

Water Policy

News

Title: **Australia Highlights Lack Of Water Governance In Canada**

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Content: There is a lack of water governance in Canada, especially at the federal level. Oil sands water technology is improving and most of the water used in oil sands production is now recycled.

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Trends and opportunities, The market:

Climate change (evaporation of fresh surface water), Canada's major energy and resource sectors, bulk water exports, rapid urban growth, and subsequent ageing infrastructure are all driving the country's water drain at a time when water demand is at an all time high in Canada.

Sixty per cent of Canada's rivers flow north into the Arctic and most are difficult to access. In addition, the country's supply of glacier water is not replaceable and difficult to reach. Canada has the highest individual consumption of water after the USA and doesn't have a national water policy in place.

There is a lack of water governance in Canada, especially at the federal level. The Conference Board of Canada has said that Canada is not ready for the challenges ahead, including demand on resources due to global economic growth and continued climate change.

Management of water use

Residential and commercial water use for consumption, manufacturing and local agriculture is primarily managed by local utilities and municipalities. Provincial governments manage water rights (especially in rural areas) in terms of licences, usage, and allowing transfers of water. For example, British Columbia has identified 8,000 small run-of-river hydro energy sites on Canada's west coast.

Major industry (natural resources and energy companies) also play a major role in securing their water sources.

Most wastewater systems are owned and operated by municipalities. All levels of government share the responsibility for managing the collection, treatment and release of wastewater effluent. Federal Government is responsible for managing the risks posed by substances listed under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999. They also own, operate or fund a number of federal wastewater treatment and collection systems.

Canada's major water users

Drought patterns are returning to the Canadian Prairie Provinces - river systems like the South Saskatchewan, Old Man, Peace and Athabasca show signs of drying up. These drought patterns are bound to intensify with global warming. Already, the glacier that feeds the important Bow River in Alberta is melting quicker than expected. These rivers serve as critical infrastructure to major industry sectors, mainly agriculture, natural resources, and energy.

In Alberta's oil fields, oil extraction alone requires a ratio of 2-6 of water to produce one barrel of oil. New transcontinental pipelines from Alberta's oil sands and massive refinery expansions in the US Midwest are creating a 'pollution delivery system' that threatens air and water quality and human health in the Great Lakes Basin. Oil sands water technology is improving and most of the water used in oil sands production is now recycled. This

reduces the draw on fresh water sources. However, the sheer size and growth of these operations means that overall water use remains very significant.

The other major water users within Canada's energy sector are thermal electric generators (almost two out of every three litres of Canada's annual water supply are withdrawn from thermal power generation) and hydroelectric power plants. The energy industry is the single largest user of water in Canada.

Canada's agricultural industry, which is about 40 per cent crop fields, is concentrated in the western half of the country where it now competes for water with the vibrant oil and gas sectors. This puts pressure on food production for domestic and export markets.

Development of water conservation programs and future progress

Despite Canada's emerging water challenges, most Canadian provinces and municipalities are just now developing water conservation programs or are still conducting water demand management research and analysis:

Provinces and territories are expected to have a water conservation and efficiency strategy in place by the end of 2010.

Metering and pricing water is nowhere near mainstream and in most cases this measure is seen as a drastic last effort to meet water reduction goals. It's been suggested that Canada needs to begin reducing dependency on capital intense supply side solutions.

Municipal accounts for roughly nine per cent of all water usage in Canada (60 per cent goes to electricity generation alone) compared to the UK where the municipal water use figure is closer to 50 per cent.

There is slow but growing movement in Canada toward generating more water from conservation and efficiency.

Most proactive regions are focusing their programs on household and ICI water use rather than the much larger energy and agricultural users.

Canada's strategy is to achieve mass adoption of water conservation behaviour by first targeting households, schools, retailers, hotels, manufacturers and other light industrial sectors.

Education is phase 1 followed by action, which includes implementation of efficient toilet, shower, and landscape irrigation technologies.

Work-to-date has occurred in silos and now requires formalisation and clustering to gain momentum.

Grey and/or black water recycling are niche plays in Canada. Desalination projects are deep into the future.

