STORMWATER NEW SOUTH WALES

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SIA NSW Secretariat

2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
3.00 pm – 3.30 Pm Thursday, 25th September 2025
Via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Aditi Verma – Camden Council
Andre Magar – Zeal Consulting
Dr Andrew Thomas – Cooks River Alliance
Ben Wolfgramm – Durham Water Quality
David Nixon – Stormwater Services Australia
Erin Sellers – Sydney Coastal Councils Group
Justine Barrett – CSIRO
Lachlan Shackcloth Bertinetti – Ocean Protect
Murray Powell – Optimal Stormwater
Nerida Taylor – Sydney Water
Nigel Bosworth – SLR Consulting
Stuart McTaggart – Alluvium
Brent Cassidy - Hunter Water
Nell Graham – Georges Riverkeeper
Greg Mashiah – Clarence Valley Council
Leanne Niblock – Sydney Water
Nasrin Abdi - UNSW

APOLOGIES
Brett C Phillips - Stantec

PROXYS
Brett C Phillips to Murray Powell

1. PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS

Dr Andrew Thomas, President of Stormwater NSW, gave an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed Association members attending the 2025 AGM. Dr Thomas declared the meeting open at 3.07 pm

2. MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING DATED WEDNESDAY 25th SEPTEMBER 2024

Motion: That the Minutes of the 2024 Stormwater Annual General Meeting held on the 25th August 2024 be ratified:

Moved: Andrew Thomas
Seconded: Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

GEMS declared that there was no correspondence arising from the Annual General Meeting held on 25 August 2024.

5. THANKS TO GEMS EVENT MANAGEMENT

Before diving in, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to GEMS and its Director, Julie McGraw, for their long-standing support to Stormwater NSW.

Since 2008, Julie and her team have provided professionalism, dedication, and continuity that allowed our committees and members to focus on advancing the stormwater industry. Julie has been more than an administrator— she has been a trusted adviser, carrying the association's memory and guiding us through challenges with care and commitment. Many of our successes, from conferences to member initiatives, owe much to her leadership and GEMS' tireless effort.

Although GEMS will no longer serve as our secretariat, their legacy remains deeply valued. We are especially grateful that Julie and her team continue supporting our events, including this year's conference.

On behalf of Stormwater NSW, I offer sincere thanks for their lasting contribution and unwavering commitment to our association.

Andrew Thomas
President, Stormwater NSW

Moved: Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti
Seconded: Justine Barrett

6. 2025 PRESIDENT'S REFLECTION

The Biggest Issue Facing Stormwater Management in NSW

Not long ago, I was invited to review a draft policy from a local council aimed at protecting urban waterways. The team behind it had done an impressive job—clearly across the technical details and well attuned to the physical and land use threats facing our waterways. But one critical threat was missing. And it's not just this council that missed it. It's an omission that we, as engineers, scientist, policymakers, educators, designers, and problem solvers continually miss. It's not a technical oversight, but a systemic one: the sheer scale of policy stagnation in NSW.

Compared to other states—Victoria, for example—NSW has fallen far behind in urban stormwater policy. Despite two decades of droughts, fires, floods, and rising urban heat, our policy framework has barely shifted. Since the Stormwater Trust of the late 1990s and the introduction of the Stormwater Service Charge in 2006, there's been little meaningful progress.

This stagnation isn't just an environmental risk —it's a threat to public health and wellbeing. And as professionals across commercial, government, and research sectors, we must acknowledge that policy stagnation is the single greatest barrier to advancing stormwater management in NSW.

Why the Inaction?

It's a complex mix of culture, politics, and public perception. The public wants clean waterways and beaches but doesn't connect stormwater to pollution.

This lack of awareness makes stormwater an easy target for budget cuts and deregulation. Stormwater services are hard to charge for — there's no direct meter like with drinking water or sewage. Politicians face pressure to deliver high-quality services without increasing costs, and stormwater becomes the sacrificial lamb.

NSW is still stuck in a 1980s culture of neoliberal economics that fails to take into account anything much beyond easily calculated upfront costs of things. Opportunity costs beyond simple profits are not factored in, ignoring environmental, social and economic impacts (both positive and negative). Such economic thinking is not only outdated, it's also simply bad math. And those ignored costs don't somehow 'disappear' because outdated financial models treat them as so-called 'externalities'. Rather, they are just paid for by someone else, typically the community (often by those who can least afford it), or the environment.

And finally, too often, we blame local or state government practitioners for poor policy, forgetting they're caught in the middle—easy scapegoats in a socio-political system that doesn't support their work (e.g., the last minute revoking of the Design and Place State Environment Planning Policy in 2022).

So, What's the Solution?

Most fundamentally, we need to fundamentally rethink who our 'tribe' is, both within our industry and beyond it. Old ideas of friend and foe need to be thrown out, and we need to recognise that those we may have considered to be foes in the past are, in fact, our best hope for success.

