Outcome report on the Australian Delegation to Vietnam

22-27 November 2015
Background to the Australian Delegation to Vietwater

The Australian Water Association (The Association) has recognised the shift in Australia’s and Vietnam’s development cooperation, from a relationship based on development aid to one which strengthens its focus on trade and investment, by helping to improve the business climate and expand the scope of business opportunities for mutual benefit.

The Association, in partnership with the Vietnam Water Supply and Sewerage Association, with support from the DFAT, Bureau of Meteorology, Austrade, ANZ Bank and Vietnam Governments, has commenced a series of initiatives designed to support this transition by strengthening relations and sharing of expertise and technological innovations in water.

The main platform in 2015 for connecting the Australian and Vietnam water sectors was Vietwater November 22-27 – Vietnam’s largest water conference. The delegation was the largest Australian water delegation to visit Vietnam which included governments, R&D agencies and a range of private sector companies with 20 exhibitors and more than 60 Australian delegates (Attachment A: list of delegates, and Attachment B: Australia company handbook).

Vietwater 2015 brought over 380 exhibitors from 35 countries including 11 international pavilions: Australia, Belgium, Japan, Singapore, Finland, China, France, Korea, Hungary, Taiwan and the EU. The exhibition saw over 8,857 industry trade attendees from all segments of water and energy sectors including wastewater treatment, water supply, sewerage, energy saving and renewable energy.

The Australian delegation to Vietwater enabled dialogue on many common challenges and solutions regarding safe, secure, efficient and sustainable water management. The experiences and technologies Australia gathered during Australia’s water reform journey were found to be in high demand and applicable to the needs of the Vietnam water sector. This report provides a brief snapshot of activities and outcomes from this delegation. The delegation to Vietwater was self-financed and independent from DFAT funding, but it should be seen in the context of the Association’s broader program of activities in Vietnam which are financially supported by DFAT and summarised in the Progress Report to DFAT (December 2015) and include:

» Strengthening the governance, financial and investment structures of the Vietnam water sector.
» Strengthening the role of the private sector.
» Trade promotion and capacity building.
A special thank you

A special thank you must go to Loan Hong Duong and Nga Le Thi Anh from the DFAT post in Hanoi. Their tireless work and support was crucial to the success of the Australian delegation to Vietnam.

The Australian Ambassador to Vietnam with Loan Hong Duong and Nga Le Thi Anh from DFAT, and Paul Smith
Connecting the demand and supply of Australian water capabilities

Since the early 2000s, Vietnam has opened its economy to international markets. In July 2006, Vietnam updated its intellectual property legislation to comply with world standards, and became a member of the WTO on 11 January 2007. Vietnam is now one of Asia’s most open and ambitious economies and is one of Australia’s key trading partners.

Servicing expanding populations of Vietnam will require continued major capital expenditure and technological innovation. The Government of Vietnam is now looking for private investors to provide the capital required, and private service providers and technological innovators to enter the market.

In collaboration with the Vietnam water sector partners the following services and products have been identified as being in high demand and were subsequently targeted for participation at Vietwater.

» Water quality treatment
» Asset Management
» Industrial park water supply and treatment
» Water Efficiency
» Water Recycling
» Water Regulation (economic, health and environment)
» Wastewater management
» Water law and policy
» Public – Private Partnerships
» Utility performance reporting
» Skills and education development
» Supply – demand planning
» Business management
» Energy recovery
» Solid waste management
» Domestic / industrial re-use
» Flood management
» SCADA Systems
» Laboratories/Field Testing Equipment
» Leak Detection
» Instrumentation / Computer Software / Technology
» Water and Wastewater Treatment Technology
» Engineering and Consulting

(Attachment C: Demand for Australian capabilities from Vietnam utilities)

Leading up to Vietwater, the Association coordinates a number of inbound tours to Australia from the Vietnam water sector. During 2015, inbound delegations included the Vietnam Ministry of Finance, the Vietnam Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Vietnam Women’s Union, the Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment. These inbound delegations were found to be of high value to Australian delegates who were in a position to continue dialogue that commenced in Australia.
The Program at Vietwater for Australian delegates

(Attachment D: Program for Australian Delegates)

Pre-departure and in-country briefings

Two pre-departure briefings were held for Australian delegates. The first covered issues, opportunities and solutions for doing business in Vietnam. The second was to support delegates with event logistics, advice on travelling and to share experiences and facilitate partnership opportunities for doing business in Vietnam. The webinars were recorded and circulated to delegates who could not attend in person: http://redback.events/amp-lci3s.

In Vietnam, and prior to the Vietwater trade exhibition, the Asian Development Bank hosted an in-country briefing session for the Australian delegates on the Vietnam water. This briefing session allowed the Australian delegates to hear from and discuss opportunities with the ANZ CEO Vietnam, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, SMEC, Engineers without Borders, Baker and McKenzie and EFIC who all have long term and wide ranging experience in Vietnam.
Welcome reception at the Australian Ambassador’s Residence

The Australian delegates attended the Australian Ambassador’s residence for the welcome reception the evening prior to Vietwater. The Ambassador hosted over 120 individuals including Australian delegates, Vietnamese water professionals and dignitaries involved in the Vietnam water sector.

