



**Aaron Ludewig** – *Water Network Technician*  
*South East Water*

## THIS ROLE

### • **What led you to apply for this job?**

I was fortunate enough to obtain a trainee role as an operator where I would undertake different streams of the operation, including water and sewer, in both the maintenance and operations teams. From the moment I joined the Water Network team as a trainee I knew exactly that this was where I wanted to be.

### • **What does your current job involve?**

My current role requires me to monitor and manage our water network and also crosses into the sewer operations space. This is to ensure continuous supply to the customer; it also involves working closely with contractors to minimise impact on customers.

### • **What kind of setting do you work in – an office, outdoors etc.?**

I am both field and office based, which I enjoy as you can find a good balance.

### • **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

I can be found monitoring our SCADA system, doing site and tank inspections of our assets or helping shut down and recharge large water mains. It changes daily which is what I love about my role.

### • **What kind of specific systems or platforms do you work with?**

The major systems I work with are SCADA (our alarms monitoring system) Montage (our works system management platform) and GTV (our asset/pans mapping system).

### • **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

My role's major responsibilities are to ensure that our assets hold their integrity by regularly performing site assessments, as well as ensuring our system is operating to its full potential by monitoring our SCADA system.

### • **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

I love everything, I work within a great team which offers opportunity to develop and learn. I love that no 2 days are the same and that you are always learning and being challenged. I honestly wouldn't change a thing.

### • **What are you most proud of?**

I'm most proud of our team who work 24/7 to ensure continuous supply of water and waste water services. They all do a great job and we have a great team.

### • **What's the most exciting thing to have happened at work?**

All the incidents I love being involved in. This is where you really get to put the skills you have learned into practice. I find these are the greatest learning opportunities and they are a real buzz to be a part of.

### • **What keeps your job interesting?**

That no two days are the same, there's always something happening. I love that you are challenged to think of new ways to do things and are offered the support to achieve your goals.

### • **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

You need to be calm under pressure, adaptable and flexible as every job and day are different. You need to be a good people person and an exceptional team player.

### THE INDUSTRY

- **How long have you been working in this field?**

I've been at South East Water for 11 years and in our operations team for about 4 years now.

- **What do you think are the best things about the industry?**

I love that what you do is making a difference.

- **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

It is such a great industry to be a part of, with a lot of people with many years of experience. My biggest advice is to be a sponge and learn as much as you can. If you show that you are keen and willing to learn people will put a lot of time into you.

### HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

- **What subjects did you enjoy at school?**

I can't recall exactly what I studied but I really had no idea what I wanted to do once I finished Year 12.

- **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I liked school more for the social side of it. I wasn't a bad student, but I was more interested in seeing friends.

- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

I had no idea what I wanted to do. I think you're expected to know so early on what you want to do when you grow up. I'm a big believer in loving what you do and if that takes you until later in life to do then so be it. You spend a lot of time in a job so you may as well love what you do. I was fortunate enough to find what I loved in my early 20's.

- **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

I played football all through my younger years, so being involved in a team and being able to have a positive impact on people is what I love. That and helping people to develop.

- **What subjects do you think it would be useful for Year 11 & 12 students to undertake and why?**

I would say having basic written and verbal skills is a great benefit. Learning good social skills and how to deal with different types of people. I'm not really sure that's taught in schools but certainly skills that you can develop.

- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

I would say jump at it and give it your all. It's a great industry to work in with a lot of passionate people who have a lot to offer and teach. So, jump in and ask as many questions as you can, and don't be afraid to challenge or ask why things are done the way they are. Be in charge of your own development. Especially if you are in a large organisation. If you are keen to develop and make the most of opportunities push for those, don't wait for someone to tap you on the shoulder to hand you an opportunity. Find the opportunity you want and bash down doors to get it.

### AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

When I finished school I started a Cert IV in Sport and Recreation. It was at this time I started my career at South East Water as a casual for our dispatch team. After that I completed my Diploma in Sports Development and then started a degree at Vic Uni in Exercise Sports Science. All whilst working at South East Water as a casual dispatcher. I found uni wasn't really for me so I decided to leave and started working more at South East Water where I worked alongside some great people who gave me a lot of opportunities, and my passion grew for the industry.

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

I have my Cert IV in Sport and Recreation and Diploma in Sports Development but this isn't directly related to the work I do now. Through my trainee role at South East Water I was lucky enough to complete my Cert III in Water Industry Operations (networks), which has definitely helped, but your biggest learnings are on the job and being involved in incidents.

- **What factors led you to decide on your chosen course?**

My Dad worked at South East Water as a dispatcher. I was finishing up school and going to start a certificate the following year and he advised me they might be looking for a casual dispatcher. The position was advertised, I applied for it and was successful in gaining the role. From the start I loved the job and was fortunate enough to work with different managers across our call centre, maintenance and operations teams who gave me every opportunity to develop and learn. When the opportunity arose to join the service delivery team as a trainee, I jumped at it with great support from everyone involved in my journey up to that date.

- ***Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career to date?***

I've loved my path so far and take pride that I've worked my way up and feel that I haven't had anything handed to me. It took me about 5 years to go from a casual to a full-time employee and I wouldn't change it. I was able to learn different parts of the business and to be able to network with a lot of great people.

One of my key milestones was probably when I was working in our 24/7 faults and emergencies team. I learnt early on that I was in charge of my own development, and it was a good idea to multi-skill myself. So, I decided to learn all facets of the area from dispatching emergency crews to repair works, taking customer calls for reporting leaks and alarm monitoring overnight for out sites. This gave me a great grounding and general knowledge of the business but also helped me network with a lot of people in the organisation. This in turn showed that I was a keen team contributor willing to give anything a go.

## THE FUTURE

- ***If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?***

If I wasn't working in this career I'd love to be a firefighter.

- ***What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?***

I see myself continuing my career at South East Water. I have some pretty big career goals, so I'll be chasing them down. I want to get into management and help develop people to reach their goals and find their purpose in work.



**Amy Miles** – *Insights and Design Consultant (parental leave replacement)*  
South East Water

## THIS ROLE

### • **What led you to apply for this job?**

I was really interested in getting involved in the price submission work for our business. Not only does it involve having direct customer input on our pricing and services for the future but there are so many elements of customer interaction that make it very appealing.

### • **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

This role is so varied, some days I'm working on the logistics of facilitating our community panel and others I can be working on updating our website to make sure our customers have as much up-to-date information as possible.

Some other tasks I undertake are:

- Answering questions from our community panel
- Liaising with our external research partner
- Ensuring we're managing any risks around our customer data throughout this process and working with our legal team to manage those
- Running surveys and competitions to gather valuable insights from our customers, communities and stakeholders
- Engaging with our internal stakeholders

### • **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

My job is about supporting a great outcome for our price submission. To do this we have to make sure our customers are leading the way and providing input into what they want to see in our pricing and services for the next period.

### • **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

I love the variety of this role and the way that I'm able to be involved in helping to bring our customers voices to life for such an important piece of work.

### • **What are you most proud of?**

Seeing how the work I'm doing is not only supporting bringing in our customers views to the business, but also that these views are being taken seriously by the business and will make a difference to our final price submission.

### • **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

There can be lots of work that needs juggling, so being organised is really important. Communication is also essential as you're dealing with lots of people from across the business, external companies and our customers so clear and open communication is key.

## THE INDUSTRY

### • **How long have you been working in this field?**

I've worked in the water industry, specifically the customer space, for nearly 10 years now in various roles.

### • **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

There's so much variety in the water industry, as well as opportunity. Get involved in any way you can, and you'll find an amazing job or career for years to come.

## HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

### • **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

School was good. I did miss a fair bit of school due to medical reasons, but I always managed to keep up. I wasn't the naughty kid or the straight A student either, but I really enjoyed the social aspects. I worked a part time job throughout Year 11 and 12 and found that because I didn't have a clear career goal I probably wasn't as focused on school as I could have been (sorry mum!).

### • **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

I was definitely interested in teaching. I loved children so was considering pursuing primary school teaching however I really wanted a career with variety. So, I wasn't totally sold on that career path as a teacher.



- ***What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?***

I always liked helping people and I did some volunteering which I think has translated into my passion for being involved with customers and wanting to make things as great as possible for them. I played sport and this also helped with discipline and being a team player.

- ***What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?***

Give it a go! Attitude is such an important element to being successful and all you need is a willingness to have a go. There is so much opportunity in this space and you don't need to have multiple qualifications to be involved. Having started at entry level at the age of 21, I've now been able to make an awesome career that I don't think I'll ever get bored with.

## AFTER SCHOOL

- ***What type of transition did you make from school?***

After finishing year 12, I did start a pretty generic course while working full time. I wasn't completely sold on what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. That's how I saw a career at that point (the same job for 40 years), so I just worked as much as possible until I found my first job in the water industry.

- ***Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?***

I have a Diploma of Community Services which I started and completed after I had started working in this industry.

- ***Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?***

Completing year 12 was a key milestone for me as I was the only one in my family to do this and I was really proud of myself for achieving that. I gained so many skills working in a job throughout the end of school and afterwards (hospitality). I felt this gave me a maturity that assisted me in getting a really great job in the water industry.

Getting the job with South East Water was the most crucial milestone for me. Even though I started in a call centre job, I'm now 10 years down the track with a fantastic career and so many opportunities ahead.

## THE FUTURE

- ***If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?***

My substantive role is in customer experience where I work on identifying areas in which we can improve our service for our customers. I love working with our customers, so I don't see myself working in another area for a long time!

- ***What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?***

I honestly don't know what the future will look like but there is so much opportunity that I can't wait to see what comes up next for me. I'm sure I'll be working in a customer focused role which continues to be my passion.



**Bec Rai** – *Payroll Services Officer*  
Goulburn Valley Water

## THIS ROLE

### • **What led you to apply for this job?**

I'd been working in the customer accounts and services team within Goulburn Valley Water for about 12 months and was very comfortable in the role. I wasn't actively looking for another job, but I'd recently finished my degree and eventually wanted to take the next step in my career. When this position came up, I knew it would be something I could really take control of and make my own. As the position sits within the Human Resource team, it made the role more appealing. It was an area of work I've always found extremely interesting.