Historically, our industry's sectors - commercial, government, and research—have operated as separate tribes, with those in government seeing the commercial sector as 'needing to be managed', and our researchers typically operating in a vacuum, rarely working alongside the industry in an ongoing, meaningful way beyond short-term academic goals.

These old ways are not serving any sector of our industry well, nor is it serving the interests of NSW and its communities. It's time to throw them out.

Commercial players must look beyond day-today competition, take a leaf out of the developer playbook (e.g., the Urban Development Institute of Australia *UDIA*), and invest in your industry through collective advocacy and initiatives to drive policy change in NSW.

Government practitioners need to speak more boldly to power, recognising that leadership from above has been lacking for decades. And those in the commercial and local government must support our colleagues in state government—intellectually and politically—as they navigate a system that often undermines their efforts.

We also need to rethink our approach to lobbying. Direct appeals to state government still matter, but our focus should shift to building alliances—with groups like the Australian Water Association (AWA), NSW LGA, Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS), universities, and even those we've previously seen as adversaries or distant players, such as the UDIA and the Insurance Council of Australia.

Not only are these assumptions incorrect, but such organisations also typically carry far more financial and political clout than our industry does. Financial and political clout that is necessary to address policy stagnation in NSW.

Finally, we must get comfortable with engaging the media, traditional and new, with a compelling narrative that taps into peoples' desire for liveability and a cleaner world. It's not enough to educate; we need to advocate. We must show how underinvestment in stormwater is compromising our state's resilience in the face of climate change and urban growth, and that it needn't be this way.

What Stormwater NSW Is Doing

The good news? We've already begun. Since the 2024 Franc Conference, we've committed to a more assertive, collaborative approach.

Highlights include:

Launching Stormwater 2030, a not-for-profit incubator for bold ideas and cross sector collaboration.

Completing Phase 1 of the NSW SQID Task Force, uniting talent from commercial, government, and research sectors to tackle a key industry challenge.

Participating in two Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) public hearings and submitting responses— supporting Sydney Water's 2025–30 plan and challenging IPART's 30% price cut.

Contributing to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into local government infrastructure funding, advocating for increased stormwater investment. Initiating conversations with potential allies including IPWEA, UDIA, AWA, the Insurance Council of Australia, and leading university researchers.

Reaching out to politicians across the spectrum to build bipartisan support. Continuing to deliver engaging events and expanding the Franc Conference to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

These are just a few highlights of what Stormwater NSW is moving on. Through these efforts—and the example set by the SQID Task Force—I believe we can take a far more assertive role addressing the policy stagnation in NSW by working together to strengthen our industry, and deliver lasting, substantial and tangible benefits to the environment and communities of NSW.

Andrew Thomas
President, Stormwater NSW

Motion:	That the 2025 President's Report be accepted.
Moved:	Murray Powell
Seconded:	Andre Magar
Vote:	16 For 0 Against 1 Abstained

7. TREASURER'S REPORT

It is my pleasure to present the Treasurer's Report for the Stormwater Industry Association of NSW (SNSW) for the financial year ending 30 June 2025. This report reflects not only the financial results of the past 12 months, but also the broader story of how our association's decisions have positioned us for the future.

Financial Position in Context

As of 30 June 2025, SNSW held net assets of $38,205, compared with $108,050 at the end of FY24. While this headline decline in reserves is concerning at first glance, it is important to highlight that the result is largely shaped by timing of certain major expense items, including:

- Final costs associated with franc events that occurred outside this financial year but were reconciled in FY25.
- Seed funding for franc 2025, which represents an investment to ensure our flagship conference remains strong and continues to grow.
- Payment of deferred national levies, which were carried forward from FY24 and therefore inflated the FY25 expense profile.

In other words, the FY25 deficit reflects a combination of prior-year catch-up costs and forward-looking investments, rather than ongoing structural issues in the association's operations.

Income Overview

Total income for FY25 was $54,156.74, a moderate decline on the prior year. Membership income continues to form the backbone of revenue, accounting for 83% of total receipts.

Membership Income

Corporate memberships $33,380
Individual memberships $11,700

These results underline the continuing importance of maintaining and growing our membership base. Corporate memberships remain the majority share, but the strong take up of individual memberships demonstrates that the association is reaching practitioners at all career stages.

Events and Publications

Events and O&M manuals generated $7,505. While this is lower than in FY24, it must be noted that this income stream is highly variable and directly linked to the timing of training sessions, workshops, and publications.

Importantly, the O&M manual initiative continues to build momentum. This project has long-term value in standardising best practice and providing tangible benefits to members.

Expense Overview

Total expenditure for FY25 was $130,873, compared with $56,794 in FY24. The main drivers of this increase were:

Secretariat Services

$45,458 was spent on secretariat support. This expense was essential for maintaining professional administration, compliance, and continuity in the day-to-day operations of the association.

