

Water industry showcase day toolkit

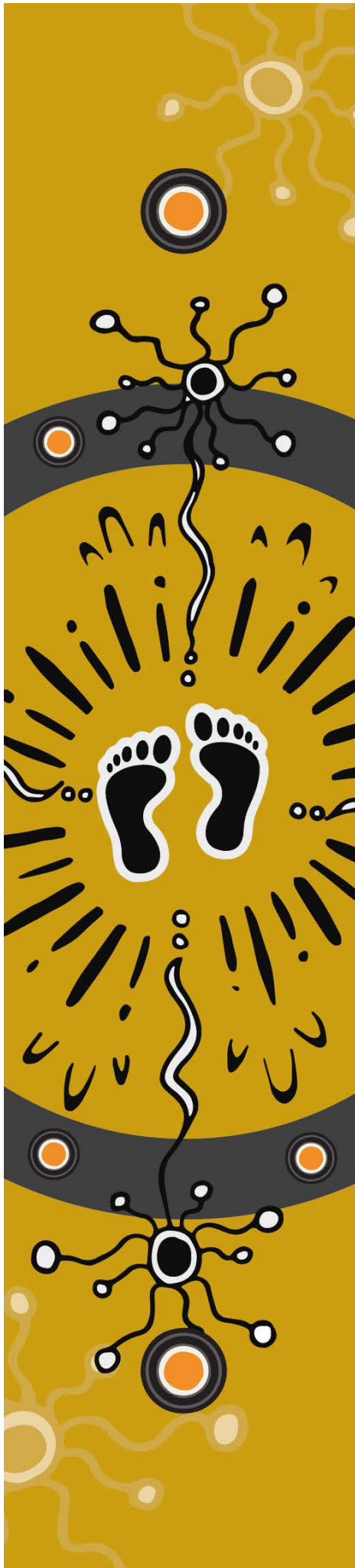
A resource to assist local water utilities to plan
and hold a water industry careers event

April 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.



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Background



1

In 2023, the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department) held a Water Industry Showcase Day at the Calala Water Treatment Plant in Tamworth in partnership with the NSW Department of Education. We invited jobseekers and students from local high schools to learn about the range of careers available in the water industry.

Showcase day attendees went behind the scenes of a water treatment plant, took part in interactive activities including water quality testing, and had the chance to talk to water industry professionals.

More than 50 school students from 4 local government areas attended the showcase, which featured in local media. It resulted in almost 30 students expressing interest in work experience and led to 4 traineeships at the participating local water utilities (LWUs).

The showcase was a partnership with the NSW Department of Education, Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Tamworth Regional Council, Walcha Council and Gunnedah Shire Council.

The day's success, including increased interest in work experience and employment opportunities, resulted in LWUs expressing interest in hosting similar events. We developed this toolkit to help LWUs organise their own showcase days.

What is a water industry showcase day and what are the benefits?

Water industry showcase days present a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of job opportunities and career pathways within the water industry. LWUs target local high school students, careers advisors, job seekers, employment agencies and key industry and community stakeholders.

A LWU facility, such as a water treatment plant, can host showcase days. Water operators and industry experts take the lead as attendees participate in hands-on, water-specific workshop activities. It enables attendees to meet and talk to the experts about the various roles and responsibilities available in the industry.

Showcase days provide the opportunity for students, schools, careers advisors, jobseekers, and community stakeholders to learn about the industry and facilitate future candidate interest.



Water industry showcase day toolkit



2

What does the toolkit contain?

A step-by-step guide to successfully staging a showcase day.

1.

Planning – what to do and how to prepare

2.

Running the event – what happens on the day, pitfalls and challenges

3.

Follow-up after the event – maximising successful outcomes

Planning

Plan a showcase day at least 4 to 6 weeks ahead of the event with the below checklist as a guide on what to do.

	1. Budget and cost calculator tracker	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Marketing and communications plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Industry and educational partners	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Mentorships	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Water industry focus	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Date	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7. Venue	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8. Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9. Work experience opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10. Guest speakers	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Collateral	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12. On-the-day logistics	<input type="checkbox"/>
	13. On-the-day activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
	14. Distribution list and registration platform	<input type="checkbox"/>
	15. Risk assessment and insurance paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/>



1. Budget and cost calculator tracker

Develop a budget and cost calculator tracker. This will involve researching all associated costs before confirming the final invitations. Industry champions, and educational or employment stakeholders often supply goods and services for free as part of an in-kind contribution or part of their servicing contracts with their clients.