### • **What does your current job involve?**

Processing the pay run is quite a large part of my role, however, it also involves periodical reporting both within the organisation and external bodies. Ensuring the enrichment and maintenance of the payroll system is something that I'm constantly working on, including working with staff across the organisation to deliver payroll training.

### • **What kind of setting do you work in? An office, outdoors etc.?**

For the past 18 months I've been working from home. When at work, we're in an office space, one I look forward to getting back to! The majority of indoor staff that work within the organisation are in our main office, which is great. This allows us to regularly interact with those from different departments.

### • **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

Each day can look quite different depending on the time of year. A day can consist of responding to staff queries, updating staff information via our internal system and running/updating the payroll as required.

### • **What kind of specific systems or platforms do you work with?**

Our payroll system is called MYOB Payglobal. It's where I spend most of my time running pays or reports and is the system staff use when submitting timesheets and leave requests. Our internal document management system is known as TRIM, another program I use regularly.

### • **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

Running the payroll for staff members, board members and any manual pay runs. Paying payroll tax, employee superannuation contributions, reporting for government authorities and management within the organisation. Also, setting up new employees and finalising employees who have left in the payroll system.

### • **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

I love the fact that my role seems very systems orientated, however, there's plenty of opportunity to interact with people across the organisation daily. I don't think there's anything I'd change at this point.

### • **What are you most proud of?**

I'd have to say, I'm proud of being able to help people when they have issues or concerns. Payroll is such an important part of any organisation. Providing support and answers for people (leaving them with a level of comfort) is something I take very seriously.

### • **What's the most exciting thing to have happened at work?**

Being selected for my current role has been one of the more exciting things to have had happen to me. When applying for the job, I wasn't expecting to be in with a shot, especially as I didn't have prior payroll experience. The organisation took a chance on me and that's something I'll carry with me throughout life.

### • **What keeps your job interesting?**

Problem solving is a large part of the job, especially when something in the payroll system isn't adding up as it should. It takes an understanding of the applicable awards, legislation, enterprise agreement and software to navigate these issues, but is something I thoroughly enjoy doing. Another side of the role that keeps things interesting is the interaction with people across the organisation.

### • **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

Attention to detail when processing the pay role; people skills (as you're dealing with people on a daily basis) and being able to interpret legislative requirements in order to communicate them effectively to others, is a significant part of the role.



### THE INDUSTRY

• **How long have you been working in this field?**

I've been in my current position since the start of the pandemic (around 18 months). Prior to that, I was working in the customer accounts and services role for a year.

• **What do you think are the best things about the industry?**

The industry is extremely collaborative and is one of its best features.

Each provider has their own allocated area in which they provide water and wastewater services, uniquely positioning us with no competition. This allows us to prioritise both our staff and customers, and focus on the best results possible for the environment.

• **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

I would strongly advise to call and chat with your local authority as the industry has such a wide variety of careers available. It wasn't an industry I'd thought about until I started working in it myself. It's such a great feeling to work for an organisation where every person has the ability to make a difference no matter how big or small.

### HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

• **What subjects did you enjoy at school?**

My favourite subjects in school were Psychology and English. In saying that, maths wasn't my favourite subject, but I could do it pretty well.

• **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I was a relatively motivated student in my later high school years. I got off to a bit of a slow start, but my motivation seemed to grow as I progressed through high school.

• **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

My career path changed several times before getting into this position and is likely to change again in the distant future. I didn't have a firm handle on exactly what I wanted to do in the future but knew I didn't want to spend my life doing something I didn't enjoy.

• **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

I think the fact I love the lifestyle I'm able to have in my hometown contributed significantly to informing my career choice. I have always been highly work orientated, so I knew I wanted to work somewhere which would foster career growth and opportunity. I also knew I didn't want to move to a big city.

• **What subjects do you think it would be useful for Year 11 & 12 students to undertake and why?**

I think it's important to have the fundamentals. You never know how your career path may change so you don't want to limit yourself. However, it's also important to enjoy what you're studying. I think if you trust your gut, you'll find the right answers!

• **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

I would tell you to always keep your eyes open for opportunity, and if you are knocked back, don't be discouraged. Ask for feedback, take it on board and try again!

### AFTER SCHOOL

• **What type of transition did you make from school?**

Following year 12, I took a year off to work and landed a couple of part time jobs. I was eventually going to move to the city and start my degree at RMIT the following year. Towards the end of my gap year, I was offered a full-time position at a local accounting firm as a trainee accountant, and with that, I transferred to LaTrobe in my hometown and took the job.

• **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

I currently have a Bachelor of Business (Accounting) which I completed at La Trobe University. I've also recently started my Graduate Certificate in Human Resource Management, which is set to conclude in March 2022. From there, I'm hoping to transition into my Masters of Human Resource Management. The bachelor's degree helped me to secure the job I currently have. Although it wasn't a prerequisite of the position, it helped show that I was no stranger to numbers and detail.

• **What did you do after Year 12?**

I took a gap year after year 12 to spend some time doing some local travelling and working a couple of part time jobs.



- ***What factors led you to decide on your chosen course?***

I think after my gap year, having held down a couple of jobs that I loved and being offered a job at a local accounting firm, I really wanted to stay local. I was very lucky we had a university here which I could attend.

- ***Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?***

Being offered the job as a customer accounts and services officer was a huge milestone for me and was when I really started to see the potential I had within the water industry to make a change. Following this, being selected for the role of payroll services officer only increased my knowledge of the organisation and industry and how it all fits together. I was then selected as one of 5 participants across Australia to take part in the WSSA Young Utility Leaders Program, which was significant in my personal development and realising the collaboration which was taking part between the different water authorities.

## THE FUTURE

- ***If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?***

It's hard to say where I'd be because my career has taken a few sharp turns so far! I think I would be working within the water industry even if I hadn't been offered my current position and may still be working as part of the customer accounts and services team.

- ***What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?***

I think if I was to move out of payroll it would only be to work in a more hands on Human Resource role, which facilitated increased interaction with the staff across the organisation. However, I don't see a future career path that involves me leaving the water industry.





**Candice Blackney** – *Senior Engineer in Corrosion Management*  
Greater Western Water

## THIS ROLE

### • **What led you to apply for this job?**

I wanted to work in a role where I could make a difference. I found it appealing to be able to make high-level decisions as an asset owner and work for the government in what is essentially a profit-for-purpose structure.

### • **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

On any given day I could be reviewing SWMS for an upcoming job, reviewing contractor KPIs, putting in budget updates, reviewing a commissioning report, talking a technician through where to find a test point on site, picking up a broken ferrule for testing, coordinating with our strategy team, writing a scope of works to administer or visiting a site where a new corrosion protection system is going on...or something else! The role is very varied.

### • **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

I am responsible for managing our corrosion field services contract which ultimately mainly delivers cathodic protection for pipelines and tanks. This contract includes opex and capex works. I am also responsible for some tank inspections, tank maintenance, pipeline failure assessments and pipeline condition assessments. Additionally, I am looking to address electrical hazards on pipelines and concrete sewer corrosion. I spend a lot of my time dreaming up programs of works or trials for technologies to take care of our infrastructure and then trying to bring these visions to life through procurement of field works.

### • **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

I love the variety, and that this role enables me to talk to a lot of different people across my business, allied water authorities and suppliers. Since 'corrosion management' is quite a broad sphere it allows me to get involved in many different things. One thing I would change about the role would be the ease of procurement and delivery of new programs. I have more ideas than I can procure and deliver at the moment, but that might just be the nature of things.

### • **What are you most proud of?**

I am most proud of the first cathodic protection system I designed, installed, commissioned and now monitor to this day. It's no great or unique achievement but every time I drive past it, it really fills me with pride. So for whatever reason, that project has nestled a spot in my heart for itself above any other.

### • **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

The number one helpful attribute is to have a scientific mind. Dealing with a lot of technologies to care for existing assets, a lot of which are underground or sealed a lot of the time, requires interpretation. There is a lot of judgement involved in knowing when it is 'safe' to make assumptions or interpretations in the data or results that testing or designs may produce.

Also, maybe surprisingly, good stakeholder communication and people skills are required. This is because you need to be able to work with contractors, operators, managers, fellow engineers, strategy teams, project managers and others who are trying to look after or build the primary infrastructure you're trying to protect from corrosion. A lot of the time you're trying to convey some pretty technical 'black magic' ideas which can be difficult, but I find it fun. Cathodic protection is often referred to as 'black magic', which I always thought was funny because my mum always told me we have a history of witches in the family. I guess I'm carrying on the family tradition!

## THE INDUSTRY

### • **How long have you been working in this field?**

My whole professional career, some 11 years now. I started when I was in my penultimate year at Uni aged 19 in a vacation program and I'm 30 now.

### • **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the Industry?**

Join a professional association and attend events and talk to as many people as you can. There's no better way to find out the niche you may be interested in and people are generally very nice and forthcoming at association events...they are there to chat and mingle! You will also create some great contacts to help with job opportunities and technical help if you do enter the industry. Be a go-getter!



### HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

- **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I never loved school, but I took it very seriously, studied hard and was somewhat gifted. I went through an 'accelerated' program and finished high school at age 16. I really wanted to get out into the real world and become independent.

- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

In year 10 I wanted to be a vet. So, I got a job at a vet (doing the cleaning and reception on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings). I didn't like what I saw, so I reset my focus on being an engineer and here I am now!

- **What interests did you have outside of school that helped inform your career choice?**

I'm not sure my interests outside of school did inform my career choice! I just loved science and chemistry in school and wanted a stable well-paying job so I chose engineering!

- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

Pursue finding out as much as you can about the day-to-day activities of an engineer before you dedicate 4 years of your life and \$32,000 in debt to pursue the career! You can do this by going to engineering association events and talking to as many people as possible (ask them about the project they are working on at the moment). Also pursuing any position you can get in an engineering company to witness the inner goings-on of a company.

### AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

I went straight from high school into uni and then started working as a full-time engineer straight after I earned my degree. Pretty linear! I had my eye on the prize of becoming an independent working professional.

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

I have a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering (Materials). It allows me to work as an engineer and Greater Western Water has recently supported me through the 'chartered' process.

