

PLANNING MAKES PERFECT

Unusually, the award-winning Logan Water Alliance covers everything from planning to project delivery. By Richard Collins.

Amid the confusion surrounding the structure of water retailing in south east Queensland was a ray of light last month – Allconnex Water's Logan Water Alliance took out the Infrastructure Project Innovation Award at the Queensland Water Awards.

The alliance of Allconnex and engineering services providers Tenix, Parsons Brinckerhoff and Cardno is one of the largest water infrastructure delivery programs of its type in Australia.

"What is novel about our alliance, what sets us apart from others, is that planning is included in the scope of works," said alliance manager Christian Truscott.

While the top level strategic planning remains with Allconnex and the State Government, the alliance handles everything under that, from master-planning down through to catchment planning, from project identification to capital delivery.

"We swim a lot further upstream than most program alliances around the place. Our ability to work in the planning space and collectively use the knowledge of all the partners of the alliance



The planning team did a detailed audit of the regions planning needs and identified priority tasks.

in planning lets us deliver some really good value for money solutions," Truscott told *WME*.

In fact, 'Unlocking value through planning' is a mantra around the place. As an example, Truscott points to the Slacks Creek to Loganholme Wastewater Trunk Main project. The original plan had been for a major pump station at the WWTP, but the alliance team took a step back and adopted a whole-of-catchment approach. The solution, which involves the delivery of wastewater using 7km of pressurised rising mains, is expected to halve whole-of-life costs.



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Shared risks and rewards

The rate of growth in the corridor south of Brisbane, combined with council amalgamations in 2008, saw Allconnex Water's projected capital investment in the Logan district jump from about \$30 million a year towards \$100 million.

In addition, the scope of works was complex and uncertain, making an integrated alliance that shared the risks and rewards the preferred option.

That required building a culture pretty well from scratch. The first year of the alliance saw a significant investment in human resources management, relationship development and culture building activities to bind the 110 staff.

"We had a focus on change management and building the team at the start of the alliance," Truscott said.

"We sat down with each person and asked them their aspirations and what they wanted out of the alliance. That allowed us to structure the team so they would be able to add most value."

After a few months, they ran a two-day foundation workshop to develop the alliance values and charter. The value around program delivery, for example, was "deliver the right projects for the right costs in the right timeframes".

There has been a suite of culture building efforts, including regular internal communications, the Icebreakers social committee and quarterly "health check surveys" on the culture. The Australian Water Association award suggests they've got it right.

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