2. Marketing and communications plan

Draft a marketing and communications plan outlining how to promote the event, timeframes, key messages, drafted flyers, social media advertisements and newsletter articles.



3. Industry and educational partners

Initiate discussions with LWUs and business representatives to form partnerships. Collaboration ensures all stakeholders contribute to the event, meeting their needs and providing a comprehensive overview of career options. Educational partners, such as the NSW Department of Education and Training Services NSW, supply the interested career seekers. When selecting industry partners, prioritise genuine employment opportunities within the LWUs region. Clearly communicate the ability to directly refer job stakeholders to associated industries. Research career progression opportunities, skills, and training requirements, including potential for work experience, traineeships, or apprenticeships. This approach ensures the showcase day emphasises local and regional job opportunities and career pathways.



4. Mentorships

Employers, group training organisations, or employment providers can often provide industry mentors to support new starters in the workplace. When inviting stakeholders to the showcase day you may want to discuss this option with them to see if this is a topic they could address at the question-and-answer session. If so, include it in your plan.



5. Water industry focus

Consider regional employment opportunities when selecting your showcase target LWU. We highly recommend LWUs, joint organisations and regional alliances working in collaboration. LWUs often have connections with support industries such as electrical contractors and transport companies. Inclusion of these industries ensures a progressive event inclusive of all career-seeker applicants. Combining LWU, joint organisations and regional alliance knowledge reduces the workload, increases the success rate, and provides a quality experience for participants and key educational stakeholders. It also increases the catchment area of potential participants.



6. Date

When planning your showcase day, check the regional events calendar, and school calendar timetabling to ensure there are no clashes that will reduce the likelihood of participants attending. You may also consider scheduling the showcase day to correspond with a complementary event that will bring additional interested candidates to the region. Weeks 8 or 9 of the NSW school terms is often a good time to schedule a showcase day. However, please check with your local school vocational education and training (VET) coordinator to confirm the most convenient day and time of the year.



7. Venue

Working with LWUs to select a suitable venue ensures a true picture of the workplace. It provides access for participants to engage in hands-on activities as part of the overall industry experience. Safety is the most critical consideration when arranging access to worksites and practical tasks. Be sure to complete risk assessments and check that sites are safe for groups of people. Access, weather, and environmental conditions are also important considerations. Too much noise, poor lighting, and inadequate room to safely access or exit spaces impacts participants' capacity to relax and enjoy the discussions or workshop demonstrations. The pilot water showcase day held in Tamworth in 2023 was onsite at the water treatment facility.





8. Transport

Consider the support required for schools, unemployed, disabled, and remote participants when determining a suitable location. Research local transport options before confirming the location. Collaborate with local schools, jobseeker agencies, and support organisations to check if there are free transport options available. Once confirmed, make these transport options known to interested participants. If there are no options for free transport, consider discussing options with industry partners. They may have buses available. Or consider hiring a bus and arranging pick-up points. Factor this cost into your budget as well as hire lead time and availability of buses in regional NSW.



9. Work experience opportunities

Discuss work experience opportunities with LWUs. If it's possible, add this to the event schedule for discussion. Before confirming, work out the details of insurance and liability with the employer or someone from the workplace. Schools will have their own insurance policies for students undertaking work experience. Consider engaging work experience brokers to negotiate these aspects on behalf of organisations or employers.



10. Guest speakers

One of the most effective ways to promote an occupation or career is to include an industry champion. They can provide a realistic account of what it takes to become successful. They can also provide the opportunity for participants to ask difficult questions and to receive honest, sincere responses. This allows participants to make informed choices. To source a suitable industry expert to engage with participants, consult LWU networks, the department, or the NSW Water Directorate.



11. Collateral

Develop resources for participants such as flyers, fact sheets and brochures. These materials should outline career advice and pathways, employment opportunities, training programs, future projects, and good news stories. This way, individuals have the best chance to consider and explore joining the water industry. If there's budget, consider putting together promotional bags with items such as the collateral, and branded hats, water bottles, lanyards and USBs. Industry bodies or workplaces may be able to provide free samples.



