



# **AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES**



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

### Covering Statement

These Guidelines are intended to provide advice and information in relation to obtaining and providing aid to water and wastewater authorities within Australia. It's important to note that this is not a legal document, and while every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information provided in these Guidelines, it should not be relied upon as a substitute for legal or other professional advice.

### Endorsement

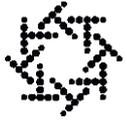
The Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) and the Water Services Infrastructure Assurance Advisory Group (WSIAAG) have approved these Guidelines and are responsible for its revision and reissue.

Dr Kerry Schott

Chair, Water Services Association of Australia Board

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# AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

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# AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

## Foreword

Australian water utilities face numerous risks in the operation of their business. These risks include product contamination, supply chain disruption and the impact of disasters both natural and manmade. Historical case studies show that in product contamination events it can take many months before water supplies can be declared safe. For example, in Walkerton (population 5,000) it took nine months to declare water supplies safe to drink with mutual aid coming from across Canada to sustain the emergency operation. During these types of events, water utilities may have difficulty sustaining around the clock operations relying solely on their own resources. This is particularly true for utilities relying on small numbers of personnel with very specialised skill sets.

Mutual aid not only facilitates the deployment of skills and equipment, it is a means for sharing experience and knowledge. Water utilities that have faced certain events have the experience and lessons that are invaluable to other utilities facing similar circumstances. In 2003, British Columbia sought help from Australian water utilities in managing burnt out water catchment areas because of our prior experience in dealing with bushfire events.

For this reason the Australian water sector has developed these guidelines to facilitate mutual aid within the industry.

## Purpose

The water sector is responsible for providing water and wastewater services to the community. Water is essential for the health and life of people, for manufacturing essential products and in providing essential services. These Guidelines have been developed to ensure that during times of disaster/emergency, water utilities are able to restore and sustain services more effectively by drawing on available resources from other unaffected areas in Australia. By having these Guidelines in place prior to a disaster/emergency, the process of requesting, coordinating and deploying resources is streamlined, saving time in planning and administration and in locating specialist personnel and equipment.

These Guidelines facilitate rapid, short-term deployment of disaster/emergency support to restore critical water/wastewater operations. Ultimately, these Guidelines will enhance the resilience of the Australian Water Sector and the communities that they serve.



# AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

## Definitions

**Assisting Authority:** The water authority which provides resources to a requesting water authority to help manage a disaster/emergency.

**Disaster/Emergency:** An event, including natural, technological or man-made, which adversely effects ability to provide water and wastewater services to the community, and requires significant resources to restore and sustain.

**Mutual Aid Coordination Cell:** A unit that may be established to collect and coordinate requests and offers of assistance.

**Participating Authorities:** Any water authority, which makes arrangements with another authority regarding assistance using these Guidelines.

**Period of Assistance:** The time assistance is provided to a water authority under the arrangements in these Guidelines.

**Requesting Authority:** The water authority which requests resources from another water authority to help manage a disaster/emergency. In the case of a large, widespread disaster/emergency, there may be a number of Requesting Authorities.

**Water Authority:** Water and wastewater infrastructure owners and operators.

## Scope

These Guidelines are not rigid and may be adapted to suit the particular needs of the requesting or assisting water authority. These Guidelines are to be used in conjunction with existing state/territory emergency management arrangements.

Assistance from other water authorities should not replace resources that are available from the local community.



# AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

## Eligibility for Assistance

To be eligible for assistance, the Requesting Water Authority must be situated within, have services situated within, or be providing services to the disaster/emergency area. The Requesting Authority must be utilising all of its own available resources and have depleted other resources available within the community. The request must come from an Authorised Officer employed by, or empowered by, the Requesting Water Authority.

Assistance can be sought for any disaster/emergency, be it natural, technological or man made, which affects or threatens to affect the health and wellbeing of people, animals and the environment as well as impacting on vital services, manufacturing and the economy.

