



Water Resources Alliance

Melbourne

The Water Resources Alliance (WRA) is delivering a program of works for Melbourne Water, aimed at improving and expanding the water storage system and water distribution network, and enhancing existing wastewater treatment processes.

Along with Melbourne Water, WRA comprises Baulderstone, Beca, MWH Australia, Sinclair Knight Merz and United Group Infrastructure. Over five years until 2013, WRA will deliver more than \$650 million dollars worth of infrastructure, comprising more than 90 projects. WRA has around 150 staff and 50 subcontractors working across its headquarters, two treatments plants and a number of smaller sites throughout Melbourne.

Recycling & Green Initiatives

Vision

One of WRA's goals is to exceed current standards relating to sustainability and environmental impacts on construction sites and to be acknowledged by industry for doing so. WRA takes a 5 star sustainability approach to infrastructure to achieve outstanding whole-of-life outcomes.

Planning

WRA's Environment Management System (EMS) covers the management of environmental risks and incorporates sustainability initiatives associated with WRA's activities and works, including management, design and construction.

WRA's environmental commitment is defined in its Sustainability and Environment Policy. The Policy is endorsed by senior management and reviewed annually. The Policy guides all decisions relating to the WRA's environmental performance.

Full time Environment Team members and all other project team members gather information about WRA's environmental impact and contribute to program design, budget development and planning. They undertake environmental risk assessment, as well as ongoing research and liaison with private recycling service organisations and government agencies involved in environmental and waste management. Consultants are called in for pre-project soil classification, cultural heritage assessments, and flora and fauna investigations.



A recycling station at one of WRA's project sites.

WRA's sustainability objectives and targets are set through a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) under the Sustainability and Environment Key Result Area (KRA). All the KPIs are consistent with WRA's Sustainability and Environmental Policy.

The key objectives of the program are to:

- △ Minimise waste disposal (to landfill) and maximise resource efficiency
- △ Ensure 100% corrective and preventative actions are closed out by due date
- △ Be acknowledged by industry for exceeding current standards relating to sustainability and environmental impacts on construction sites.

The program is managed and overseen by WRA's Environment Team and reported on monthly by the Program Management Team.

In May 2012, WRA launched its Sustainability and Environment Culture Plan, which seeks to promote positive behaviour and develop an 'environmental culture' within WRA. This requires the involvement and commitment of all staff. The plan will see WRA's Environment Team work closely with other staff to change the direction and the way work is performed, as well as the manner in which decisions are made within the general norms of the workplace.



WRA has issued reusable KeepCups to all personnel and recycles hard hats at all sites.

Implementation

WRA has implemented a wide range of recycling and sustainability initiatives:

- △ Worm farms for food waste are available at the two treatment plant site villages and food waste collection bins are located at all other sites.
- △ Across all sites, WRA provides recovery or recycling facilities for cardboard, office paper, ink cartridges, batteries and e-waste, light globes, damaged or unwanted mobile phones and cameras, plastic hard hats and mixed metals. Recovery/recycling facilities for hardwood pallets are available at project site villages, while facilities for large volumes of polythene are available at sewerage projects.
- △ Where possible, contaminated soil is avoided or minimised, or treated and reused.
- △ “Green Pipe” made from recycled plastic bags is used instead of PVC pipes in projects involving the installation of new stormwater pipes or replacement of existing pipes.
- △ On linear pipeline projects, mixed crush glass is used as pipe embedment instead of non-recyclable quarry-sourced natural sand.
- △ Rainwater collection tanks are located at all sites except headquarters, and site villages have large rainwater tank farms. Rain gardens are installed on completed projects wherever possible.
- △ “KeepCups” made from recycled materials and branded with WRA’s logo have been issued to all personnel. Over 80% of WRA sites no longer use disposable cups.

To better measure the program’s outcomes, WRA reviewed and reissued its waste recycling contract to ensure that service

providers submit a detailed and verifiable monthly breakdown of waste and recycling volumes. This forms part of the KRA/ KPI plan.

Results and Benefits

All activities are established and the program is achieving a materials recycling rate of at least 95% every month.

Sustainability and environment have become part of the WRA culture and are considered by employees at all stages, from design through to project completion.

Challenges & the Future

The main challenge WRA has confronted in delivering the program is breaking old habits around unsustainable work practices. This has been managed through training, consultation and strong leadership.

WRA is investigating ways to increase sustainability in design, primarily by seeking out suitable alternative materials or products that have a high sustainability value.

WRA’s sustainability and environment program is achieving a materials recycling rate of at least 95% every month.

Make recycling at work easy! Visit BusinessRecycling.com.au to check out reuse and recycling options for around 90 different materials, find out how to choose the right recycler, download signage to help with recycling, and learn what other workplaces are doing to manage waste and improve sustainability.



Planet Ark’s BusinessRecycling.com.au is a partnership program that has been funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority, and the Victorian Government.



The information included here has been provided to Planet Ark by the named business for the purpose of encouraging other businesses to recycle and ‘green’ their workplaces. Although we strongly applaud the actions outlined, Planet Ark does not necessarily endorse them or the specific business.