

Water Genders, Culture, Politics - water governance inside and outside the home

Water governance in Australia has never been more challenging. Faced with addressing water security in uncertain times of climate change and population growth, governments and the community are seeking more sustainable, secure and cost-effective water supply services from water utilities.

More innovative servicing solutions are being developed to respond to these challenges and they are very different to what the community has traditionally come to expect and experience. Gaining community acceptance and support for these new technologies is therefore critical. A key question for the water industry is to work out the best ways to effectively engage with our customers and stakeholders to bring them along on the 'journey'.

Responding to these challenges Yarra Valley Water has been developing more innovative solutions to deliver more sustainable water and sewerage solutions that meet customer and stakeholder expectations. Often in partnership with other organisations, these approaches have provided Yarra Valley Water with opportunities to work more closely with particular customers in ways that extend beyond what might be termed the more conventional customer interactions. It has also provided greater opportunities for cross-disciplinary teams within Yarra Valley Water to work together – greater bridging of the disciplines of engineering with the social sciences.

This paper explores some of the work that Yarra Valley Water has been doing in this area. It will highlight the insights and learning Yarra Valley Water has gained through responding and adapting to these challenges as it seeks to deliver more innovative and sustainable water supply and sewerage services.