National Levies

$21,920 was paid in national levies. Whilst higher than the $3,564 reported in FY24, this is not due to increased rates.

It reflects a committee decision to defer some levy payments from the 2023/24 financial year. The result is that some levy obligations from the prior year are recorded in FY25, distorting year-on-year comparisons.

The decision to defer levy payments was not taken lightly, but it was integral in providing SNSW with the flexibility and stability to support the successful restructure of the Stormwater Australia Board and associated constitutional amendments. This step has allowed the national body to refresh its governance and representation model.

As the new-look national body finds its feet, we expect that the services and initiatives offered will increasingly align with the levy contributions of state associations, delivering more direct value to our members and to SNSW.

Going forward, levy payments will return to a more predictable and sustainable profile.

Conferences and Events

$45,765 was allocated to conferences and events. It is critical to note that this line item covers more than just activity within the FY25 calendar year, it includes:

- Final reconciliation of prior franc events (2022–2024); and
- Seed funding for franc 2025

This dual role of "closing out old events" and "seeding future events" makes the FY25 event expense figure unusually high, but also explains why this year's financial result needs to be taken with context and not as a prediction for future trends.

Other Costs

- Awards for Excellence: $2,253
- Publications: $4,290
- Insurance: $3,715

These categories remain consistent with prior years, representing the ongoing commitments of the association.

Net Result

The FY25 operating deficit of $76,716 is therefore best understood as the result of:

- Timing and reconciliation of franc costs
- Catch-up of deferred national levies
- Ongoing administrative s costs

Assets and Liabilities

As of 30 June 2025:

- Assets: $55,643
- Liabilities: $17,438
- Net Assets: $38,205

While reserves are down, SNSW remains solvent and capable of meeting obligations. Importantly, liabilities are modest and fully manageable within existing cash resources.

Challenges and Goals for FY26

Event Profitability and Risk Management

Events remain one of the most visible activities of the association, but they represent a financial risk. Franc conferences, workshops, and O&M manual trainings are critical to member engagement.

However, we must ensure that budgets are realistic, sponsorships are secured early, and risks are carefully managed so that events do not undermine financial sustainability.

Membership Growth and Engagement

Membership fees are our lifeline. We must continue to provide clear value to both corporate and individual members, ensuring retention while also reaching out to attract new organisations and practitioners. Initiatives such as training modules, advocacy, and publications all serve to reinforce value.

National Levies and Advocacy

Our contribution to the national body is vital to ensure that NSW has a strong voice in federal policy and advocacy. With governance reform now in place, there is a real opportunity for the national body to deliver enhanced services to members in return for levies. Predictable levy obligations will also make financial planning smoother in future years.

FY25 has been a year of both challenges and forward planning. While the deficit has reduced our reserves, it is important to understand the reasons behind the numbers: deferred national levies, event reconciliations from prior years, and seed funding for franc 2025.

These are timing-driven issues rather than structural weaknesses. The association remains solvent, stable, and strategically positioned to rebuild our reserves.

The committee's focus in FY26 must be on restoring financial balance through membership growth, prudent cost control, and careful management of event risk.

In short, the FY25 result reflects a transitional year, one where we closed out past commitments, prepared for future success, and maintained the vital services our members expect.

With disciplined management and renewed energy, I am confident that SNSW will return to a stronger financial footing in the coming year.

Acknowledgement of Secretariat Transition

This year also marks an important transition for Stormwater NSW. After many years of service, GEMS Event Management will no longer be providing secretariat services to Stormwater NSW. I would like to formally acknowledge and thank GEMS for their longstanding contribution, which has been integral to the smooth and professional operation of our organisation.

In particular, we extend our deepest gratitude to Julie McGraw, who has guided the Secretariat function for over 16 years. Julie's dedication has been central to the stability and growth of Stormwater NSW during this time.

Her efforts have supported countless events, committee changes, membership renewals, and financial processes, ensuring that the association has remained strong and responsive to our members.

From a personal perspective, as Treasurer, I would like to offer a special note of thanks. Julie's guidance and support have been invaluable as I have stepped into the Treasurer's role. Her knowledge base of the association is second to none and her willingness to provide clarity and advice have made my transition into the position significantly smoother. I am sincerely grateful for her patience, professionalism, and generosity with her time.

I would like to wish Julie and the entire GEMS team the very best for the future. The legacy of their work will continue to benefit Stormwater NSW well beyond this transition.

Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti
Treasurer

Greg Mashiah asked about the forecast for the 2025 franc Conference. Nerida Taylor advised that the 2025 Conference is on track to break even and make a small surplus.

