

MEDIA RELEASE

Australia to assist South East Asia with early warning COVID-19 surveillance

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The Australian water sector is set to help South East Asian nations develop an early warning surveillance system to track COVID-19 prevalence in wastewater.

The Australian Water Association and Water Research Australia have partnered to transfer leading Australian innovation in the environmental surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 to support the Governments of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand to prepare, respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project has received funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through Australian Water Partnership's Australia-Mekong Water Facility Grant.

The Association's Chief Executive Corinne Cheeseman has welcomed this opportunity to showcase some of Australia's leading researchers and practitioners in water and human health and to support our northern neighbours.

"This project will enhance the capacity of environmental surveillance systems for detecting SARS-CoV-2 in the communities of Mekong countries," said Cheeseman.

"This is a great opportunity for the Australian water sector and South East Asian nations to connect and share innovation that will support over 250 million people across the Mekong as they respond and recover from COVID-19."

Water Research Australia Chief Executive Karen Rouse has expressed delight that the robust environmental surveillance methods developed through the Collaboration on Sewage Surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 ([ColoSSoS](#)) project in Australia will be used to support others in the region.

"We are looking forward to connecting leading practitioners from Australian universities, utilities, health agencies and laboratories with their counterparts in Mekong countries to enhance their capacity for environmental surveillance of SARS-CoV-2," said Rouse.

"We are optimistic that this program will make a significant contribution towards Mekong countries achieving early warning detection of outbreaks, timely control measures and a more rapid return to normality."

The project is part of the Australian Government's [Partnerships for Recovery — Australia's COVID-19 Development Response](#). The development program is helping to tackle COVID-19 in the region together with our partners.

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For media enquiries, please contact:

Paul Smith, International Manager, Australian Water Association
E: psmith@awa.asn.au

Kathryn Nicholas, Communications Lead, Water Research Australia
E: kathryn.nicholas@waterra.com.au

About the Australian Water Association

With a membership of over 5,000 individual and corporate members, the Australian Water Association is Australia's biggest water network inspiring and driving a sustainable water future.
www.awa.asn.au

About Water Research Australia

Water Research Australia is an independent, leading hub for collaborative research and innovation that is member-driven and funded. We are dedicated to healthy people, healthy lives and a healthy planet – advancing the science behind water to ensure the safety, security and sustainability of the world's most vital resource.
www.waterra.com.au