



WORLD FIRST GOLD ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP CERTIFICATION

Inghams Enterprises (Inghams), a leading Australian and New Zealand integrated poultry producer, has achieved gold level Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) certification for one of its major production plants. The Somerville processing plant on the Mornington Peninsula (Victoria) is the second site in the world to achieve AWS certification and the first to achieve gold level.

Chair of the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) and Secretary of Water Stewardship Australia (WSA), Michael Spencer, congratulated Inghams for achieving this milestone. "The team at Somerville has worked consistently over time to improve water management and work with its community on water issues. The plant provides a wonderful example of how industry and community can work collaboratively to address shared catchment challenges."

Ingham Head of Business Sustainability, Julia Seddon, said: "Water is essential to every aspect of our operations, and it is vital that we understand our impact on water catchments and also how those catchments can impact our operations and future. This certification is a critical milestone as we pursue our goal to ensure that our use of fresh water is socially beneficial and environmentally sustainable," she said.

Water stewardship provides a framework for collaboration between businesses and communities through which they can find solutions for catchment challenges and reduce water related risks. The AWS Standard, which embodies the concept of stewardship, is intended to achieve: sustainable surface and groundwater systems, good water quality, healthy water-related ecosystems, including biodiversity and cultural sites, and good water governance.

The AWS Standard encourages continuous improvement and best practice through the opportunity to achieve points for meeting advanced criteria. The Standard provides for three levels of certification: core, gold and platinum. The Somerville site was the first in the world to comply with a sufficient number of advanced criteria to meet the requirements for gold level certification. International conformity assessment body Exova BM Trada Certification Ltd. independently audited the site.

Inghams Somerville embarked on their water stewardship journey in 2008 having been named as one of Melbourne's biggest water users at the height of the Millennium Drought. They were initially evaluated against the world's first water stewardship standard developed by WSA in 2009. Following release of the global AWS Standard in April 2014 Inghams developed their 'Sustainable Somerville' plan with the aim of achieving certification to the global standard.

Along the way, the Somerville plant has received significant investment to improve its water efficiency. The installation of an Advanced Water Treatment Plant (AWTP) in 2012 allowed the plant to reduce potable water requirements by almost 70 per cent through advanced treatment technology. This resulted in a comparable reduction in wastewater from the plant. A number of process improvements have also been made at the site.

As well as addressing issues related to water quality and quantity, Inghams have addressed issues related to healthy ecosystems and biodiversity by, for example, fencing off and replanting the sides of an ephemeral creek that runs across their property.

One of the most innovative and exciting projects to have emerged from the Sustainable Somerville plan was the engagement of the community and other water users in the Westernport area. Inghams partnered the Western Port Biosphere and WSA to initiate the Westernport Water Stewardship Project. The initial focus was Watson Creek – once regarded as the dirtiest creek in Victoria. The Western Port project has already engaged 10 new landholders and water users, including two schools, in water stewardship.

Over the course of their water stewardship journey Inghams have received recognition for their efforts from government (Prime Minister's Water Prize) and customers (global leader on water in the McDonalds Sustainable Supply Chain awards). The Company has deepened its relationship with WSA and is looking at the potential application of water stewardship at other sites.

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Further information: Michael Spencer +61(0)439 381144), michael@waterstewardship.org.au

About Water Stewardship

AWS is a global partnership dedicated to promoting the responsible use of freshwater. The AWS Standard provides the globally-endorsed framework to engage water users in understanding their water use and impacts and working collaboratively to address shared water challenges. Companies conforming to the AWS Standard can be recognized through credible certification processes. Water Stewardship Australia (WSA) is the Asia Pacific regional affiliate of AWS and was a founding member of Alliance having developed the world's first water stewardship standard.

The AWS international water stewardship system has been recognised and promoted by the Australian, U.K., German and Swiss government agencies as well as UN agencies and provincial government agencies in China. It has been adopted by major multinational companies and well as national businesses and SMEs. Projects are being implemented in most parts of the world.

Businesses adopt water stewardship because; the system helps to monitor and manage water related risks, it helps them to engage with stakeholders in a structured way, it leads them to holistic water solutions, it can help to simplify compliance with a range of requirements and it allows them to distinguish their region, industry or products in competitive markets. The combination of these factors can enhance the resilience of rural communities.

The framework is based on the Alliance for Water Stewardship International Water Stewardship Standard (the AWS Standard) released in April 2014 at a meeting of the UN Global Compact CEO Water Mandate. It requires individual water using sites to take account of catchment and stakeholder water challenges and develop a site water stewardship plan. Sites are required to commit to good water stewardship, implement the site water stewardship plan, evaluate the plan and communicate and disclose water stewardship performance.

The global water stewardship system is intended to achieve four outcomes that address most stakeholder concerns about water: sustainable water balance (surface water, groundwater); good water quality; healthy water-related eco-systems and cultural places; and, good water governance. It is based on the view that if enough water using sites take action through their water stewardship plans catchment health is improved. It encourages collaboration between water users and between water users and other stakeholders.