Motion:	That the Treasurer's Report be accepted.
Moved:	Murray Powell
Seconded:	Justine Barrett
Vote:	15 for 0 against 2 abstained

8. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE AND OFFICE BEARERS

The term of a committee member is two years and half of the committee stand for re-election each year while the terms of the second half's is continued until the following year.

All members must attend at least 60% of meetings (Committee and Sub Committee Meetings) to be eligible for the Committee the following year.

There were no members seeking re-election who have fallen under the previous requirement of 60% attendance for the 2024 – 2025 year.

The following serving member has advised that they would not be nominating or did not nominate for the Stormwater NSW Committee for the 2025/2026 year.

1. Louis Nguyen - Woolacotts — Category: Consultant
2. Jacqueline Woodlock – WMS Engineering — Category: Consultant

Appointment to the Committee for 2025/2026

The following committee members were not required to renominate:

1. Dr Brett C Phillips (Stantec) — Category: Practitioner
2. Murray Powell (Optimal Stormwater) — Category: Consultant
3. Dr Andrew Thomas (Cooks River Alliance) — Category: Catchment Management
4. Justine Barrett (CSIRO) — Category: Scientific Organisation
5. Aditi Verma (Camden Council) — Category: Local Government
6. Leanne Niblock (Sydney Water) — Category: Water Authority
7. David Nixon (Stormwater Services Australia) — Category: Manufacturer Other

8. Yuna Chen (Aurecon) Category: Consultant

The following nominations for the 2024 – 2025 Committee were tabled at the meeting:

1. Nerida Taylor (Sydney Water) Category: Water Authority
2. Andre Magar (Zeal Consulting) Category: Engineer
3. Erin Sellers (Sydney Coastal Councils) Category: Catchment Management
4. Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti Category: Manufacturer GPT
5. Nell Graham (Georges Riverkeeper) Category: Catchment Management
6. Brent Cassidy (Hunter Water) Category: Utilities Provider
7. Stuart McTaggart (Alluvium) Category: Consultant
8. Rapula Regoeng (Adams Consulting Engineers) Category: Engineer
9. Lachlan Prentice (City of Canterbury Bankstown) Category: Local government

As the nominations received were not greater than the number of members required to fill the vacant positions, all nominations were accepted.

Each committee member should be reminded that there is an expectation from every committee member that they be actively involved in a Sub Committee, which involves approximately 4 hours per week on average.

Resolution: That the 9 nominations for the 2025/2026 Stormwater NSW Committee be accepted for a period of 2 years.

Move: Murray Powell
Second: Leanne Niblock

Vote: 17 For 0 Abstained – Carried

Nomination of Office Bearers

Nominations were tabled for the Management Committee positions.

- Nerida Taylor was nominated for the role of President (unopposed)
- Erin Sellers, Andrew Thomas and Andre Magar was nominated for the 2 Vice President roles (unopposed)
- Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti was nominated for the role of Treasurer (unopposed)
- Justine Barrett nominated for Secretary (unopposed).

As the nominations for executive positions did not outnumber the available positions, it was moved that the Management Committee of Stormwater NSW for 2025/2026 be approved as follows:

Nerida Taylor	President
Andre Magar	Vice President
Erin Sellers	Vice President
Andrew Thomas	Vice President – Stormwater Australia Board Member

Lachlan Shackcloth-Bertinetti Treasurer
Justine Barrett Secretary

Moved: Aditi Niblock
Seconded: Leanne Niblock
Vote: 17 For 0 Against – Carried.

9. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

Resolution: As a Tier 2 association under NSW Fair Trading legislation, Stormwater NSW is not legally required to have its accounts formally audited. The obligations for Tier 2 associations are limited to the preparation of accurate financial statements, which must be presented to members at the Annual General Meeting, but do not require an external audit unless specifically directed by members or mandated by the association's constitution.

Our constitution contains no provisions requiring an annual audit, and members have not passed a resolution to engage one. On this basis, it has determined that it is both appropriate and compliant with our legal obligations to continue without engaging an auditor.

This approach also represents a practical cost saving compared with prior years when audits have been undertaken, freeing up funds that can instead be directed to core member services, advocacy efforts, accounting and the delivery of events and programs that directly benefit the association and its members.

10.GENERAL BUSINESS

Andrew Thomas thanked the entire 2024/2025 executive committee for their hard work over the past 12 months. Nerida Taylor also thanked Andrew Thomas for all of his hard work during his tenure as President.

No further general business was raised in the meeting.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Annual General Meeting for Stormwater NSW will be held on either 17th or 25th September 2026. The final date for the meeting will be held in due course.

12. CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no further business, the President, Nerida Taylor closed the meeting at 3.45 pm.

These minutes form a true record of the business of Stormwater NSW 2025 Annual General Meeting held on Thursday, 25th September 2025.

Prepared by: **Julie McGraw, GEMS Event Management Australia**
Date: **Thursday, 25th September 2025.**