



Water Industry Operators Association Team of the Year Award Winner 2021

The Water Industry Operators Association (WIOA) Team of the Year Award came about following discussions with organisations about nominating individual operators for the Operator of the Year Award. Many were hesitant to single out an individual operator for recognition, when the provision of services to a community is reliant on a team of operational people.

The creation of this new award sponsored by TRILITY gives water organisations the opportunity to nominate a whole team for recognition.

There were two finalists for the inaugural WIOA Team of the Year Award: the Walcha Council water and wastewater operations team; and Tweed Shire Council water and wastewater reticulation operations supervisory group, both from NSW.

The judges reviewed the applications for the contribution to and impact with their community; initiative shown; teamwork displayed; and innovations identified and implemented.

The winner for 2021 is the Reticulation Supervisors Team from Tweed Shire Council who are responsible for the delivery of operations and maintenance of the water and wastewater networks through their 50 field staff that serve over 80,000 customers.

The team includes Chris O'Dwyer, John Anderson, Anthony Pearse, Jeff Holt, Dale Hickey, Gary Cain and Peter Bruggy and they were nominated by Peter Haywood.

The team has an enormous amount of experience with a cumulative total of 215 years at Council's disposal and an average service of over 30 years each. Together they deal with more than 230 customer requests each month; along with the routine tasks associated with water and wastewater operations.

The group have always had the customer first approach and they receive regular customer praise for their staff performance. This group also participate in after-hours work as first responder to the average 70 after-hours calls per month.

The water industry has come a long way since many of the team members were first employed. There have been massive changes in safety and managing how the job is done. Add to this the introduction of digital technology, computers, iPads, phones, GIS and the like has required all the team members to be able to learn, adapt and keep pace with the changing times and technology.

The team has a long list of specific achievements and they are a truly deserving of the 2021 award.

Thanks to award sponsor TRILITY, the Tweed Shire Council will receive copies of the WIOA Practical Guides to the value of \$2,000 for their library and the use of the operations staff.