12. On-the-day logistics

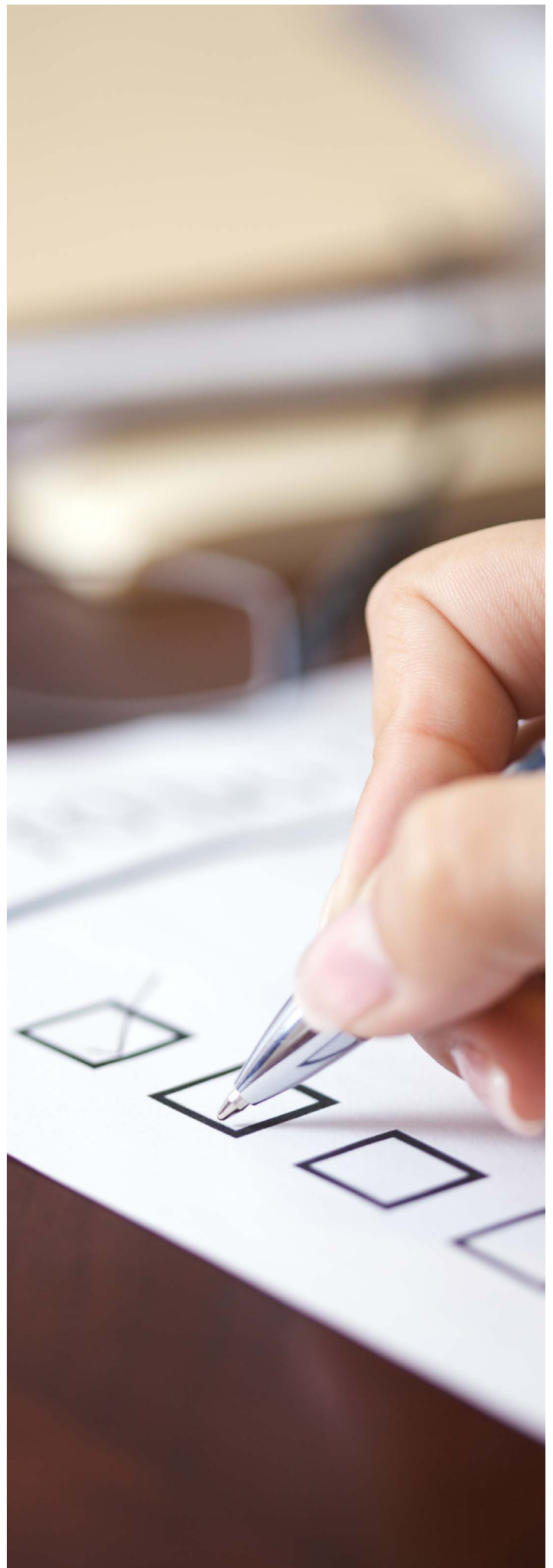
A showcase day requires structure and careful planning to ensure it flows easily and provides the opportunity for all participants to gain value. We recommend:

- developing a run sheet
- developing an agenda, including your organisation's protocol for paying respect to Traditional Custodians and First Nations Peoples of NSW
- booking catering and equipment hire
- confirming staff required and their roles and responsibilities
- booking a photographer
- printing/organising digital photography consent forms.



13. On-the-day activities

Showcase any new industry innovations in the event to help demonstrate how the industry is progressing and highlight what skills and knowledge participants will learn to help broaden their career outcomes. For example, at Tamworth's showcase day in September 2023, the Sydney Water leak detection dogs demonstrated new industry technologies. This is often a great selling point for employers and careers advisors to use when engaging with potential candidates. Videos, demonstrations, or industry champions can highlight opportunities in the water industry. Hands-on activities that are fun and memorable can be the most valuable in promoting interest. Ensure all planned activities, including question and answer sessions and breaks are included on an agenda or run sheet so the facilitator and supporting staff can ensure smooth transitions between activities and timekeeping.