The Australian Water Association booth at Vietwater

The Australian Water Association booth was a large, professionally-constructed and centrally located booth in the Vietwater exhibition hall. The Australian booth promoted 20 Australian companies, each provided with their own display area. Each company was showcased in the Australian delegate handbook (Attachment E) and an in-colour webcast that was circulated to over 10,000 invitees prior to the event. The booth also contained a lounge area where business introductions were held.

The Australian Water Association, with support from in-country partners, facilitated meetings during the exhibition, with Vietnamese authorities at government, provincial and local level and with Vietnamese enterprises, water professionals, donor agencies, decision-makers, potential buyers and partners.

The Australian exhibition booth won the “best and most informative booth” award during Vietwater.

Members of the Australian delegation receiving the Best Booth Award at Vietwater
“To win the “Best Booth Award” at Vietwater is testimony to the quality of exhibitors and interest Vietnam has in Australian water capabilities. We believe the delegation has showcased a new level of cooperation between the Australian and Vietnamese water sectors, ensuring that the expertise and experience of the Australian water sector are profiled and positioned to play a key role in the fast-transitioning water sector in Vietnam,” said Jonathan McKeown, CEO of AWA during an interview with the Vietnam media at Vietwater (above photo).
Showcasing Australian capabilities and technologies during the Australia-Vietnam workshops

During Vietwater, the Associations coordinated two workshops on water quality and one workshop on Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). The first workshop on water quality attracted a capacity crowd of 130 water professionals and brought together leading experts in both Vietnam and Australia to enhance the Vietnam water sector’s capacity to deliver safe water quality (Attachment F: Water Quality Workshop Program).

The second workshop on public private partnerships catered for Ministries responsible for water quality regulation in Vietnam and focused on Australia-Vietnam collaboration to strengthen inter-ministerial coordination to enable efficient regulation of water quality (Attachment G: Water Quality meeting agenda). Twinning and information exchange between Australian and Vietnamese water quality professionals was a key area of focus from the workshop.
Also during Vietwater, the Associations coordinated a workshop on PPPs with Ministries and multi-lateral banks to explore the opportunities for private sector participation and key issues to consider in delivering a PPP Flagship project to support implementation of Decree 15 (Attachment H: PPP workshop agenda). The PPP workshop hosted ADB, World Bank and various Vietnam Ministries with an interest in PPPs.
Showcasing Australian technology during site visits to water utilities

Australian delegates were provided with two site visits earmarked for Public Private Partnerships and technology transfer. The first site visit was to Nam Dinh Provincial Government and Water Utility on Monday 23 November. The second site visit was to Pho Tho Provincial Government and Water Utility on Friday 27 November.
Feedback from Australian delegates

An online survey was completed by Australian delegates post trip. The findings from the survey are presented below.

Many of the Australian delegates indicated they made positive business leads and wished to make a return trip coordinated by the Association in March 2016 to include additional B2B’s and site tours that could not be accommodated during Vietwater.

Testimonials:

“This was an extremely well run visitation, quite possibly the best I have attended of this kind.”
John West, CEO, BioGill

“It was a great week. A real pleasure meeting everyone. Well done for arranging such a gathering. I also commend AWA delivery of the workshops. They were facilitated excellently and we were glad to be a part. Thanks for all your hard work.”
Brian Hayden, General Manager, SMEC, Water – Asia Pacific

“Well done on a fantastic trip and event - it was a successful turn out. Thank you so much once again for the opportunity to join the Australian delegation and AWA at Vietwater week. It was a great event and also very useful to meet and hear from the various key actors in the sector.”
Heidi Michael, Country Manager, Engineers without Borders

Q1. What aspect of the tour did you find most relevant?
Q2. Was the duration of the delegation right?

Q3. Did you make promising business leads as a result of the delegation? What type of organisation did you connect with?
Q4. The Australian Water Association will be travelling back to Vietnam in March 2016 – would you be interested in a follow up mission with the Association?

![Bar chart showing responses to Q4.]

Q5. The Australian Water Association is now planning for Vietwater November 2016 – would you be interested in joining this delegation?

![Bar chart showing responses to Q5.]

The other 33% of delegates indicated this was too far out to decide.
Q6. The Australian Water Association and project partners are now embarking on a feasibility study for a flagship PPP project in Vietnam, would you like to be involved in the feasibility study and potential PPP flagship project?

![Bar chart showing responses to Q6](chart.png)

28% that indicated “no” said they were not sure how they would get involved in a PPP project and asked for more information.

Q7. During 2016/2017 the Australian Water Association are considering additional delegations to Asian countries, which of the following country’s trade exhibitions would you be interested in attending?

![Bar chart showing responses to Q7](chart2.png)
Attachments

A. List of Australian delegates
B. Delegate handbook
C. Demand for Australian capabilities from Vietnam utilities
D. Vietwater program for Australian delegates
E. Delegate Handbook
F. Water Quality Workshop Program
G. Water Quality meeting agenda
H. PPP Workshop agenda
I. AWA Journal Articles