



**intelligent
water
networks**

Request for Expressions of Interest

“In-Stream”

3 March 2025

**Victorian Water Industry Association Inc (VicWater)
trading as Intelligent Water Networks (IWN)
ABN: 46 541 210 712**

1. About VicWater and IWN

VicWater is the peak industry association for the Victorian water sector and all 18 Victorian water corporations are our members. We support our members to be 'better together' by facilitating industry advocacy, collaboration and innovation to achieve better outcomes for customers and community.

IWN is a program of VicWater created to:

- develop a critical mass of funding and resources – level the playing field between metropolitan and regional water utilities,
- drive sector-wide innovation through establishing collaborative relationships with technology providers and research organisations,
- reduce duplication of effort and resources to solve sector wide challenges; and
- uplift adoption of innovative approaches to drive value for customers and water businesses.

2. Project background and objectives

'In-Stream' is an exciting new initiative to be delivered under the IWN banner in partnership with Isle Utilities.

The Victorian water industry is facing complex challenges that cannot be solved with the way we currently operate. Within those challenges are tremendous opportunities, such as embracing the circular economy by finding innovative ways to utilise all resources, repeatedly, and create more sustainable water management practices. By adopting circular principles, the industry can enhance efficiency, lower environmental impact, and contribute to long-term resilience. Additionally, leveraging digital technologies presents an opportunity to improving operational efficiency, therefore lower the cost of services while increasing customer value.

While the IWN program has been highly successful in delivering innovative thinking, approaches and technologies to the Victorian water industry, collaboration and change is difficult beyond knowledge sharing and trials. We need to strategically collaborate across sectors to develop a co-creation ecosystem that works to future proof Victoria's water sector and help build our capability and capacity to rise to future challenges.

In-Stream is a 12-month cycle of co-creation and collaboration between the public, private, research and tertiary sectors to actively generate real, fit-for-purpose solutions to the opportunities and challenges facing the Victorian water industry.

In-Stream will bring together:

- Executive teams and board members
- Operational and digital teams from water utilities
- Representatives of private sector organisations
- Innovation and research teams
- Universities and other learning institutions
- Regulators and policy makers
- Champions of change with a passion for innovation and collaboration.

In-Stream will be guided by an Executive Steering Group and the IWN and VicWater Governance models. Members of the Steering Group will include Senior Executives from within the IWN Membership. This group is

where strategy meets action, their role is to align and guide the *In-Stream* process. The Steering Group is responsible for shaping the vision, ensuring informed decisions, and co-creating the foundations for a Victorian Water Industry Ecosystem. To date the Steering Group, the IWN Executive Group and the preliminary working group have shaped and agreed on the challenge statements.

Opportunities and challenges	Question to ideate on
Water security	How might we ensure a secure supply of safe drinking water for all Victorians?
Climate Impact	How might we plan, design and build our infrastructure to secure our water future
Circular Economy	How might we change our business so that we achieve 100% utilisation of everything that comes into our facilities.
Contaminants of Concern	How might we prioritise, measure and treat contaminants of concern so that we continue to protect public health and the environment in which we operate
Real Zero	How might we actively reduce our emissions so that we can achieve real zero.
Customer Engagement	How might we leverage digital technologies so that we can lower our cost of services whilst increasing customer value.
Embracing digitisation	How might we employ digital technologies so that we can manage our infrastructure more effectively and efficiently to enhance our delivery to customers

3. Engagement opportunities

Expressions of Interest are sought from private, research and tertiary sector organisations that want to be a trusted transformation partner with the water industry in Victoria. Participants in *In-Stream* will interact closely with IWN and VicWater, their key stakeholders and members on the development of solutions that are fit-for-purpose and have the opportunity to develop trials.

An exciting range of engagement options, described in Section 3.1, have been designed to offer various levels of engagement for potential sponsoring organisations. Organisations can choose to participate as a **'Pioneer'**, helping to shape the direction of solution options, or elevate their involvement as a **'PioneerPlus'**, gaining significant visibility at IWN and VicWater conferences. Alternatively, they can join as a **'Catalyst'**, actively contributing to the transformation process alongside key industry stakeholders.

3.1. Pioneer

An organisation that acts and converts insights and ideas into impact.

As a *Pioneer*, you'll have the unique opportunity to form a sector wide co-creation ecosystem that taps into the resources, knowledge and insights of select members in your supply chain, customers and key partners. Your role is to guide critical conversations, shape and test innovative solutions with water industry partners and IWN. A *Pioneer* will position its people and brand as "thought leaders who act". This is your chance to elevate your profile, collaborate with other visionaries, and contribute to sector transformation.

- Why get involved?