- **Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?**

My career has been quite linear, but in a way, the line has been curved and I have come full circle into my current role. I started working at Melbourne Water as an asset owner. But after a couple of years, I got a job as a field technician at a contractor and eventually ended up as an engineer with that contractor designing, assessing, and installing cathodic protection for pipelines. At some point, I felt like I hit a ceiling there and decided to come back into an asset owner role with all the knowledge I'd acquired at the coal face of doing the works.

### THE FUTURE

- **If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?**

I'd probably be an architect as that was my second preference for uni courses. If I could choose again now, knowing myself a bit better after being an adult in the world for 11 years, I would choose to be a clinical psychologist or landscape gardener or politician!

- **What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?**

I would like to explore a role with more of a leadership component. Possibly a team leader, but maybe more of a strategic role coordinating different uplift initiatives for our engineering/asset activities. I've spent many years focused on my career, so I also want to focus more time and energy this decade on pursuits outside of work. Hobbies and side hustles, self-improvement and honestly just enjoying some of the fruits of my labour!



**Esther Thomson** – *Civil Engineer*  
*Lower Murray Water*

## THIS ROLE

### • **What led you to apply for this job?**

I applied for an Engineering Student scholarship at Lower Murray Water shortly after accepting my university offer for a degree in Civil Engineering. I didn't know much about the water industry at the time, but I quickly discovered that it was something I wanted to keep doing after I graduated.

### • **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

My daily tasks change every day. In a week I could do anything from running a construction site, to condition assessments of key infrastructure, interviewing construction contractors for upcoming projects, designing upcoming projects, managing budgets and assisting with planning for the future of water in our community.

### • **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

I am responsible for the delivery of new infrastructure and the refurbishment of old infrastructure throughout the Urban Water Network and the sewerage networks of the community. I make sure that the works are delivered with high quality, so they last for a lifetime and that the money spent on these assets is spent sensibly and with careful consideration. I make sure that the works are delivered without impact to the environment and without harm to any people, all while making sure that the sewer and water services are not interrupted.

### • **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

I love the huge variety of structures, technologies, and infrastructure I get to see and work on. Every day is different and everyday there is a new challenge.

### • **What are you most proud of?**

I am proud of the work I deliver. I get to build key pieces of infrastructure designed to last a lifetime in the community I grew up in.

### • **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

To succeed in my role, you need to be willing to listen, willing to think very critically and be willing to ask some hard questions.

## THE INDUSTRY

### • **How long have you been working in this field?**

8 years now. I worked in the industry throughout my 5 years of university studies and now 3 years in my role.

### • **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

It is a fascinating industry, filled with incredibly knowledgeable people working on similar challenges, with similar technologies all around the globe. It's rewarding to know that the work we do makes people's lives easier without them even knowing. That's the sign of a job well done.

## HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

### • **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I was a country farm kid, always asking "how does it work", "why does it work". I loved math and science and any opportunity to see things in real life.

### • **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

By Year 10 I was becoming interested in Engineering, but I still counted myself as the kid that "didn't know what they wanted to be when they grew up". It was not until I started my university studies in Civil Engineering that I found my passion for the water industry.

### • **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

Race Cars. I grew up in a "speedway family" watching my dad and uncles build, engineer, design and push the boundaries of race cars. Weeknights in the shed and weekends at the racetrack taught me how to problem solve, how to apply and use physics, how to think outside the square.



- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

Keep an open mind, ask questions until you understand, listen to those around you. The best learning you can do for any career in engineering, infrastructure, construction etc., is to learn through experiences.

## AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

I finished Year 12 and went straight into my university studies, it was the step that made sense for me.

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

I now hold a Bachelors Degree in Civil Engineering (Honours), which has allowed me to gain my current role. However, I work alongside a vast group of people with and without formal qualifications. It is by no means an essential requirement for a successful career in this industry.

- **Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?**

The biggest milestone for me was the completion of my degree and the start of full-time work. From there I have continued to learn and grow, and make mistakes and learn again, it's all part of the journey!

## THE FUTURE

- **If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?**

I'd be doing something else I love just as much, maybe speedway management, or event management, travelling the world and just doing something that makes me happy!

- **What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?**

Doing exactly what I am now, helping the community through providing water and sanitary services, in whatever way I can.



**Jacinta O'Connor** – Asset Optimisation – Civil Engineer

Goulburn Valley Water

Qualifications – Bachelor of Civil Engineering and a Bachelor of Science

## THIS ROLE

- **What led you to apply for this job?**

I was approached by a University for a Graduate Position, which I jumped at and the opportunity for a job within water and in my hometown. I then transitioned into a permanent position.

- **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

Meetings, reading reports, writing Business Cases, assessing asset replacement requests, emails and talking with my team to find solutions.

- **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

Ensuring assets are replaced in an effective, timely manner.

- **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

I enjoy working in my team, getting to talk to different parts of the organisation and going out on site visits. I'd like to make some of our processes more efficient, as they can be quite tedious at times.

- **What are you most proud of?**

Improving the quality of data coming in from Operations.

- **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

Engineering, an eye for detail, being able to communicate effectively and work with a diverse group of people.

## THE INDUSTRY

- **How long have you been working in this field?**

4 years.

- **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

It's a great industry to work in and has lots of different roles and skill sets required to keep it running. And water is always going to be needed.

## HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

- **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I was very studious and enjoyed learning.

- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

I didn't know what I wanted to pursue. I sat down with a job/course guidebook and read through the descriptions until I found one I liked the sound of. Also, in Year 10, I won an award from Engineers Australia for excellence in Maths and Science at which an Engineer presented, sparking my initial interest in Engineering as it's a profession you can travel the world with.

- **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

I love puzzles and water, so Engineering in the water industry seemed like a good fit.

- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

See if you can get work experience at the kind of place you want to work. And if you want to be an Engineer, ask yourself if you like problem solving and mostly want to interact with work colleagues rather than the general public.



**Jacob White** – Senior Analyst – Analytics Centre of Excellence  
Melbourne Water

## THIS ROLE

### • **What led you to apply for this job?**

I wanted to combine my experience in evaluating business performance and analysing data with my interest in finance, and apply it to an organisation that makes a meaningful contribution to people's lives and the environment at both a local and regional level.

### • **What does your current job involve?**

My job is all about talking to people and solving problems. I meet with a range of stakeholders across the organisation to understand what questions they are trying to answer and determine what data would assist in their decision making. I then try to find the right data in our systems and pull it all together using a range of analytical applications in a user friendly way to communicate back to the business.

### • **What kind of setting do you work in? An office, outdoors etc.?**

I work in the Melbourne Water head office and from home. Occasionally I visit Melbourne Water's various sites located around metropolitan Melbourne to meet with colleagues who are based elsewhere.

### • **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

- Scoping up and developing the roadmap to improve the analytics maturity of our organisation
- Using Business Intelligence tools to join data, prepare data or visualise data
- Problem solving data issues with colleagues in IT, understanding needs and requirements from colleagues out in the business
- Developing meaningful metrics to determine and analyse business performance
- Simplifying and communicating complex financial information

### • **What kind of specific systems or platforms do you work with?**

I predominantly use Business Intelligence tools like Tableau and Power BI to view and present data. The output of this data is often in the form of dashboards, storyboards, reports and presentations. I also use SQL Server to view data tables directly and pull data.

### • **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

- Progressing initiatives for advancing the analytics maturity of our organisation
- Communication to management across the organisation regarding specific analytics initiatives or "playing back" solutions
- Solving issues with data: getting it into our data warehouse, joining multiple datasets from different systems together, refining data structures to enable analysis and visualisation of data
- Developing easy to use, intuitive dashboards and analytics outputs to clearly communicate issues, trends and outcomes or for the business to own and manage

### • **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

There is an amazing video on YouTube by Dan Pink and it's about the three things to attain job satisfaction:

- **Autonomy** – having the freedom, independence and responsibility to manage my work and what I do. In my role I'll be working on a dozen different initiatives or pieces of work at any point in time, so I need to be able to pick up and put down things and be able to manage my time and tasks independently.
- **Purpose** – Being part of something bigger I believe in. I love that Melbourne Water provides such critical services to the community and is all about sustainability and improving our environment. I'm a small part but I get a huge amount of satisfaction through knowing that I'm contributing.
- **Mastery** – Being good at something and doing what you are good at. My strength is in translating technical concepts into business language and the other way around. Melbourne Water is big on training and professional development of their staff so I'm able to keep learning the latest tools and skills.
- **What would I change about my job?** Incorporate overseas travel somehow! But being more realistic, maybe less meetings (although I'm guilty of setting a lot of them up).



- **What are you most proud of?**

I've been involved in a number of projects that have been really important strategically for the organisation. From a technical perspective, I developed a scenario modelling tool that allows users to make better budgeting decisions. From a non-technical perspective, I've pulled together the plan for advancing our organisational analytics maturity after a couple of years progressing this work unofficially. Both projects were recently presented to the Audit Risk and Finance Committee and received great feedback from the highest levels of the organisation.

- **What's the most exciting thing to have happened at work?**

Probably when I'm talking to someone in the business and they show me a great tool they use, not knowing that I was the one that created it. That's probably more satisfying than exciting! Melbourne Water does a lot of great events to support different causes, it's always great to head along and be part of things.

- **What keeps your job interesting?**

There is always a new challenge, always someone wanting to discuss a problem with me. No two days are ever the same and there is always such a huge variety of things for me to be working on, it never gets boring.

- **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

People skills and numbers, both are absolutely critical. So much of my job is about interacting with different people so it's important to be able to form a strong working relationship as I'll be asking for input just as often as I provide it. Being good with numbers and having the attention to detail is the other thing and the ability to problem solve why two things that should add up don't.

## THE INDUSTRY

- **How long have you been working in this field?**

I've been in the analyst, performance and data space for about seven and a half years and have been in the Water Sector for four and a half years.

- **What do you think are the best things about the industry?**

The Water Sector is fantastic and working for an "owner company" (compared to a consultancy) is really rewarding as you can see projects all the way through. Working at Melbourne Water you are exposed to so many different things from treating sewerage and waste water to working with traditional owners to improve the health of our creeks and waterways to looking at how we can be a more efficient business so that our customers pay less in their water bills. It's a really rewarding place to be.

- **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

There is a huge amount of satisfaction to be gained from working in an industry that aligns to your values. It's also really supportive of flexible working arrangements and values training and development of staff, so it's a fantastic environment to learn and to keep learning through a range of opportunities that come up within the sector.

## HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

- **What subjects did you enjoy at school?**

I always enjoyed geography, humanities and international relations subjects. I wouldn't say I "enjoyed" maths and sciences but got a lot of satisfaction out of being able to do them.

- **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I really enjoyed school, but definitely the socialising aspect more than the learning side. That being said I always paid attention and stayed on top of my studies. I was never one of those last minute cram the night before students.

- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

I didn't know. I'm not sure I ever had a solid idea of what career I would pursue. I think you always have to keep exploring ideas and be open to new experiences and learning opportunities when they come up.

- **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

I did a few outdoor activities and learned music outside of high school but I don't think they were overly influential in my career choice.

- **What subjects do you think it would be useful for Year 11 & 12 students to undertake and why?**

I picked a diverse range of subjects which was great because I didn't have a driving passion in any one particular area.



- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

The best analysts out there are those that are good with numbers but have done other things prior so they can apply their other skills, experience and judgement. I studied Environmental Engineering and most of my class are not actually doing “engineering” as such, but I think they would all attest to the value and doors that are open to you from studying or working as an engineer for a time.

## AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

I went straight from school to university. At the time it felt like there was a bit of pressure to do this, even though I wasn't sure I would like what I chose to study.

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

I have a bachelor's degree in Engineering (Environmental) and a bachelor's in Arts. I wasn't sure what the arts degree would allow me to do but the engineering qualification allowed me to apply for jobs at engineering companies after I graduate and pursue a career in engineering. I also have a Graduate Certificate in Finance. This qualification would support a career transition but not be enough to transition to a financial analyst role at a bank or similar.

- **What did you do after Year 12?**

I didn't take a gap year (although I would definitely recommend it to others). At the time it seemed important to get on with your studies, but once you start studying you then think about your career and getting a job and then it all just keeps going. If I finished my course at 22 or 23 what would it matter?

- **What factors led you to decide on your chosen course?**

I'm a pretty decisive person and I like to keep progressing forward. I knew that even if I wasn't passionate about Engineering, I was capable of studying it which would give me options after I completed my studies. I'm a big advocate of making choices that expand your skills and keep your options open but also building on the past things you've done. I've been lucky enough to land at a fantastic workplace, in a field (data and analytics) that has an amazing runway ahead of it.

- **Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?**

I started out as an Environmental Engineer at Golder Associates working in the contaminated land space. I was a pretty adaptable field engineer, so I also worked on projects in the hydrogeology space and geotechnical engineering. I decided I enjoyed the geotechnical side better and switched areas which was a great decision in retrospect because I had some incredible experiences there. A highlight was supervising geotechnical investigations in the jungles and coastlines of West Africa on a massive mining project. This experience gave me exposure to large scale projects which allowed me to move to a company that specialised in analysing capital projects. It was at this company that I was able to incorporate my experience as an engineer while learning analytical techniques, performance evaluation, and reporting and presenting findings in a high pressure environment. I had some amazing experiences as a capital project analyst, meeting with project teams in South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Shanghai and Japan, evaluating mining, oil and gas, pharmaceutical and chemical production industries. I ultimately wanted a better work life balance, and to be able to contribute to an industry with strong environment focus and local impact, so I made the transition to Melbourne Water as a systems analyst in the Waterways and Land team. This allowed me to refine my technical systems and data visualisation skills and see some really satisfying improvements in the financial performance space. Given I gravitated to the finance analysis space in this role, it was a natural progression for me to move into the Finance team in my current role.

## THE FUTURE

- **If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?**

I'd probably be working as an analyst in the financial sector, or potentially in the capital analysis space for a mining or manufacturing company. Given my exposure to data science and data related works in my current role, I could potentially work for a number of companies or industries as my skill set is highly versatile.

- **What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?**

I'd love to continue to work in the analytics space, grow a team or start an analytics division within my current company. Years ago companies never had a Head of Analytics role or Chief Analytics Officer role but this is becoming more and more popular and this is where I'd like to end up. While I never had an idea of where I wanted to take my career, by being adaptable and quick to learn, I now have a clear picture in my mind of what my career will look like.





### **Jake Veal** – *Apprentice (Electrical Instrumentation and Control) 4th year* *Lower Murray Water*

#### **THIS ROLE**

• **What led you to apply for this job?**

I applied for this role straight out of school after finishing year 12. At the time, I was casually working at the local pool. I applied for a few electrical apprenticeships and LMW was the one I got. I did a week's trial elsewhere, but I'm very happy to have ended up in the water industry. 60 plus people applied for this position and I received the call up.

• **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

I would say the tasks I undertake each day are mostly electrical maintenance, reactive maintenance, or preventative maintenance. I replace lights, VDS pumps and do maintenance checks. I also work on valves and test motors to find their efficiency.

• **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

As an apprentice, I'm always with my supervisor, so I'd say my responsibilities are to communicate well with my manager/others and work efficiently.

• **What do you love about your current job and working for Lower Murray Water?**

The people I work with are friendly and easy to get along with. The type of electrical work is intriguing. It's a different experience to working in a residential electrical setting. You get to see a lot more and gain knowledge around town, helping me to better understand the region of Sunraysia. On a daily basis, I also get to see the complexity of the water cycle and industry.

• **What are you most proud of?**

How far I've come in the trade is one of the things I am most proud of. It was hard to picture myself in the position I'm in today from when I first started. Getting a position with a well-known government organisation, is a great achievement.

• **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

Communication skills, problem solving skills, hands on skills and a little knowledge in treatment plant operations. I still learn something new every day from my colleagues and others within the organisation.

#### **THE INDUSTRY**

• **How long have you been working in this field?**

Nearly 5 years – 2017 is the year I started. Due to COVID, I had a few setbacks with completing my apprenticeship.

• **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

Be open minded, go after it, and it's a big industry. You'll learn skills throughout your time in the industry which you wouldn't learn being in any other setting. You won't learn everything overnight, it's a slow but steady process.

#### **HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL**

• **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I liked school and embraced what I was good at, which made studying easy for me. I gave school 100% and was happy I finished year 12. My main interests were maths, woodwork and hands on activities.

• **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

I knew I didn't want to go to uni, so I took on several different work experiences in Year 10,11, &12 in electrical x2 and building x2. Through these experiences, I found that Electrical was best suited for me.

• **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

I'm very much an outdoors person. I'm part of a swimming club, enjoy water skiing, basketball, playing footy and tennis. I felt that electrical was best, as I can be outside more.

• **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

If you're interested, do some work experience in the field to make sure it's for you.



### AFTER SCHOOL

- ***What type of transition did you make from school?***

I continued to work part time at the local pool but applied for a heap of jobs in the electrical field until I was lucky enough to get a call from Lower Murray Water.

- ***Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?***

Due to COVID, there have been some restrictions on completing my formal qualifications, but I expect to be fully qualified with my Cert III in Electrical by early 2022. I will be furthering my qualifications after getting my Cert IV in Instrumentation and Control.

### THE FUTURE

- ***If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?***

I'd be doing something in the sporting industry or another trade similar to building.

- ***What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?***

I am very happy with my current role, but possibly well into the future, I'd like to become a leading hand and technical specialist.



**Jarrod Williams** – *Currently Civil Construction Trainee*  
*Barwon Water*

## THIS ROLE

- **What led you to apply for this job?**

I wanted something that would continue no matter if covid was around.

- **What does your current job involve?**

Fixing anything to do with water and sewer pipes.

- **What kind of setting do you work in? An office, outdoors etc.?**

I work outdoors all over the Barwon water area.

- **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

I could be fixing a major burst pipe or unblocking a sewer block that is spilling into a property.

- **What kind of specific systems or platforms do you work with?**

We use an online system called focus, and I use a GIS platform to find certain positions of pipes.

- **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

We have a lot of responsibility to get water turned back on for properties as quickly as possible or to unblock / stop a sewer spill before it impacts anyone.

- **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

I love that every day is different, and things can change very quickly.

- **What are you most proud of?**

I'm most proud of being able to help the Barwon water customers in any way I can.

- **What's the most exciting thing to have happened at work?**

I would say, seeing the things that Barwon water has in the ground.

- **What keeps your job interesting?**

Each day is different.

- **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

Skills with tools, time management and being able to think on your feet quickly.

## THE INDUSTRY

- **How long have you been working in this field?**

I've been in the field for 7 months now.

- **What do you think are the best things about the industry?**

There are just so many different things that you do each day.

- **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

I would just give it a go.



### HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

- **What subjects did you enjoy at school?**

I always loved outdoor education.

- **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

It was pretty good. I definitely preferred to be out working though, as I struggled sitting in a classroom all day.

- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

I always wanted to be a marine biologist, as I love the water.

- **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

I was always into fishing and camping, so I knew I wanted to work outside .

- **What subjects do you think it would be useful for Year 11 & 12 students to undertake and why?**

Definitely doing outdoor Ed helped, as I've learnt so many skills I've used outside of school.

- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

Put yourself out there with any and every opportunity. The more experience you get, the better.

### AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

I went straight into working as a security guard, so it was an easy transition for me from school .

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

I have many; security operations, traffic management, marine operations (near coastal), marine engineering and a marine radio certificate. From these qualifications, I've been able to be a security guard, a captain of a boat up to 24m, a first mate on a boat up to 80m and can also be a marine engineer on a vessel.

- **What did you do after Year 12?**

I did security for about a year.

- **What factors led you to decide on your chosen course?**

I wanted security in the circumstances created by the pandemic.

- **Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?**

I have been on the Young Endeavour for 2 weeks, a beautiful tall ship with a program run by the navy. I motored a 10-million-dollar motor yacht down the east coast of Australia from QLD to Vic. I've also crossed Tasmania with the Sorrento ferries many times in my previous job.

### THE FUTURE

- **If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?**

I would be on a vessel working on the water.

- **What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?**

Hopefully going full time with Barwon water.



**Jess Brooks** – *Service Desk Coordinator*  
Yarra Valley Water

## THIS ROLE

### • **What led you to apply for this job?**

I heard about the Service Desk role from someone else who had interviewed for it. The focus on customer service was what interested me. After 2.5 years in a Service Desk role, I was offered a secondment for the Service Desk Coordinator role.

### • **What does your current job involve?**

The day-to-day management of the service desk and working as an escalation point for the team.

