*
- Identify high priority professional development topics that require development. Explore opportunities for co-investment by enterprises with common need.*
- Attraction of school students to water industry.*
- More involvement of water industry working together - opportunities to network and interact*
- Dam Technology – 4

Nine subscribers provided contract details (i.e. Question 3).



Two subscribers responded to Question 4 offering comments relevant to WICD:

- *The skills supermarket should be promoted and used by universities to enable the scope of water industry relevant education to be on display*
- *Australian National Committee on Large Dams (ANCOLD) is interested in (2).*

## APPENDIX

### WICD SUBSCRIBERS PRIORITIES SURVEY 2006 QUESTIONS

#### **Question 1**

The following priorities were identified in mid-2004 by a small, broad group of industry representatives for water industry training and professional development. Please rank each item, according to level of priority, on a scale of 1-5 (very low to very high). You may provide additional comments if you wish.

#### **Question 2**

Please list other priorities for training and professional development that you feel are important and should be added to the list of priorities in Question 1. Please also indicate the level of priority for each on a scale 1-5 (Very Low - Very High).

#### **Question 3**

Please complete your details here so that we may contact you to discuss your ideas and suggestions if required. Note: this is not compulsory.

#### **Question 4**

Please add any other comments or suggestions relevant to WICD here.