14. Distribution list and registration platform

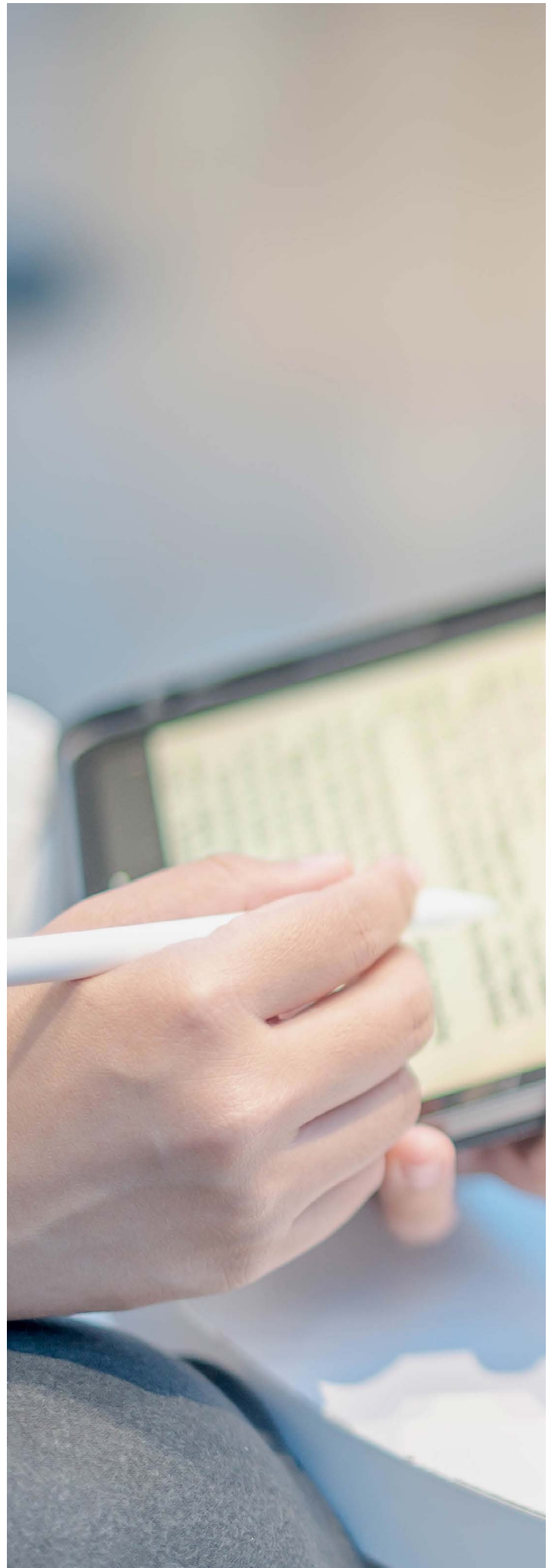
Create a distribution list including name, organisation, email, contact number and the details of stakeholders. This list can be used to send initial invite, reminders and post-event survey. Key stakeholders could include local disabilities organisations, schools, job-search organisations, registered training organisations, youth organisations, women's groups, and any other regional groups. Distribute invitations via email, or other appropriate methods of communication and be sure to include all key information about the showcase day, such as event time, date, location, safety requirements and registration link.

To manage registrations, develop a registration form using an event management platform such as Eventbrite or Humanitix.



15. Risk assessment and insurance paperwork

All aspects of the showcase day can involve risks in relation to venue, transport or event activities. It is important to develop a risk-management plan to ensure you have considered all scenarios. Part of this process is to check the insurance cover and worksite induction process for the venue/s you are planning to attend. You should also ensure your public liability insurance will cover external participants visiting your site.



Running the event

Some staff members, such as the events team, the communications and marketing team, experienced industry speakers, and technical staff should attend the event to help oversee the activities. These staff can assist with:



1. Personal protective equipment and safety



2. Running the activities



3. Post-event feedback surveys



4. Media coverage and photography



1. Personal protective equipment and safety

It is critical to comply with Work Health and Safety requirements for the site. This includes providing personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensuring participants wear suitable clothing and shoes while on site. The organiser should research these requirements and be sure to include them in the invitation. Consult the LWU about providing the PPE or if the event facilitator is expected to provide the PPE for attendees. An on-site induction of attendees may also be necessary so schedule the time required to complete this mandatory task.