## Making a Request

Requests for assistance must come from an officer authorised by the CEO/MD. All requests for assistance must be signed off and records kept in accordance with the Requesting Authority's record management practices. An example of a request form can be found in Appendix A, however Requesting Authorities are not limited to using this form and the request can be tailored to suit your particular business needs.

As a minimum, requests for assistance should include:

- The current situation
- The tasks to be undertaken
- Operational risks
- Equipment required
- Skills or knowledge of personnel needed
- Period of assistance is needed for
- Where the equipment or personnel needs to go
- When the equipment or personnel needs to be there
- Who the equipment or personnel needs to report to.



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

### **Liability**

These guidelines are premised on the spirit of co-operation. In this spirit, Assisting Water Authorities, their employees and agents should not be held liable for any loss or damage arising from their assistance provided to any requesting water authority.

### **Costs**

Any expenses incurred from delivery of goods or transport, meals and accommodation of assisting personnel should be met in the first instance by the Assisting Water Authority.

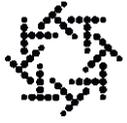
The Assisting Authority should ensure the Requesting Authority is aware of any charges or costs they will seek to recover prior to deploying the equipment or personnel. It is therefore very important for the Assisting Authority to keep comprehensive records.

The Requesting Authority should meet the operating and/or repair and servicing costs of equipment on loan.

It is expected that the issue of responsibility for covering certain costs be discussed prior to releasing equipment and personnel.

### **Laws and Standards**

Personnel assisting in another State/Territory must abide by the laws, safety standards and all other regulations administered by that state/territory.



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

### Health and Safety

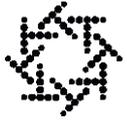
The Requesting Water Authority is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all personnel deployed to assist in an operation. Any known health or safety risks should be declared in a request for assistance.

The Requesting Water Authority is responsible for ensuring that all personnel:

- Have been inducted into the work site
- Are aware of any operational requirements eg. Access, reporting, hazards etc of the agency in control of the emergency/disaster
- Are provided safe work method statements for the activities personnel are engaged in, including specific job safety analysis and additional controls in place where required
- Have PPE that meets the safety standards of the state and their organisation, and where inadequate, provide the correct PPE
- Are given adequate breaks and the access to welfare services
- Are briefed on OH&S standards, equipment and procedures including emergency response procedures of their state and organisation.

The Assisting Water Authority is responsible for ensuring that all personnel:

- Are aware of declared risks
- Are medically and physically capable of doing the requested work
- Have adequate skills base to safely and successfully undertake the work
- Ensure that personnel take with them the correct PPE or, ensure that the correct PPE, meeting the safety standards of the requesting state, is provided to them upon arrival
- Willingly offer to take part in the mutual aid deployment.



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

### Responsibilities

The Requesting Water Authority has the following responsibilities:

- Arrangement of transfers and accommodation
- Provision of additional task related PPE, communications, plans and maps where necessary
- Meeting and briefing assisting personnel on situation, objectives, marshalling areas, safety and risks, and command and communication protocols
- Provision of a single point of contact for assisting authorities to resolve logistic and welfare issues
- Ensure assisting personnel remain under the command of the Requesting Water Authority
- Inducting assisting personnel into the work site and ensure they are inducted and/or briefed if the work site is being controlled by another agency
- Ensuring that assisting personnel are treated with the same rights and privileges as the Requesting Water Authorities own staff
- Ensure that assisting personnel are fully utilised according to their qualifications, licences and skills and that all proposals for re-tasking beyond the initial scope are reconfirmed with the Assisting Water Authority
- Make certain all efforts are made to care for any property on loan from the Assisting Water Authority
- Ensure that equipment is maintained and returned in a similar or better condition than when it was received
- Release assisting authority personnel and resources at the earliest opportunity
- Liaising with their state/territory emergency management committee.