USA based 'Alliance For Water Efficiency' has a growing Canadian chapter.

POLIS is Canada's leading water conservation academia and policy group.

Opportunities

Stimulus funds targeted for green infrastructure projects are anticipated to drive demand for environmental products and services significantly in Canada. Canada's National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) is undertaking a major new research program into the sustainability of water and Canada's natural resource sectors.

Examining the relationship between water and the resource sectors will lead to a clearer, deeper understanding of the policy issues and choices needed for the long-term sustainability of the country's water resource and how the forestry, mining, agricultural and energy sectors of its economy use it.

The dependent relationship between energy, water and food is just now being defined in Canada. Add the growing affects of climate change and Canada's need for cutting-edge water technologies, services, advice and leadership is likely to grow.

There are opportunities for Australian service and technology providers to enter Canada and make first mover advantage of the country's early stage adoption of water conservation, demand management, and efficiency programs and policies.

These include:

Providing services that help municipalities and cities with the development of their demand management programs and techniques including water audits, social marketing and related change programs.

Introducing new technologies and/or services that help specific sectors. For example, irrigation auditing and management within the ICI sector is under serviced in Canada.

Most municipalities have infrastructure upgrades or efficiency retrofits underway or in

the pipeline, which offer opportunities for companies holding experience with the latest procedures and technologies.

Servicing the manufacturing sector (specifically wine/brewery, food, and chemical) with energy efficiencies, internal wastewater treatment (grey and black), smart metering, pressure management, irrigation management, and leak detection solutions.

The majority of municipalities will use contractors/consultants who tend to source and use 3rd party expertise and products. The best way to participate in municipal RFPs is to partner early with a Canadian firm to form a consortium or be a supplier to them.

Municipalities prefer to work with one project manager in Canada. Still, it's smart to connect with municipalities directly as they can often be positive influencers.

Lastly, Canada is well serviced and a world leader in the niche areas of UV treatment and membrane separation technology although there may be room for collaboration in these areas.

Tariffs, regulations and customs

The Canadian Customs Tariff is based on the World Customs Organization's Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS). It is suggested that companies visit the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) website in greater detail to identify any import duties that may apply to their products.

It's also recommended that companies seek a final ruling from CBSA prior to shipping any product.

CBSA can be contacted at <http://cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/contact/general-generaux-eng.html> [1].

General Canada import requirements are also available at the Government of Canada website.

Marketing your products and services, Market entry

Canada is a very open economy that is receptive to new ideas due in part to a strong import culture and deep history of working with other nations. There are; however, a few points to consider:

Treat Canada as a highly competitive, mature and demanding market that has similar expectations in terms of readiness, competitiveness, and communication when compared to the USA and EU markets.

Don't automatically assume that Canada is the perfect 'springboard' into the US market. It can be, but many companies find that Canada is a high performing market on its own that can be very rewarding.

Be humble in your approach and do your research first - as much as Canadians enjoy dealing with Australia the ideas and solutions presented must make sense for the market, be competitive, and show clear ROI.

Understand that Canadians prefer to establish rapport and that relationships are key. Prompt response and easy communication is expected.

Although Canada and Australia share almost the same legal systems it is proactive to have a legal and taxation contact that can assist quickly when needed.

The Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) is the Australian Government's trade and investment development agency, operating as a statutory agency within the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio.

Austrade assists Australian businesses contribute to national prosperity by succeeding in trade and investment, internationally, and promoting and supporting productive foreign investment into Australia.

Austrade:

Delivers services that assist Australian businesses initiate, sustain and grow trade and outward investment.

Promotes Australia as an inward investment destination and, with the States and Territories, supports the inflow of productive foreign direct investment.

Administers the Export Market Development Grants scheme.

Undertakes initiatives designed to improve community awareness of, and commitment to, international trade and investment.

Provides advice to the Australian Government on its trade and investment development activities.

Delivers consular, passport and other government services in designated overseas

locations.

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[1] <http://cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/contact/general-generaux-eng.html>: <http://cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/contact/general-generaux-eng.html>

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