2. Running the activities

Ensure the facilitator follows the agenda or run sheet, ensures groups sizes are suitable for each activity and keeps everything on time, by assisting groups to move between activities at pre-arranged intervals. It is helpful to have more than one staff member ensuring the activities are running as planned, including keeping time and directing groups to specific locations.

Leaders of each activity need to be prepared with any equipment they need, for example water samples and monitoring equipment, table, shade (if required) etc and have a support person, or back up plan if there are any issues on the day. Ensure breaks are scheduled and utilised, and refreshments are offered in a suitable location. Breaks provide a great opportunity for informal chats between jobseekers and employers.



3. Post-event feedback surveys

Surveys are a great tool to gauge stakeholder interest and feedback as well as supporting continuous improvement practices. Well-targeted questions that require short responses will help with reporting on the event later on. Use short-answer questions for follow-ups or to elicit more detailed data to assist a review and to plan future events. Survey Monkey and Microsoft Forms are survey building tools to consider. They provide the data in graph or Microsoft Excel reports for easy collation and are easily accessed on any device via QR code or a link. Electronic survey tools make it easier to gather information after showcase events, saving time and energy. Participants will fill out the survey on their own phones. Ensure you also have an iPad available if participants cannot complete the survey on their phone. The survey tool can also record contact details of participants interested in potential work experience.



4. Media coverage and photography

Media coverage and photos assist marketing material and create positive outcomes for participating stakeholders. Ensure you have signed consent forms from participants before publishing any photos or videos of individuals involved in the showcase day. Contacting local media to cover the event, posting items on relevant social media pages or uploading them to industry webpages will help publicise future events, create interest in the industry, and show community engagement with your organisation. Don't forget to provide the link to view these media items to all stakeholders so they can access them after the event. Tamworth's showcase day received significant media coverage, highlighting to the wider community the important work done at the treatment plant.

Follow-up

After the event, follow up with participants and media, and develop reports and communications. This should include:



1. Reviews and testimonials



2. Promote the showcase's success



3. Review cost analysis



4. Report



1. Reviews and testimonials

After investing time and money in organising a showcase, we recommend you review the process and outcomes for achieved objectives and budget. Reviewing what did and did not work will help inform future planning. You may not realise benefits immediately, for example, the time taken to employ a trainee.



2. Promote the showcase's success

Encourage interest in the water industry and future showcase events by highlighting the success and positive feedback from the current showcase. Use feedback, quantitative data, increased employment outcomes, enquiries, and enrolment data to show education and employment stakeholders that the event will meet their expectations. Draft newsletters for both internal and external audiences summarising the events success along with suitable images.



3. Review cost analysis

Complete a cost analysis to ensure you are aware of the expense involved in conducting a showcase day. The cost analysis should include:

- hourly rate of coordinator/facilitator and time required to plan, implement, and review the showcase day
- transport and venue hire
- marketing materials, promotional bags, and PPE
- catering and gifts
- administration and stationery costs.



4. Report

Producing a report formalises the data collected from previous showcase days, which you can then use to plan future events. Reports also provide a written account of what took place and are a record of who, what, how, and why things happened. All these aspects of the showcase day will be available as an accurate future point of reference.

Testimonial

‘The Water Industry Careers Showcase day was a great hands-on opportunity to show potential employees the myriad of jobs and career pathways they can experience with our local water utility.

As a result of the showcase day, we have now employed a water industry school-based trainee and developed strong working relationships with the local high schools, careers advisors, and job agencies. It has also facilitated a stronger understanding of the importance of water in our community.






We are confident these new relationships will continue to grow and assist us with future employees who are as passionate about the water industry as we are.’

Rod Batterham – Water Services Manager, Liverpool Plains Shire Council.



Useful information

To assist you plan and implement your LWU showcase day, visit:

-  [Careers in the water industry](#)
-  [Water Industry Operations –Certificate II](#)
-  [NSW school calendar](#)
-  [SBAT engagement](#)
-  [SBAT in NSW, contact \[sbat@det.nsw.edu.au\]\(mailto:sbat@det.nsw.edu.au\).](#)

Department of Climate Change,
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