### • **What kind of setting do you work in? An office, outdoors etc.?**

Office.

### • **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

Organising rosters, coordinating the queue of work and general team coordination.

### • **What kind of specific systems or platforms do you work with?**

- ServiceNow (ticketing system)
- Microsoft Office 365
- Active Directory
- SCCM.

### • **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

Maintaining communication between the team whilst keeping everyone involved, weekly team meetings and collaboration.

### • **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

The people, sense of community and the friendships.

### • **What are you most proud of?**

The Tech Lounges at the office. These are a walk-up IT support desk for all staff.

### • **What's the most exciting thing to have happened at work?**

I won a company-wide award at a previous workplace which was a highlight. Also, gaining recognition through the years for different projects and customer service.

### • **What keeps your job interesting?**

IT is something that is constantly changing and the people we support are constantly changing. We are always looking to keep our systems relevant so there is always something new.

### • **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

Customer service and IT skills. Having the basics with both is important. They are both teachable and can be built upon.

## THE INDUSTRY

### • **How long have you been working in this field?**

5 years in IT and more than 2.5 years at Yarra Valley Water.

### • **What do you think are the best things about the industry?**

The collaboration between different water providers and being able to work closely with others within the state, country and even worldwide. It's not something I have seen before in other businesses I've worked with.

### • **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

My advice would be that you don't have to be invested specifically in the idea of water/sewerage. The water industry caters to a lot of different skill sets. You can have any kind of role within the water industry to support what we supply to our customers.



### HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

- **What subjects did you enjoy at school?**

English, Media, Studio Arts.

- **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I really applied myself to the subjects I liked.

- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

I wanted to work in Fine Arts or Graphic Design.

- **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

Experience in Graphic Design and a general interest in IT.

- **What subjects do you think would be useful for Year 11 & 12 students to undertake and why?**

It depends on what area they want to work within. Speaking from an IT perspective, anything Information Technology related.

- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

YVW offers graduate student opportunities.

### AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

I was a little bit lost after finishing year 12. I applied for a Diploma of Visual Arts, but it fell through. Afterwards, I worked as waitress until someone suggested I apply for a Service Desk role which started my career in IT.

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

No formal qualifications, all my learning has happened on the job.

- **Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?**

Taking the opportunity for the Service Desk role without any previous experience. Taking a chance and trying something new is what kicked off my IT career and ultimately lead me to YVW.

### THE FUTURE

- **If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?**

If I had not begun working in IT, I'd probably be pursuing further education or a career in Fine Arts or Graphic Design as I'd initially planned.

- **What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?**

My current goal is to gain more experience in the Service Desk Coordinator role to get a feel for higher responsibilities. I may become interested in a management role in the future.



### **Kaitlyn Braden** – *Environmental Sustainability Officer*

*GWM Water*

Qualifications – Bachelor of Environmental Science (Management & Sustainability)

I applied for this job as my background is in Environmental Science (Management and Sustainability). I have been in my role for 2.5 years and my job is a mix of office and outdoor work. The different types of tasks I undertake on a daily basis is dependent on what projects are currently happening and assessments that need to be completed.

I really enjoyed school as I loved learning. I was always the kid asking a lot of questions in class. I was someone who picked subjects I enjoyed, rather than subjects I thought I should take. Choosing subjects I genuinely enjoyed helped reduce my stress levels in year 11 and 12 (where the stakes are high) as I was passionate about what I was learning and didn't feel forced to learn subjects I didn't want to.

Growing up, my family spent lots of time camping and travelling around Australia. Connecting with nature from a young age and seeing the diversity of different landscapes across Australia, made me realise how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful country filled with so much natural beauty. I think this passion really influenced my career choice.

I went straight to university after finishing high school. There are different paths to get into this field rather than going into uni straight away or don't receive the ATAR required.

I love the variety in my current role at GWM Water. If I was doing the same task day in and day out, I know I wouldn't enjoy myself. The variety keeps my days interesting and challenging. I'm part of a broader team that mostly consists of engineers. Most of my colleagues are male. At times, it can feel intimidating being the only female in a meeting room of men.

Some of the skills I need for my job:

- A background or degree in environmental science/management
- Strong verbal, written and interpersonal communication skills
- The ability to work efficiently as part of a team
- Analytical skills
- Organisational and planning skills
- Not essential, but helpful for any career path you choose in life; passion!

Environmental science is a multi-disciplinary field. There are many career paths available to pursue and many variations of environmental degrees you can do.

If you can narrow your interests down to a particular area, it will allow you to make better decisions around choosing a career path further down the track.

Do you like sustainability? Are you more scientifically minded, like research and studying animals/plants? Do you have an interest in marine ecology? These are all questions you should ask yourself. It's also valuable to connect with people in the industry and in particular positions you're interested in to ask about their experiences and what they did to get to where they are today.

I have been in my current role for 2.5 years. My job is a mix of office and outdoor work and varies day to day depending on what projects are currently happening and what assessments need to be done. I really enjoyed school. I loved learning and was always the kid asking lots of questions in class. I was someone who picked subjects I enjoyed, rather than subjects I thought I should choose. Growing up, my family spent lots of time camping and travelling around Australia. Connecting with nature from a young age and seeing the diversity of different landscapes across Australia, made me realise how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful country filled with so much natural beauty. Environmental science is a multi-disciplinary field. There are many career paths you can pursue and many variations of environmental degrees you can do. If you can narrow your interests down to a particular area, it will allow you to make better decisions around choosing a career path further down the track.



**Katie Semmens** – *Graduate Engineer*  
*Barwon Water*

## THIS ROLE

### • **What led you to apply for this job?**

I applied for this job because I was already working at Barwon Water on shorter contracts, and really enjoyed it. This position allowed me to finish the final year of my degree, as well as provided me with a level of security, which alleviated a lot of stress as someone who lived out of home. I was excited by the idea of getting to see more parts of Barwon Water and get a better understanding of the business.

### • **What does your current job involve?**

I've only been in this position for a couple of weeks, so I'm still figuring that out myself! The team I work in now are responsible for the quality of potable and recycled water. Previously, the team I worked in were responsible for the delivery of construction projects. It can vary quite a bit!

### • **What kind of setting do you work in? An office, outdoors etc.?**

For most of this role, we have been working from home due to the pandemic. I've been on site a few times. Without the pandemic, I would still likely be office based, with a couple of site visits here and there.

### • **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

I'm still figuring that one out in my new team!

### • **What kind of specific systems or platforms do you work with?**

There are a wide range of systems and platforms that I have worked with over my time at Barwon Water. One of my favourites would be the SCADA system, which has ongoing monitoring of assets, among other things. I'm interested in data and trend analysis, so being able to see exactly what is going on and when is very interesting to me.

### • **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

I'm still working this one out in my new team!

### • **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

I have really enjoyed the rotation system of the graduate role, as it means I've been able to experience different things and slowly put together an idea of what interests me most for my future career.

### • **What are you most proud of?**

At this stage I'm most proud of completing university alongside the graduate program and developing my ability to manage some relatively ambiguous and broad projects.

### • **What's the most exciting thing to have happened at work?**

One of the most exciting things for me was a meeting I had with the team of stakeholders on a project. I was in the position to run this meeting and had put a lot of time and effort into providing a report beforehand. It was very exciting and encouraging for me to receive positive feedback from the stakeholders.

### • **What keeps your job interesting?**

The variety is absolutely one of the things that forces me to continually be interested! Aside from that, I've been given the opportunity to work on tasks and projects that I've really enjoyed. When you're passionate about something it's hard not to be interested in it as well.

### • **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

For a graduate position, I'd say the most essential skill has been adaptability. Changing positions regularly means meeting a new team, learning new processes and taking what you have learnt and applying it in different ways. If you're someone who adapts easily to new environments and is keen to learn, it is a massive advantage.





### THE INDUSTRY

- **How long have you been working in this field?**

I've been working in the water industry since the start of 2020, and studying it more heavily since 2019, so I'm still pretty fresh to it all.

- **What do you think are the best things about the industry?**

So far, to me the approach to safety and sustainability has been one of the best things about the industry. Though different groups work separately, there's still this overarching goal that most people I've met have in common. I also think the variety of things I've been asked to do, as well as the many different career options within the same industry is a huge plus!

- **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

I'd strongly recommend it! My advice would be get involved in any way that you can, because you'll find out quickly enough if it's something that you'll enjoy.

### HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

- **What subjects did you enjoy at school?**

I genuinely enjoyed all subjects at school, except physics, which is somewhat ironic given I went into engineering afterwards. In year 11 and 12 I completed a range of subjects, including Maths, English, Chemistry, Music, PE, Indonesian as 2nd language, and then even more Maths! I can honestly say I enjoyed them all, and I liked having the variety.

- **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I enjoyed school and have always had a passion for learning. I was the sort of student who participated in everything I could, from choir, sports teams, leadership positions and of course my homework. I always liked helping other people especially in maths, when they were stuck and sometimes spent more time doing this than my own work.

- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

In year 10 I was enjoying teaching my friends maths and thought that I might want to be a teacher. I also really enjoyed PE and considered studying sports science at university.

- **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

Outside of school, I played classical piano, and played and umpired netball. I think being able to meet these passions and enjoy them outside of school is why I didn't pursue a career in either of these directions. However, they have been very useful hobbies, and I've had various jobs that relate to both. To inform my career choice, I realised at some stage I was passionate about the environment, and that all life on earth needs water to be sustained. In all honesty, my ultimate career choice was heavily determined from my family, and my fear of disappointing them by not picking something reliable enough.

- **What subjects do you think it would be useful for Year 11 & 12 students to undertake and why?**

I think it's important and useful for almost any student to study English and Maths. With this foundation, you can get anywhere! I would also recommend studying what you enjoy, no matter what that is, and finding a balance if that's possible. There is a lot of stress and pressure put on Year 11 and 12 students, and I think that's unnecessary at times. If you can fill your programme with things you enjoy doing, it makes it much easier!

- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

Whenever you can, look at what kind of tasters or experience you might be able to get at a university or in the industry. Different universities offer experience weeks for different courses and careers. Sometimes going through these you might learn that it is exactly what you want, or that it's nothing like you thought. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask questions to people who work in the area, because they're happy to help. That being said, it's okay to change your mind once you get there too!

### AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

I went straight from school to university, and started working at Barwon Water in my 3rd to 4th year of uni.

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

I now have a Bachelor of Civil Engineering (honours) degree. This qualification allows me to work in the engineering field and complete a wide range of activities. Currently, my work is very water specific, however my degree would allow me to work in construction, railway, roads, transport, infrastructure, building design, and so many other fields. Similarly, it puts me in a good position to look towards project management in the future and many other areas.

- **What did you do after Year 12?**

I went straight to university after year 12 and spent the summer working in a clothing warehouse.

- **What factors led you to decide on your chosen course?**

I was interested in a lot of things, including urban planning, architecture, maths, science, music and much more. I thought that civil engineering could be a stepping stone into any of these things and had enough maths and science to keep me interested. There was also some family pressure to pick a 'safe' or 'sensible' degree.

- **Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?**

For a long time I thought I would be most interested in the road and traffic management side of civil engineering. It was my overseas study in 2018 that showed me that while I liked roads and transport, what I was really passionate about was fluid mechanics and the environment. When I returned, my course was a lot about water and hydrology. The combination of my passion and the passion and support of the teaching staff was enough to tip me back into the water and environmental side of things.

## THE FUTURE

- **If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?**

There are so many possibilities, it's hard to know! No matter where I was, I'd like to think I'd take my care for the environment and sustainability with me.

- **What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?**

For now, I still have 16 months of the graduate program to complete. Beyond this I'm still unsure about where I'd like to be heading. I can see myself eventually returning to further study on water resource management and policy, but I can also see myself finding a pathway to this through the industry. I'd like to know more about carbon emissions and other environmental management subjects. In the future I'd like to be in a management position of some description, but exactly where or what this might look like is yet to be determined. As long as I'm in a position where I can make a positive impact, I'll be happy.



**Lane Appleby** – *ICT Service Desk Coordinator*  
*Lower Murray Water*

## THIS ROLE

- **What led you to apply for this job?**

The opportunity to work for a larger organisation than I previously had, take on more responsibility and further my skills in ICT.

- **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

Configuring servers both in production and development environments, maintaining connectivity between our endpoints (data centre to treatment plants and pumpstations etc.), configuring new hardware for end users and supporting end users in their day-to-day issues.

- **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

Ensuring high levels of systems and communications uptimes. Ensure scheduled works and outages are well communicated to all impacted parties including protection against data loss via a backup and disaster recovery solution.

- **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

I get to work on large scale ICT projects. These projects simplify the lives of our end users to improve productivity.

- **What are you most proud of?**

Managing and Maintaining ICT Systems that were flexible enough to allow a 'working from home' experience, that was uninterrupted during COVID. Also, managing and working on projects such as our video conferencing upgrade and high-speed fibre installations to our remote sites for improved reliability on our network.

- **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

Problem solving, working under pressure, an in-depth knowledge of Microsoft and Networking Systems.

## THE INDUSTRY

- **How long have you been working in this field?**

15 years.

- **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

IT is a part of almost every industry/business. There are always new opportunities and options to try something new.

## HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

- **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I was more capable in Science and Maths as opposed to English. I left school after year 11 and went to TAFE as a Trainee.

- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

In year 10 I had no idea what career I would pursue. I enjoyed working with computers, however, I still hadn't made any career decisions at the time.

- **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

I enjoyed working on cars and gaming/building computers. Both provided a chance to improve on my problem-solving abilities.

- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

Cyber security and software development are increasingly important skills for someone thinking of entering an IT Career.



### AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

I left school at the end of year 11 and got hired as a Helpdesk Trainee.

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

I have a Cert 3 in Systems Administration from my traineeship, however, its fairly dated by today's standards. A Degree or Diploma would make for a great underlying qualification. I have now undertaken training on the key systems I administer for my current role.

- **Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?**

Leaving School in year 11 was a big step. Completing my traineeship in IT was when my career started gaining traction. I've taken on higher roles at different organisations and gained new skills with each job change, both business and ICT related.



**Lucy Baranowski** – *Apprentice Electrician 2nd Year*  
*Barwon Water*

## THIS ROLE

- **What led you to apply for this job?**

I always wanted to be engaged in a career that allowed me to be forever learning in an area that is continually growing and expanding with new improvements. I love that there is an answer and a way of doing things to achieve the best possible outcome.

- **What does your current job involve?**

Assisting and learning with an A-Grade Electrician. Being willing to learn, to become the best possible apprentice leading on to best possible A-Grade Electrician.

- **What kind of setting do you work in? An office, outdoors etc.?**

I work in the outdoors mostly and love every minute of it.

- **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

Being a sparky is never quite so linear, you can be in a tunnel one day and then doing an underground the next. It's always changing and always providing an environment to learn.

- **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

To always be engaged, willing to listen and highly willing to learn. Understanding the responsibilities for yourself and those around you. It's knowing where you're at and being able to do the work that is expected of you.

- **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

I love the variety of what I do, every day there is something new to learn and every day is an experience unlike the day before. You're engaging with people who have a wealth of knowledge and are willing to teach you. There's nothing I would change in what I do.

- **What are you most proud of?**

I'm proud of where I am at the moment, I've worked hard to be here and to get this far. Finishing Year 12 I never imagined I'd be in the position I am now. 18 year old me would be proud. I worked hard and it came through.

- **What's the most exciting thing to have happened at work?**

I think thus far, the most exciting thing for me has been working in a tunnel that ran underneath a dam, which was pretty damn cool.

- **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

The biggest skill is wanting to learn and to improve yourself to get the best possible outcome, that's rewarding. Being a good listener goes a long way as well as being hands on.

## THE INDUSTRY

- **How long have you been working in this field?**

I have been in the electrical industry for nearly 2 years now.

- **What do you think are the best things about the industry?**

The support of my co-workers around me and them engaging with me to better myself and my learning, helping me to become a skilled electrician.



### HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

- **What subjects did you enjoy at school?**

I actually loved Studio Arts, History, English and Outdoor Education. They all taught me valuable life lessons and provided me with valuable knowledge.

- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

Honestly in Year 10 I thought I was going to be a pilot, I knew I wanted something hands on.

- **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

I knew I wanted to be hands on and engaging myself in such a way that allowed me to keep learning. My interests were always helping in and around the community. Knowing that providing a service that was beneficial really solidified my desire to be always learning and moving.

- **What subjects do you think it would be useful for Year 11 & 12 students to undertake and why?**

I think understanding basic mathematics and English are important to what I do, but I think as long as you're open and willing to learn you're in with a good shot.

- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

Go for it, give it a go, and learn all you can. And never stop asking questions. Questions lead to learning.

### AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

I did year 12 over two years which allowed me to fall into step after finishing year 12. I worked a few part time jobs and had a few gap years to really settle into what I wanted to do.

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

I completed year 12 as well as a pre-apprenticeship which gave me a taste of what I wanted to do, as well as gave me prior knowledge before landing an apprenticeship. I highly suggest it for all!

- **What did you do after Year 12?**

I worked a few part times jobs here and there to fill in the gaps before finding an apprenticeship. I went on a lot of adventures.

- **Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?**

Landing an apprenticeship was probably my biggest key milestone to date, there were certainly a few in between that taught me lifelong lessons.



**Mary Claire Sheridan** – *Operations Scheduler*  
*Melbourne Water*

## THIS ROLE

### • **What led you to apply for this job?**

I was doing the role as a contractor, so not permanently employed by Melbourne Water. I had worked for Melbourne Water previously as a Project Manager and knew they were a good company to work for. Additionally, the role would be the first time I had a desk-based role, as previously I had always worked on site, so it would allow me to better manage my health and wellbeing.

### • **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

My job is unique in that it's 50% managing people and facilitating meetings and 50% managing the operations program, scheduling work, looking 90 days ahead and evaluating if we have enough capacity to deliver work. Some days I am running or attending 5 or 6 meetings while other days I am using different software to manage our program of works.

### • **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

To ensure we have enough capacity to deliver our works, to schedule and program in works in the next 30 days and 90 days. To communicate with our service providers and give them visibility on upcoming work. To facilitate good relationships between the Delivery team (who carry out the work on site) and the various Initiator groups (who have given us the work to do) which include Water Supply, Sewerage, Major Projects, Minor Capital and Waterways & Land Regional Services.

### • **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

I love that I get to use both sides of my brain; that I can spend the day communicating with people and building relationships or spend the day working on software like Excel or Maximo to plan the program. If I could change one thing, it would be to get outside onto site a little bit more. I miss that part of my old job a wee bit where I could see the different Waterways or Treatment Plans in Melbourne.

### • **What are you most proud of?**

I am most proud of my contribution to my team in helping everyone work together in a more consistent way and communicate with each other more. In addition to the role, I support a lot of men's and women's health sessions in the business and support the discussion on topics like mental health, pregnancy & miscarriage, menstruation, gynaecological health and gender equity. In 2021 we held a full day dedicated to health for Women's Health Week involving people of all genders and we had 142 people attend! It helped to normalise conversations around topics which are difficult to discuss such as miscarriages, gender equity, gynaecology health, IVF treatment etc., and made a significant impact to people's health & wellbeing.

### • **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

Communication skills and emotional intelligence; being able to build good relationships with people. Computer skills and confidence with software like Excel and Maximo. The ability to think ahead, analyse data and see the domino effect of different actions.

## THE INDUSTRY

### • **How long have you been working in this field?**

I have been working in the construction industry for approximately 13 years and specifically in the scheduling role for almost 1.5 years.

### • **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

If you're someone who likes to see the tangible output of your efforts, then you'll suit this industry. It can be difficult sometimes as the culture has not been inclusive sometimes so I'd advise you to have a strong sense of self and find your support system and a mentor who can help you navigate it. The industry can be small and if you leave a job, always leave on good terms, you never know when you'll come back (I've come back to the same company twice!).

## HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

### • **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I was pretty academic, I did well in most subjects, but I hated and really struggled with maths! Which is funny seeing as I went on to study engineering at university. When I decided I would study engineering, I got tutoring outside of school to help me with my maths. I was a C student in Honours Maths even with the help, but it was enough to get me into university! I didn't LOVE school, I didn't hate it either, but I couldn't wait to finish school. In Ireland, we get the option to do 5 years or 6 years at secondary school and I did the 5 years! Not a hope was I staying in school for 1 year longer.



- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

I went to school in Ireland, so I think Year 10 is similar to our “Junior Cert” year. I didn’t have a clue what I wanted to do when I was 15. I knew I’d probably do further education, and I picked the subjects which gave me the most options for university. I knew I didn’t want to do medicine, law or teaching and I narrowed it down to either engineering/construction or something to do with the outdoors or exercise. In a geography class, I had been struck by how many people in our world don’t have access to clean water or sewage treatment and that stayed with me helping me to decide to do environmental & civil engineering later in my Leaving Cert year (Year 12).

- **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

My father was a builder so building sites and construction was familiar to me. It wasn’t that daunting of a prospect to consider engineering as a future. I knew I liked figuring things out and coming up with solutions to things plus I liked being outside so engineering/construction gave me that option. I was pretty active; I didn’t play any competitive sports but loved competing and I loved swimming and water sports so a future in exercise or the outdoors was also an option.

- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

Think about what you find fulfilling in terms of the day to day. Do you like talking to people, do you like analysing data, do you like reading and being detailed in specifics or do you love spending 100% of your time outdoors or do you feel fulfilled painting. Get to know yourself and what you enjoy and are good at and then find a career that matches your skills. Also remember that our generation can change careers multiple times now. Most people I know who studied engineering have changed industries and work in completely different careers now.

## AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

I finished school at 17 and went straight to university where I studied engineering for 4 years. Before I graduated university, I had a job lined up as a Graduate Engineer with an engineering consultancy firm. When I graduated, I took 3 months holidays and then I started in that job. I had contemplated taking a year off after university to travel, but my older sister advised me that it was harder to find work overseas without experience. So, I decided to work for a few years, get some experience and make some money and then go travelling.

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

Bachelor of Civil & Environmental Engineering (Honours)

- **Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?**

After working as a Graduate Engineer for 3 years, I quit my job (on good terms & gave plenty of notice) and travelled around South America for 6 months and then travelled to Australia. I had no plans for Australia; I had the 1 year Working Holiday Visa and thought I’d try and get some work as an engineer and see how it went! I got a 3 month contract working for a construction company as a site engineer and they then offered me a working visa if I agreed to do a fly in fly out project. After a few years working for them as a project manager, I then got my Residency Visa and was able to change companies.

After working for Melbourne Water for 4 years, I felt unfulfilled and did some career coaching with a psychologist. I then decided to pursue aid work and got a job with Engineers Without Borders. I resigned from my job (on good terms & gave loads of notice) and moved to Cambodia to manage a sanitation project for 1.5 years. I then returned to Melbourne and got a short-term contract working as a project manager.

After working in Cambodia and working as a project manager, I felt really burned out. So, I went back to Ireland to take some time out for myself. I left on a one-way ticket with no pressure or plans and spent 9 months relaxing at home and travelling around Europe. It was the best thing for my mental and physical health.

## THE FUTURE

- **If you weren’t working in this area, what would you be doing?**

Possibly the international aid sector or something to do with health and wellbeing.

- **What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?**

I don’t know! I don’t really do forward planning. I tend to go with my gut and my intuition which has guided me really well so far. I trust my gut; it sometimes tells me things aren’t quite right when logically everything seems fine. I just need the courage to follow my instincts and intuition.





### **Max Goodwin** – Graduate Engineer – Project Delivery

GWM Water

Qualification – Bachelor of Civil and Infrastructure Engineering

I applied for my current role as I was looking for experience coming out of uni. I wanted a job that allowed me to manage my own projects and focused on construction management and project engineering. My current role involves tendering projects, selecting the most suitable contractor, and managing the contractor throughout the duration of the project. I have been in this role for 1.5 years.

My favourite subjects at school were physics, PE and outdoor ed but I was also good at maths and science type subjects. I was a motivated student and wanted to do well in the subjects I was interested in, however, I spent most of my free time playing sports and hanging out with friends. When I was in year 10, I had no idea what kind of career I wanted. I did work experience with a project management company for events and thought the job seemed interesting but stressful.

I then went from high school to studying a Bachelor of Civil and Infrastructure Engineering at RMIT University in Melbourne. The course appeared interesting and had a wide variety of different career pathways and opportunities. I went straight into studying Uni full time. Throughout my degree I took some time off to travel and experience new things.

Day-to-day tasks in my current role at GWM Water include preparing contract documents & Request For Quotes's, responding to technical queries from contractors, writing reports and technical memos, processing contractor payments and variations and attending project team meetings. I mostly use Microsoft office suite and some use of GIS and SCADA viewer systems.

I find my role rewarding with a wide range of different projects. I travel frequently due to the wide area of work locations.

My job is interesting because of the different variety of projects requiring me to use different engineering skills and technical knowledge. Projects span across a range of civil, mechanical, and electrical knowledge.

If you're keen to get into this industry, I suggest trying to organise work experience and learn how the systems work and if it interests you. Try to acquire as much industry experience as possible and ask questions of people who may be in similar industries to ascertain if it's something you may be interested in.





**Patrick Tanner** – *Graduate Engineer, Early Career*  
*Barwon Water*

## THIS ROLE

### • **What led you to apply for this job?**

I applied for the Barwon Water graduate program to gain a diverse range of experience within the Water Industry and learn more about the different water systems which service our local regions and cities. I have always been inspired by water and the essential role it plays in society. I saw the Barwon Water graduate program as an opportunity to connect with the water industry and gain an in depth understanding of how clean water is produced from beginning to end.

### • **What does your current job involve?**

I am currently at the beginning of my 2nd rotation of the Barwon Water graduate program spending the next 8 months in the Water Resources Team within the broader Asset Planning Department where my current roles and responsibilities include:

1. Options assessments
2. Options investigations and development
3. Historical data analysis
4. Long term water storage forecasting
5. Provision of general engineering support
6. Asset planning process improvement projects

### • **What kind of setting do you work in? An office, outdoors etc.?**

Throughout both my 1st and 2nd rotations at Barwon Water I have worked both from home and from the office. The majority of my work is desk based, however I have had the opportunity to go on site visits to various assets in the Geelong region.

### • **What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?**

As a graduate engineer in Asset Planning, I am responsible for a diverse range of tasks and responsibilities on a daily basis. These tasks largely include:

1. Providing engineering support in the form of data analysis for options assessments. Option assessments help to determine which infrastructure upgrades will provide the most cost-benefit.
2. Long term improvement projects such as GIS improvement. This involves setting up a project with IT to increase the functionality of GIS for the benefit of Asset Planning.
3. Data analysis and data manipulation which is then used to help create new and updated water forecasting models.
4. Short term investigations to determine whether current options and infrastructure needs to be updated.

### • **What kind of specific systems or platforms do you work with?**

Currently in Asset Planning the majority of the data analysis and modelling I do is performed through Excel. However, I occasionally also use software including ClearSCADA for when I require information regarding asset operation and system overview. I also use Lab Database for when I require information regarding water quality results when I am assessing the efficacy of new infrastructure in raw water basins and catchments.

### • **What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?**

The coordinator of the Water Resources Team is the person I report to most directly. Their role is to oversee and coordinate all projects concerned with Water Resources planning, this includes infrastructure upgrades which aim to increase storage capacity at Barwon Water catchments as well as yield harvest from rainfall. They also oversee future forecasting and modelling of the region's water supply. They are also responsible for ensuring the future water security of the Greater Geelong Region.

### • **What do you love about your current job? What would you change?**

What I most love about my job is that being in the graduate program allows me to experience a diverse range of roles within the water industry. I gain a holistic understanding of various water systems and how it fits into the process of harvesting raw water from the environment, treating it and then delivering it to the community.

If I could change one thing about my work at Barwon Water it's that I would try to incorporate more site visits and in-field experience alongside my office based work. I feel this would provide me with greater practical experience and understanding of various water systems and assets within the region.



- **What are you most proud of?**

Thus far in the graduate program, I am most proud of persisting through my first rotation in Product Quality despite having faced some new and diverse engineering challenges in field in which I had no prior experience in. I have been able to develop a growth mindset which is resilient when faced with work which at first seemed overwhelming.

- **What's the most exciting thing to have happened at work?**

I get most excited at work when I get the opportunity to participate in operational tasks which involve site visits and outdoor field work. Through this kind of exposure I get to obtain a practical understanding of how Barwon Water assets and water systems actually work.

- **What keeps your job interesting?**

Every day I get to be involved in a diverse range of both operational and long term strategical projects. I am continually learning new engineering and professional concepts and skills through the projects I am involved with. The prospect of learning new skills and advancing my own engineering career keeps the job interesting every day.

- **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

As a graduate engineer, attention to detail, resilience and patience are some of the most essential skills to achieving success. Resilience and patience are particularly important given that I am always learning new and sometimes difficult concepts which require time to properly master and implement. Adaptability is also an extremely important skill for a graduate going through rotations as I am constantly having to adapt to new engineering concepts and work environments.

## THE INDUSTRY

- **How long have you been working in this field?**

At the beginning of 2019 I obtained casual work as an undergraduate engineer in operations. I worked in this position for approximately 2 years until the start of 2021 when I graduated and was lucky enough to be selected for the Barwon Water graduate program having completed my 1st rotation in Product Quality and now having just started my 2nd rotation in Asset Planning.

- **What do you think are the best things about the industry?**

I believe one of the best things about working in the water industry is the fact that I get to be in an environment where every person involved is passionate and motivated by their work. Every day as an engineer in the water industry I get to participate in meaningful work and directly contribute to the prosperity of the region. It's a very energising and motivating environment to be a part of.

- **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

My advice would be not to wait and just begin looking for any opportunities in the sector to help start building your experience straight away regardless if you're about to graduate from your course or just beginning. Water systems are large and complex assets and the more exposure and understanding you can gain now will help you in the long term and throughout your career. Be proactive and start emailing or calling a variety of different companies and authorities. You never know what opportunities may arise when you're actively searching for them.

## HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

- **What subjects did you enjoy at school?**

In Year 11 and 12, I took mainly STEM based subjects including maths, physics and chemistry. In hindsight I realised the subjects which I enjoyed most were languages and humanities. In my free time outside of work I now usually read or study these humanity based topics as I find it therapeutic and relaxing. I think it's really important in any career to be well rounded and to have an interest and appreciation for the study of humanities and languages, as these subjects help to shape our understanding of the world around us as well as develop our soft skills.

