

# New Water Stewardship Appointments

Melbourne and Edinburgh 23 July 2015

The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS), an international not-for-profit organisation developing and promoting water stewardship as a mechanism to engage corporations and business in good water stewardship, and Water Stewardship Australia (WSA), an Australian not-for-profit organisation representing AWS and promoting water stewardship in the Asia Pacific region, have announced two new appointments. Zhenzhen Xu will become the Asia Pacific Regional Manager for the organisations based in Shanghai China and Richard Robertson will become Technical Manager based in Vancouver Canada. Both bring considerable relevant experience to the development, management and promotion of water stewardship, particularly in the Asia Pacific region that is experiencing major water challenges.

Zhenzhen Xu will focus initially on the development and promotion of water stewardship in China where she will work with international and national corporations, government and civil society to develop and implement water stewardship projects. AWS and WSA already have a number of partners in China with a strong commitment to water stewardship as a tool for engaging corporations in good water management. Zhenzhen will build on these relationships and develop a network to facilitate or lead projects that can demonstrate the potential of water stewardship in key catchments. She will also engage with AWS partners in India and South East Asia to develop water stewardship projects and demonstrate the value of the water stewardship system. Her role will include coordination of training services and capacity building in the region. She will be supported in this role by WSA and AWS. Water stewardship projects and capacity building in the Pacific will continue to be managed from Australia for the time being.

Zhenzhen brings to the role considerable experience with water and working with the corporate sector. She is currently employed by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), part of the World Bank Group, in Beijing as an operations officer providing advisory services within the Resource Efficiency Business Unit. She is co-leader of the IFC China Water Program. Prior to this she spent four years with Veolia Water in China as a business development officer and project manager in China. She also spent two years with Sogreah Environmental Protection Consultancy as a water engineer. Zhenzhen holds a Bachelor of Environmental Engineering from Shanghai Tongji University and a Master of Environmental Management and Development from the Australian National University in Canberra. She is accredited in water footprint assessment and project management. She will commence on 1 August.

The appointment of a Technical Manager will be an important step forward for AWS and coincides with the publication of the AWS verification system requirements. Richard Robertson will be responsible for ensuring that accreditation and verification programs progressively meet or exceed best practice; for the management of AWS certification processes including the undertaking of witness audits, and; the review of the international water stewardship standard scheduled to commence in 2016. He will provide technical support for regional program managers and support for capacity building activities. Richard will manage AWS compliance with ISEAL requirements and contribute to systems for building knowledge about water stewardship and tracking outcomes achieved.

Richard will bring to the role extensive experience in audit, assurance and verification systems as well as experience with standards development and management of consensus based, multi-stakeholder processes. Richard is currently working part time as a consultant to AWS. He is a Lead Assessor for Accreditation Services International and gives technical advice to other resource management schemes. He has previously worked as the Policy and Standards Program Manger for the Forest Stewardship Council. A forester by training, Richard worked for FSC for over a decade and oversaw the development of FSC Standards in over 40 countries, as well as managing the International Generic Indicator process. Richard will commence work on July 20th.

Executive Director of the Alliance for Water Stewardship, Adrian Sym, said the appointments represented a major milestone for both the organisation and the development of water stewardship internationally. He said the new appointments add to recent announcements of Regional Managers for North America and Southern Africa. "Building a strong and highly-skilled international team will ensure that water stewardship is an important part of resolving water challenges globally while ensuring we have the expertise we need to support our growing team of accredited auditors, consultants and trainers."

Water Stewardship Australia Executive Secretary, and AWS Chair, Michael Spencer, said the appointments would allow the organisation to realise its goal of building water stewardship through supply chains into the most populous areas of the world where water was a crucial economic, environmental and social issue. "It is essential that solving these water problems becomes a collaborative effort between business, government and civil society if we are to make the breakthroughs needed to solve the world's water crises."

These appointments are made possible by the generous support of the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The Australian Government is committed to involving business in resolving water challenges and creating pathways for sustainable development in the Indo Pacific region.

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