

Recollections of a Member

NZWSDA had developed from its humble beginnings under the guidance of Ron Hicks. My involvement began only in 1991. For many years while I was working in the water and wastewater departments of the Auckland Regional Authority (then the Auckland Regional Council), I had been a member of IPENZ and its Technical Group on Water, and in 1991 I joined, what the Association was then known as, the NZWSDA.

An informal group, the Auckland Combined Water Group, evolved about 1990 (or perhaps earlier) largely through the efforts and leadership of Ian Gunn from Auckland University. Auckland members of both the NZWSDA and IPENZ TGW were invited to the meetings, and these and other technical activities were popular and well attended.

The combined mailing lists for this Auckland group showed that there were many people who were members of both organizations, and they had common and complementary interests. About this time we polled the NZ wide membership of both organisations regarding the possible formation a new group, combining the membership and the activities of the separate organisations. The idea won widespread approval. At that time I was Chairman of the TGW having taken over from David Hamilton, and Jeff Booth was President of NZWSDA.

There was considerable discussion on the name for the new Group. We settled on the current name, using Wastes rather than Wastewater (cf the Australian Water and Wastewater Association with whom we had an affiliation) because we hoped that some of the solid waste organizations we had been talking to would join us. I wrote a Constitution and Rules, and at the AGM in 1992 in Christchurch, the night it snowed so heavily that they closed the city for a day, we formed the new Association with about 700 members.

The formation of the new Association had removed the engineers with a water interest from recognition within the IPENZ structure, so that in 1997, the Institution and the Association entered into a Memorandum of Agreement for mutual cooperation on water matters. About the same time, we entered into mutual agreements of cooperation with the Australian Water and Wastewater Association (AWWA) and with the UK based Chartered Institute for Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM). Under the latter arrangement, Rob Blakemore went to the UK on an operator exchange program.

IPENZ and the Royal Society had jointly organised the six yearly Water Conference, which brought together a wide variety of scientific organizations with professional engineers in the water sphere. NZWWA agreed with the Royal Society to take over the management of this conference, and the arrangement operated satisfactorily for a period, although it now appears to have faded.

The Journal had for many years been the flagship of the Association. The Annual Conference had generally been held in smaller centres so that it was widely accessible, and it was coordinated to be in a separate location from the IPENZ conference of that year. We well remember the trade exhibition held in a tent in the hotel carpark in Havelock North where it was so cold that the condensation dripped on the exhibits. We had another big carpark tent at the Rutherford in Nelson. We tried two venues in Auckland – Ellerslie and Aotea Centre, but in each the exhibits were too scattered. Len Clapham managed to get our 40th Birthday conference into Te Papa Museum, and it was a good show but I think we disrupted their activities a bit for the week. Now the conference and expo are so big there are only two decent venues in the country.

In late 1995, both the conferences and a series of new events were building up, so we made a difficult decision to set up an office and employ staff, with the hope that we could increase activities enough to finance these major new costs. Graham Ure was appointed to work part time as our Business Manager, and he set up the New Lynn Office. Christine Takiwa, our Administration Officer moved the Association's business from her living room to the office. Journal editor, David Ogilvie, continued this work from his home.

By the middle of 1996 the office work had become too much for Graham, and we could see through the popularity of the Journal, and attendance at Annual Conferences, that we needed to expand our capabilities. We advertised for a business manager and a conference organiser, and I interviewed a number of candidates. In September 1996 Len Clapham was appointed as the new full time Business Manager. Len's experience also provided us with the capacity to organise our own conferences and seminars.

Up until this time, all of the management and direction of the Association had been carried out as voluntary work by the elected committee. With the appointment of full time staff and more conference and administrative activity, the structure needed to change. Over a series of meetings we evolved a set of rules for a Board to provide overall direction to the Association, with the Business Manager supervising the staff and the day to day activities.

The office was moved to more spacious and central location in Church St Penrose, and the staff and the activities of the Association increased with the membership numbers. David Ogilvie retired from the position of editor, and Michele Bristow took over the preparation of the Journal. The research activities of the Drainage Managers and Water Supply Managers Groups led to several documents that became national guidelines. I was the Association's representative on the National Asset Management Steering Group for several years, and three of these Association publications - *Infiltration and Inflow Control Manual*, *NZ Pipe Inspection Manual*, *Infrastructure Asset Grading Guidelines* - became reference documents in asset management.

This was a period of increasing membership, bigger and better conferences, good relations with a number of related organizations, and increasing contact with relevant government departments. As the NZ Member Association, we had raised our profile with the Water Environment Federation, and were invited as guests to WEFTEC. We had visits from their president and several other officers, and for a short period, our business manager, Len, exchanged jobs with one of their staff from the head office in Alexandria, Virginia.

I enjoyed my time as an officer of the Association, learned a lot about working with people in many roles, met some very interesting folks here and overseas, and saw some very successful and not so successful projects. Over this period we had seen the Association grow and mature as an organisation. It was not until I had finished my year as Immediate Past President in 1997 and suddenly had some spare time, that I realised how much time over the previous six years of so had been given to the Association's activities.

Boyd Miller