

AUSTRALIAN WATER ASSOCIATION

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Peer Review Policy (February 2020)

The purpose of the peer review process is to maintain the quality and integrity of the journal by ensuring as far as practical that published papers provide accurate, objective information that is relevant or of interest to the water industry.

AWA uses the computer based manuscript management system "Scholastica" to manage the assessment and review of papers. Invited reviewers will be pre-registered by AWA to access this system and be required to record their comments within the "Scholastica" framework.

Manuscripts submitted for publication should meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. Provide information on a new process, application, equipment or new information relevant to the water industry
2. Demonstrate the application of a process or technique that is novel or interesting (this may also include details of an unsuccessful project that may be of interest to others working in the same area)
3. Provide a commentary or opinion regarding a topical subject or incident
4. Discuss a project providing insights into lessons learnt and/or pitfalls made
5. Be of historical interest
6. Document significant major works, incidents or studies
7. Be of general interest to the industry

Manuscripts submitted will be assigned to an Associate Editor, who is a member of the Technical Committee. The Associate Editor shall initially review the paper for suitability. If necessary, the Associate Editor may refer the manuscript to other committee members for comment. Manuscripts of a controversial nature, potentially libellous or sub judice shall be referred to the committee chairman who may seek legal advice.

If initially considered suitable for publication manuscripts should be reviewed by at least two people with knowledge of the specific area. The reviewer's comments will be considered by the Associate Editor and where considered appropriate referred back to the author(s) for consideration and attention. The responsible Associate Editor will normally have the final decision regarding recommendation of acceptance or otherwise for publication. For controversial manuscripts however The Committee Chairman may make the final decision.

The reviewers' names are not to be disclosed to the author(s) unless they agree.

Reviewers' responsibilities:

1. To advise the Associate Editor if there is a clear or potential conflict of interest
2. To complete the review within the time frame required or, if that is not possible, to advise the Associate Editor as soon as possible if they are unable to meet the timelines

3. To advise the Associate Editor if the paper is outside their area of technical expertise (this may not eliminate them from reviewing the paper where the Editor considers their experience and ability would be valuable).

Reviewers should specifically keep the following aspects in mind when reviewing a paper:

1. The paper should be objective (papers that are clearly biased toward a particular organisation, process or item of equipment without an objective analysis are generally not acceptable)
2. The paper should be free of errors: including technical, mathematical or logical
3. The paper should be relevant to the industry and of interest to members of the Association
4. The text should be clear and concise
5. The text should be well written, easy to follow and the conclusion(s) should flow clearly from the body of the paper
6. Diagrams, photographs and graphs should be clear, uncluttered, generally self explanatory, properly formatted, labelled and appropriate to the text and topic
7. Diagrams should be referenced in the text
8. Statements of fact should be supported by appropriate references
9. The paper should include a clear, concise Abstract (200 words) written in plain English summarising the subject and the key findings. The Abstract should generally not contain formulae or complex discussion
10. All abbreviations and acronyms, other than well established or standard abbreviations, should be spelled out in full on first appearance
11. The paper should be free of typos and ambiguities

REPORTING

In reporting back reviewers may consider commenting on the following:

1. The possibility of deleting any section that adds little to the value of the paper
2. The possibility of expanding any sections or adding additional information such as graphs or diagrams where the value or clarity of the paper could be enhanced
3. Requesting a rewrite of sections of the paper that are unclear, poorly written or hard to follow
4. The advisability of commissioning a counter view where the paper is contentious
5. The possibility of commissioning another paper (from the same authors or another author) to further expand the subject in a later issue of the Journal.
6. The desirability of using the multi-media facility of the e-journal to include a video(s), animation or data file(s) where available or practical and such inclusion would enhance the paper or the reader's understanding.

Where reviewers propose a number of suggestions or corrections, consideration could be given to marking up the paper using "Track Changes".

Reviewers should complete the standard questionnaire provided in "Scholastica" indicating why, in their opinion, the paper is considered suitable/not suitable for publication. Where the reviewer has made suggestions that would lead to amending the paper the reviewer may indicate that they are agreeable to having their contact details forwarded to the authors. This should only be done in exceptional circumstances where the reviewer considers that more discussion may provide a better outcome.