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

### **Responsibilities cont.**

The Assisting Water Authority has the following responsibilities:

- Arranging airfares/transport to and from the Requesting Water Authorities area
- Providing adequate funding for meals and incidental expenses
- Ensuring personnel deployed have the qualifications, skills, licences and physical ability to carry out the required work
- Providing mobile phone, laptop and standard personal PPE as required for the stipulated tasks
- In the instance of multiple personnel being deployed to a Requesting Authority, consideration should be given to including a team leader and/or logistics officer
- Ensuring that any equipment that is loaned is validated as being in good condition and includes safety documentation and manuals as appropriate
- Liaising with their state/territory emergency management committee.



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

### Mutual Aid Coordination Cell

If required, a Mutual Aid Coordination Cell may be established in support of a Requesting Authority. The purpose of the Mutual Aid Coordination Cell is to support the Requesting Water Authority in managing mutual aid.

The Requesting Water Authority may establish and operate the Mutual Aid Coordination Cell from within their organisation (if operating under the AIIMS structure, the cell may be located under logistics function). Alternatively the Requesting Water Authority can ask the Water Sector IAAG Executive to establish and operate the Mutual Aid Coordination Cell on their behalf at a separate location.

The responsibilities of the Mutual Aid Coordination Cell are to:

- Obtain and redistribute situation reports and intelligence as appropriate
- Collect, collate and disseminate requests for assistance
- Collect, collate and distribute offers of assistance
- Supply a liaison officer to the Requesting Authority if required.

### Relevant References

#### **Trusted Information Sharing Network**

For information on the way the Australian Government and the Australian business community are working together to protect our critical infrastructure and information on members of the Water Services Infrastructure Assurance Advisory Group

<http://www.tisn.gov.au/www/tisn/tisn.nsf/Page/Home>



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

### Request For Assistance Form

To:		Date:	
From:			
Contact details:	Ph:	Mob:	
	Fax:		
	Email:		
	Location:		
Current situation:			
Damage:			
Operational risks and hazards:			



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

<b>Request For Assistance Form cont.</b>	
Weather:  (current and forecast)	
Forecast situation:	
Operational objective:	
Support required  (include personnel and equipment requests):	
Quantity:	
Duration:	
Preferred time of arrival:	



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

<b>Request For Assistance Form cont.</b>			
Reporting to:			
Alternate contact:			
Work to be executed:			
Working conditions:			
PPE provided:			
Additional PPE required:			
Transport arrangements:			
Comments:			
Approved by:		Date:	Time:



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

<b>Offer of Assistance Form</b>		
To:		Date:
From:		
Contact details:	Ph:	Mob:
	Fax:	
	Email:	
	Location:	
<b>Equipment</b>		
Description of equipment:		
Quantity:		
Specialist operators supplied:		
Documentation provided:		



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

### Offer of Assistance Form cont.

#### Personnel

Description of  
Personnel:

Experience:

Medical  
conditions:

Emergency  
contacts/next of  
kin:

Support/team,  
leader contact  
details:

Comments:

Approved by:

Date:

Time:



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

### Staff Deployment Checklist

This checklist can be used as an aid for staff being deployed to assist another Water Authority. Not all items on the list are applicable in all situations.

<b>Clothing:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Weather and task appropriate pants, shirts, jackets etc	
Hat	
Sunglasses	
Rain jackets	
Boots or other appropriate footwear	
Reflective vest	
Overalls	
Hard hat	
Safety glasses	
Hearing protection	
Gloves	
<b>Toiletries:</b>	
Personal hygiene eg, toothbrush	
Towel	
Medications	
Sunscreen	



## AUSTRALIAN WATER SECTOR MUTUAL AID GUIDELINES

### Staff Deployment Checklist cont.

<b>Other items to consider:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Identification and name badge	
Torch	
Umbrella	
Sleeping bag/linen/pillow	
First aid kit	
Mobile phone	
Cash	
Contact lists	
Notepad and pen	
Are your vaccinations up to date eg. Tetanus	
<b>When you get there:</b>	
Let your manager know you have arrived safely	
Report to/register at the assembly/meeting point	
Obtain a briefing	
<b>Notes:</b>	