- **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I mostly enjoyed school and felt well supported. I really enjoyed learning new things every day and had a natural curiosity. I think looking back I could have studied much smarter through a practical approach and putting new concepts into context rather than just accepting and settling for a rote learning approach.

- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

I didn't have any specific career in mind that I wanted to pursue, however I had an idea that I wanted it to be in a STEM field, such as medicine or engineering.

- **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

Throughout school, camping, hiking, travelling and languages have always excited me in a way which most other things do not. I think these interests have naturally helped shape my passion for the environment, sustainability and domestic and international development. I believe this is the main reason why I chose Civil Engineering as a career path. It is a career choice which allows me to work and gain new experiences within my fields of interest.

- **What subjects do you think it would be useful for Year 11 & 12 students to undertake and why?**

My advice would be to choose a diverse range of subjects which you enjoy and subjects which are pre-requisites that you may need for a particular course after school. This broadens your options and adds pleasure to what you're studying to make a stressful time just a little bit easier. You are much more likely to succeed and flourish in subjects which you enjoy rather than picking subjects which you think you should be doing due to external pressures or increased scaling.

- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

My advice is they should just go out there and look for any opportunity available which may provide them exposure to the industry. Try to gain exposure to a diverse range of roles and departments within the water industry to understand the assets and water systems entire life cycle. From Asset Planning to Project Delivery when the asset is being planned and built, to Operations and Product Quality when the asset is delivering water to the customer. It is very OK to not know what you want to do after year 12, so just go out and gain experience in areas that you think you'd be passionate about and motivated by.

## AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

After I finished Year 12, I took a gap year to work and travel. When I started university in Melbourne, I eventually dropped out of the course I was studying at the time and took an extended break from study to work different jobs and figure out what I actually wanted to do in my career. I eventually decided to move to Geelong to begin studying Civil Engineering, which I have now graduated from. It is the culmination of all these experiences which helped me to figure out what actions I needed to take to help place me in the career that I eventually wanted.

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

I have recently just completed my Bachelor of Civil Engineering. I chose to study civil engineering as it is a degree which allows me to work in a virtually unlimited range of careers spanning from construction, water, roads, rail, major infrastructure projects, land development, civil construction, environment and sustainability and international development. As a civil engineer there are also many opportunities to travel, both regionally and internationally.

- **What did you do after Year 12?**

After Year 12 I took a gap year to save money for university, do some travelling and take a break from study. Taking a gap year was the best thing I could have done for myself as it gave me a chance to breathe after Year 12.

- **What factors led you to decide on your chosen course?**

I chose to study Civil Engineering at university because of the diversity in industries and careers which are possible through this discipline. I have always been inspired by the prospect of working in public infrastructure as well as infrastructure which can be implemented in developing countries and how it can better the lives of millions who use it. This is ultimately what drew me to Civil Engineering.

- **Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?**

I think the two main milestones which I have experienced in my career path to date include graduating from university and completing my 1st rotation in Product Quality through the Barwon Water graduate program.

## THE FUTURE

- **If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?**

If I wasn't in engineering I would want to be working in the foreign affairs space, whether that be in the public sector or international development. I've always been inspired by the diverse range of cultures and languages that exist in the Asia-Pacific and would want to work in an environment where I could potentially travel and advance Australia's bi-lateral relationship and partnership with our closest neighbours.

- **What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?**

I haven't really thought too far into the future regarding what I might be doing as I am just focusing on completing the graduate program with a high degree of competency. However whatever I'm doing, I want it to involve many new and exciting experiences.



**Rita Kale** – Project Manager (3.5 years)  
Yarra Valley Water

## THIS ROLE

### • *What led you to apply for this job?*

My first job as graduate was at Lendlease in corporate sustainability, where I worked on building and property development sustainability initiatives. I enjoyed working there, but was passionate about water, so I moved to a water engineering role with Jacobs. I also spent 6 months working on different water projects in India. I was gaining engineering technical skills, but realised change happens at the strategic level. I wanted to be part of that, and in-turn, it led me to apply for a job at Yarra Valley Water in a long-term planning role.

### • *What does your current job involve?*

I'm currently working on the Hazelwynde land development project. Yarra Valley Water is looking to partner with a developer, to develop 740ha block of land in Melbourne's north. We're working through planning what the development will look like and what initiatives will take place e.g., to be zero carbon and energy positive, circular economy (during both the development of project and once its established), to be water positive (generating more water than needed and exporting it from the development), having a significant tree canopy, and supporting the community with affordable housing. I've also been working with traditional owners to incorporate their knowledge and experience into project.

### • *What kind of setting do you work in? An office, outdoors etc.?*

I work mostly in the office. Outside of lockdown, I might visit sites roughly once a month during the early phase of a project, to better understand the site.

### • *What are the different types of tasks you undertake on a daily basis?*

Preparing briefing papers for board or government to influence their decision making, working on developing an approach for some of the initiatives, and conducting internal and external presentations.

### • *What kind of specific systems or platforms do you work with?*

- Microsoft Office, particularly excel
- Visio, for drawing
- Primavera, for project management
- Infoworks, for hydraulic modelling.

### • *What are the major responsibilities of someone in your role?*

Project management, working with consultants, developing the scope for work, managing time and budget for those pieces of work, cultural engagement, managing framework and strategic direction for these initiatives.

### • *What do you love about your current job? What would you change?*

**Love:** My job not only draws on a particular set of skills, but it allows me to genuinely contribute to making the world a better place. With long term projects and the big picture, you can see how you're making a difference in that vision, for the community.

**Change:** The biggest challenge is how long it takes to get some things done. We know the things we're doing are good for the community, however, it takes a while to get them implemented.

### • *What are you most proud of?*

Some of the conversations I've had with the traditional owners, the Wurundjeri Peoples.

I'm proud that our relationship with the group has really improved and we've built a lot more trust and understanding over the past 12 months. I've been committed to maintaining a dialogue and keeping the conversation going.

### • *What keeps your job interesting?*

Working with lots of organisations and stakeholders including people in different disciplines, for example, the development industry, construction, urban planning, environmental studies, biodiversity specialists, transport, health, and community NFPs.

Having access to diverse thoughts and people with different backgrounds and perspectives.



- **What kind of skills are essential for your role?**

Being able to work through uncertain and messy situations, the ability to take a dynamic and adaptive approach to project management, develop clear plans and pathways (even though they can constantly change), time management and working within short time frames, and systems thinking.

## THE INDUSTRY

- **How long have you been working in this field?**

6.5 years

- **What do you think are the best things about the industry?**

The water industry isn't profit-driven, rather it focuses on community needs and delivering essential services.

The industry culture reflects needs or basic rights as opposed to keeping costs down and making money. It's an inclusive and progressive industry to be in and provides opportunities to contribute beyond Australia to water and sanitation access across the world.

- **What advice would you have for anyone thinking about working in the industry?**

There's a lot of great information about the industry available online, and water corporations have new graduate programs. Have a conversation with someone that works in the industry to gain an understanding of how it might link in with your specific interests and motivations.

## HOW I GOT HERE – SCHOOL

- **What subjects did you enjoy at school?**

Maths, geography, environmental related studies, and history.

- **What was school like for you? What sort of student were you?**

I was pretty nerdy at school, although I didn't always study as hard as I could or should have. I took academics seriously but still had fun and was involved in music, sport, and plays.

- **Thinking back to when you were in Year 10, what career did you want to pursue?**

I wasn't sure, but I was considering health science/medical law. I also considered pursuing music.

- **What interests did you have outside school that helped inform your career choice?**

Music, which I considered pursuing, and almost studied at uni. Other than music, nothing helped inform my career choice.

- **What subjects do you think it would be useful for Year 11 & 12 students to undertake and why?**

Maths! Every industry uses some form of maths. It's needed for lots of professions. To name a few; engineering, IT, healthcare, construction, and business management. Understanding finance can be useful too. Humanities is also important, for example, an understanding of current affairs and global issues including the macro things happening around the world that influence you and your job, but you might not think about.

- **What advice would you give to a young person who might be interested in this kind of career?**

Seek out people in the industry, ask questions, and have a chat.  
Try organising work experience to gain a taste of what the industry's all about.  
The work might interest you in theory but feel differently about it in practice.  
It's a good idea to get an idea before committing to a pathway.

## AFTER SCHOOL

- **What type of transition did you make from school?**

I went straight to uni when I finished school.

- **Do you have any formal qualifications? What do the qualifications allow you to do?**

Bachelor of Environments and a Masters in Engineering.

- **What did you do after Year 12?**

I did a year of uni, then went on exchange. I also worked part-time in retail.

- **What factors led you to decide on your chosen course?**

I had conversations with teachers at school, parents, and friends, around deciding what to do. I wasn't sure if I wanted to study engineering, but I applied anyway. I was good at maths and enjoyed geography and environmental issues. My interests and strengths led me to engineering, but the decision to continue with engineering was made after I started and realised I was happy with my chosen pathway.

- **Most career journeys are not linear. What are some of the key milestones or events in your career path to date?**

Being involved with 'Engineers without Borders', steered the path of what I wanted to move towards.

I recognised that many issues in developing countries come back to water and sanitation. My first job at Lendlease was important, as it opened a whole new set of jobs in an area in which I could have an impact and wasn't something I'd thought of before.

It got me thinking about a whole different career path, one not necessarily linked to the water pathway I was working towards.

Once I started working in water, I understood that the strategic level was where I could make a difference.

After a few years, I pulled away from technical engineering and realised it wasn't for me. I respect the work of engineers, but technical detail isn't my biggest strength.

## THE FUTURE

- **If you weren't working in this area, what would you be doing?**

I'd be doing social development work overseas, opening a café, or working for a local NFP in community development.

- **What do you see yourself doing next and into the future?**

I'm not sure what's next, so I'm going with the flow. The most important lesson I've been learning throughout my career is, lots of opportunities come up when you don't expect it and haven't planned for them. There's an element of 'jumping on the bandwagon' when you can, or the opportunity might not come up again when you want it to. I'm always looking for different opportunities to further my skills and 'step up', in order to aim for a more senior role. I'd potentially like to work overseas in the future.