

NZWWA SWANS-SIG

NEWSLETTER No.2 August 2003

EDITORIAL

At this formative stage of the Small Wastewater and Natural Systems Special Interest Group (SWANS-SIG) there has been limited response to the invitation conveyed in Newsletter No. 1 (May 2003) for volunteers to assist the Steering Group in developing a programme of SIG activities for the next 12 months. Meanwhile, Dave Miller of Palmerston North has been co-opted onto the Steering group following his expression of interest in assisting with the on-site wastewater servicing area. Dave has already been drafted into action in representing the SIG during June at a workshop on training needs (see item below).

The formation of a Management Committee to oversee the affairs of SWANS-SIG will be undertaken during the NZWWA 45th Annual Conference and Expo in Auckland, 17-19 September (refer notice of meeting below). The Steering Group looks forward to meeting with those many members of the SIG who are attending the Conference and able to be present on Thursday evening 18 September from 5pm to 6pm. This first 'formal' meeting of the group is scheduled to follow on directly after the NZWWA AGM. Actually, we are likely to start a little late, as those attending the NZWWA meeting before hand may wish to spend a ¼ hour at the Social Function which follows.

See you both during Conference and at the inaugural AGM.

Ian Gunn
Interim Editor

TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT – SMALL WATER and WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

The Ministry of Health has let a contract to NZWWA to work with the Ministry and key stakeholders in the “small water systems and small sewage systems” areas to establish “competencies, information needs, and possible training needs” for people working within both water supply and wastewater servicing for small communities. By small community is meant a population (or equivalent population) size of 500 persons or less.

NZWWA have subsequently identified some 10 stakeholder groups, and invited representatives to form a steering group which held its first meeting in Wellington on June 23rd. Dave Miller (environmental engineering consultant of Palmerston North) and Margaret Leonard (ESR Christchurch) participated at this meeting as representatives of SWANS-SIG.

The trigger for the project has been the **Health [Drinking Water] Amendment Bill** which is expected to amend the Health Act 1956 to regulate drinking water tanker suppliers as well as those persons/agencies operating small scale systems supplying public facilities or groups of dwellings. The Bill also proposes amending the **Building Act 1991** to require all buildings with self-supplied drinking water systems (other than self-contained individual household systems, or large community supply systems) to have compliance schedules specifying their annual maintenance and monitoring requirements.

The review of requirements for small “sewage” (wastewater) systems appear to have been “piggybacked” onto the end of this project.

The principal outcome of the June meeting was a decision to proceed to a survey of operatives in the water and wastewater areas to assess competencies and information and training needs. The Project Manager is Leela Lala of Tauranga who has wide experience in conducting training needs assessment for a wide range of industries. Leela can be contacted at <leela@paradise.net.nz>.

TRAINING, CERTIFICATION and INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS – SMALL WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

The survey document drawn up in terms of the training needs project referred to above has been widely distributed around New Zealand during the first week in August. Survey responses are request by 29th August. Operatives in the small drinking-water systems and small sewage systems are invited to complete the relevant sections of the survey document that apply to them. The combining of both water and wastewater aspects of this project was seen as the most efficient approach, as some agencies have both types of system under their supervision. For example, there are some 600 schools and 1000 marae with water and wastewater servicing requirements. As far as practitioners are concerned, there are around 9000 plumbers throughout the country, many with dual capacity related to the services they provide.

The survey document contains a two page “general information” section identifying the several operatives involved and setting out their role. For small wastewater systems this involves – planner/surveyor (involved in provision and design of subdivisions), site and soil assessor, designer, installer, manager, operator, maintenance contractor or servicing agent, compliance officer (for discharge consents), inspector (for building control), and maintenance and monitoring certifier (such as those involved in programmed maintenance supervision).

