



**WATER SERVICES**  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



# **WATER INDUSTRY SUBMISSION**

Strategic Fleet Taskforce  
Dec 2022

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Strategic Fleet Taskforce Section

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts

GPO Box 594

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**SUBMISSION: Strategic Fleet Taskforce**

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## **About WSAA**

The Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA) is the peak body that supports the Australian urban water industry. Our members provide water and sewerage services to over 24 million customers in Australia and New Zealand and many of Australia's largest industrial and commercial enterprises. WSAA facilitates collaboration, knowledge sharing, networking and cooperation within the urban water industry. The collegiate approach of its members has led to industry wide advances to national water issues.

## **Supply chain impact on the water industry**

All larger water businesses within Australia have been deemed critical infrastructure by the Department of Home Affairs because of their essential role in supporting the Australian economy. The advent of Covid and increasing coincidence of severe weather events including the fires of 2020 and flooding events in 2022 have emphasised key concerns with our supply chain. A critical aspect of supply chain continuity has been effective distribution infrastructure and networks.

The sector has a good understanding of its supply chain risks and has in place existing controls such as alternative supplies, an industry mutual aid mechanism and storage options for critical supplies. However, at times supply chain risks require a national, cross sector response.

More specifically the Commonwealth Government have identified water treatment chemicals as a national critical infrastructure sovereign supply chain capability priority in their Sovereign Manufacturing Capability Tranche 2 report. A major disruption in the water treatment chemical supply could result in an inability to treat drinking water to the required standards. Whilst the grants resulting from this report will assist the range of chemical supply options, effective transport such as shipping remains important to secure supply chains for the sector.

Consequently the water sector views the strategic fleet taskforce as an essential augmentation to help ensure the resilience of critical infrastructure services such as water.

### **Onshore disruption risk management**

The large majority of supply chain risks for the water sector involve domestic supply rather than foreign supply chains. The vulnerability of the sector to road and rail transport was identified during the recent rail disruption resulting from the February 2022 flood in SA. During these national emergencies and in other times where the water sector may be managing a significant disruption event, the availability of a third transport option such as a strategic fleet would be beneficial. The addition of a strategic fleet provides some redundancy for single point of failure road/rail links for the bulk water treatment chemicals between east and western Australia, including specialised empty containers for replenishment. A strategic fleet may also assist with the distribution of liquid fuels at times of national shortage

The water sector has recently provided or contributed to the following supply chain related submissions to the Commonwealth Government:

- Vulnerable Supply Chains Interim Report, March 2021
- Road and Rail Supply Chain Resilience Review, June 2022

- The SOCI Act Risk Management Program review, Nov 2022
- The water treatment chemical supply chain review undertaken by the Department of Industry Science and Resources (the Department) and their consultant GHD to which, despite multiple requests, the industry has not been provided with the opportunity to review the findings and veracity.

## **Conclusion**

The water sector strongly supports the national initiative to develop a Strategic Fleet. In doing so, we would welcome the ability to provide input into the fleet capabilities because the sector has some unique containment needs, particularly regarding the supply of gaseous chlorine. For further engagement please contact: [james.goode@wsaa.asn.au](mailto:james.goode@wsaa.asn.au).