



MEDIA RELEASE

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WATER CRISIS SPAWNS MORE EFFECTIVE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, SAYS PIPELINER

South-east Queensland's water crisis has encouraged local government authorities to put aside self interest and adopt a regional approach that will deliver vital water supplies more effectively, the Australian Pipeline Industry Association (APIA) annual convention was told today.

Executive Director of the Southern Region Water Pipeline Alliance, Graham Thomsen, said the cooperative model adopted by the Alliance – which is building a 95 kilometre pipeline to boost Brisbane's supply from 2008 with water from a desalination plant, and the Hinze Dam, near the Gold Coast – will be considered by the Queensland Government in a proposed revamp of asset ownership and operation next year.

Mr Thomsen told APIA delegates, in Alice Springs, that a water source in Queensland was generally dedicated to a single local authority area and "jealously guarded and considered as a restricted asset".

However, when the Queensland Government adopted a drought management strategy – that included the Southern Regional Water Pipeline, or 'Water Highway' as it is known – new thinking was required.

After reviewing a number of options, the five local governments affected by the pipeline and South East Queensland Water decided the most effective vehicle for the project would be a Corporations Act company in which beneficiary parties were shareholders and represented by an independent board.

"The Southern Regional Water Pipeline 'Water Highway' has led the way in a shift from a fragmented and inefficient method of water delivery to a regional approach with the benefit of flexibility and efficiency," Mr Thomsen told the APIA conference.

"Establishing a delivery method that incorporates a purpose built company with high performing alliance teams that are able to push the limits of 'business as usual' asset creation, and to manage and explore more efficient and effective outcomes, has been a challenge," he said.

"The drought conditions in south-east Queensland have led decision makers to understand the need for change in the water delivery system, and support is now being given for projects which would (and were) meeting with opposition in times of sufficient water availability. Crisis conditions really do focus the mind."

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