Twelve pages at the early part of the survey relate to small drinking water systems, and can be set aside by wastewater personnel. Twenty pages deal with the wastewater training needs assessment. For each of the ten operatives (as mentioned above) there are two pages in the survey. Page one involves first, ticking off relevant “competencies (skills and knowledge)” from a range of listed items, then second, providing space to add extra competencies. Page two invites comments on how training should be delivered, subjects on which skills update/information should be provided, and information transfer methods which might be adopted. Each page of the wastewater survey is directed to operatives in the on-site wastewater area (1 to 10 persons equivalent) and/or the small community wastewater servicing area (11 to 500 persons equivalent).

To obtain a copy of the survey document, contact either Leela (above via e-mail) or go to the NZWWA office in Wellington [phone (04) 802 5262, or 0800 699 283, fax (04) 802 5272, or e-mail on <water@nzwwa.org.nz>].

SWANS-SIG INAUGURAL AGM

The inaugural Annual General Meeting of the Small Wastewater and Natural Systems Special Interest Group (SWANS-SIG) of NZWWA is called for:

Date and Time: Thursday 18 September 2003
5pm to 6pm
Place: Hauraki Room
NZI Convention Hall, Level 1, Aotea Centre
Auckland

The agenda will include the following matters:

- Election of Management Committee (to comprise a Chair, Secretary, and no less than four financial members of NZWWA).
- Discussion of and assignment of portfolios (such as Newsletter Editor, Conveners of Project Groups).
- Discussion of SIG activities (such as workshops, training programmes, research initiatives).
- General business.
- Setting the date of the next AGM.

The quorum for the AGM is set at ten (10) financial members of NZWWA. The procedure for election of members of the Management Committee as set out in the “guidelines” for the SIG is for verbal nominations (and secondment) to be received from the floor of the AGM. If required, separate ballots may be held for the positions of Chair, Secretary and Committee Members (in that order).

For members who would like to see a copy of the “SWANS-SIG Guidelines” prior to 18 September, please contact SIG support person at NZWWA, Deli O’Leary, as follows:

- <deli@nzwwa.org.nz>.

COMING CONFERENCES

On-site ’03: Conference dates for this Australia/New Zealand on-site wastewater conference are 29 September to 3 October, and venue is the University of New England, Armidale, NSW. Last day for registration is 31 August. See <www.lanfaxlabs.com.au/onsite03> for update information.

International Conference – On-site Wastewater Treatment and Recycling, 11 to 13 February 2004: This event has now been restructured into a joint conference with the International Water Association (IWA) 6th Specialist Conference on Small Water & Wastewater Systems. It should be noted that abstracts are now due 31st August, and that the conference dates and venue are changed. See <www.etc.murdoch.edu.au> for more information.

ASAE On-Site Wastewater Conference, April 14 to 17, 2004, Sacramento CA: The “Tenth National Symposium on Individual and Small Community Sewage Systems” is to be held in Sacramento at the Sheraton Hotel and Sacramento Convention Center, Wednesday April 14 to Saturday April 17 next year (immediately after Easter). The last ASAE event in this regular series was in Fort Worth, Texas, in March 2001.

Paper abstracts were due in February this year, so the programme of conference contributions has now been finalised. Details of the programme along with registration forms are to be mailed on January 15, 2004. To ensure you are on the mailing list, or to make enquiries re the conference, contact Symposium Chair, James Converse of the University of Wisconsin, Biological Systems Engineering Department, 460 Henry Mall, Madison, WI 53706-1561. Ph: (608) 262-1106; Fax (608) 262 1228. E-mail <jconver@facstaff.wisc.edu>.

ON-SITE NewZ, Issue 03/3 July 2003

This latest issue of On-Site NewZ (produced for the on-site wastewater servicing industry) deals with two main items.

The first relates to a NZ Herald report from 100 years ago regarding the provision of a new type of fully sealed septic tank system for the Mt Eden Public School in Auckland. It showed the difficulties inherent in getting new technology approved through the political process, even in those days.

The second is a detailed design review for sizing Wisconsin Mound secondary treatment and land-application systems, using the sizing criteria in the new AS/NZS 1547:2000 “Domestic wastewater management”.