- **Capability building** - Staff will get an opportunity to gain deep insights into the challenges facing the water sector, as well as exposure to new innovative tools and technologies.
- **Collaboration** - Build enduring relationships with leading water utilities, innovative technology companies and champions of innovation within the industry.
- **Brand awareness** – Increase your organisation's presence in the Victorian water sector by highlighting your business and showcasing your team's expertise.
- What will you get?
 - **Leadership opportunities** – Select a challenge to shape, choose your team and develop a solution that could transform the water industry
 - **Access** – Directly collaborate with a working group of key stakeholders across Victorian water utilities
 - **Solution testing** - The opportunity to design and deliver trials in collaboration with Victorian water utilities on potential solutions developed by your stream
- What do you need to do?
 - **Commit** - *In-Stream* has a 12-month timeline, requiring regular meetings, establishing key milestones, reporting to IWN/Steering group (every quarter) to share progress and seek feedback, as well as participating in *In-Stream* sessions at IWN and VicWater Conferences (2 days)
 - **Respond** – Submit an EOI with your best ideas on how you would progress one or more of the challenge statements (see section 8.4 for details).

3.2. PioneerPlus

A driving force in transformation, leading through action, innovation, and deeper industry engagement.

Organisations looking to amplify their impact in *In-Stream* can become a *PioneerPlus*, building on the benefits of *Pioneer* sponsorship while also gaining premier visibility and influence through sponsorship of the IWN and VicWater conferences. Conference sponsorship packages included in *PioneerPlus* are outlined in the table below.

IWN Members Conference 28 July 2025	VicWater Annual Conference 9-11 September 2025
<p>Platinum Sponsor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10-minute presentation ● 2 Conference tickets ● Trade display ● 2 banners in prime locations at the conference ● Video demonstration to be recorded and included in the post conference pack ● 2 tickets to the conference dinner and pre dinner networking drinks ● Prominent logo on conference slideware and in IWN Newsletters ● Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea networking 	<p>Technology or Industry Sponsor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sponsor identification on all conference literature ● Four complimentary conference delegate registrations plus two tickets for the conference dinner ● Sponsor link on conference website ● Sponsor display in delegate break area ● Logo inclusion on screens throughout the day ● Verbal acknowledgement as Technology or Industry Sponsor during the conference ● Opportunity to speak at the conference in a 5-minute sponsor address

3.3. Catalyst

A key player in leading the transformation of the Victorian water sector.

By sponsoring In-Stream as a *Catalyst*, your business will gain visibility and the opportunity to co-create solutions with top industry innovators. Connect with key stakeholders, expand your network, and gain critical insights to guide your business's growth.

- Why get involved?
 - **Capability building** - Staff will get an opportunity to gain deep insights into the challenges facing the water sector, as well as exposure to new innovative tools and technologies.
 - **Collaboration** - Build enduring relationships with leading water utilities, innovative technology companies and champions of innovation within the industry
- What will you get?
 - **To be a key player** - Secure one team member a seat at the table with the option to sponsor multiple Catalysts
 - **Access** – Directly collaborate with a working group of key stakeholders across Victorian water utilities
- What do you need to do?
 - **Commit** - Team members will need to actively participate at regular meetings over a 12-month timeline
 - **Respond** – Submit EOI describing how your business could be a key contributor to one or more of the challenge statements.

3.4. Sponsorship summary

	PioneerPlus	Pioneer	Catalyst
Sponsorship of IWN and VicWater (see package summary in Section 3.2)	✓		
Lead a challenge stream	✓	✓	
Branding included in all communication on Stream progress	✓	✓	
Presentation slot In-stream session IWN conference	✓	✓	
Participation in a panel session at VicWater Conference	✓	✓	
Opportunity to run trials on potential solutions developed	✓	✓	
Opportunity to shape the solution to an industry challenge	✓	✓	✓

Collaborating with key industry stakeholders - gaining visibility	✓	✓	✓
Part of the knowledge-sharing network of all streams	✓	✓	✓
Investment (ex GST)	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$15,000

4. What We Want

- **Open-mindedness** - Challenge conventional thinking, embrace uncertainty, and remain flexible in adapting to new ideas and perspectives. Curiosity and a willingness to step outside of comfort zones will drive true innovation.
- **Thought leadership** - Bring bold ideas, disruptive thinking, and deep expertise to shape the future of the water industry. Thought leadership means not just sharing knowledge but also actively driving conversations and inspiring new ways of tackling industry challenges.
- **Global business network and experience** - Global and cross-sectorial insights, best practices, and connections can help accelerate innovation. Bring in diverse perspectives from different sectors and regions to create well-rounded, scalable, and impactful solutions.
- **Collaboration, including co-opetition!** - We want an environment where even competitors work together for a greater purpose. Embrace a mindset of “win-win” rather than “winner-takes-all.” True innovation happens when organisations and individuals put progress over competition.
- **Co-creation innovation ecosystem** - Engage actively in discussions, share resources, and mentor emerging innovators. Help foster an environment where diverse stakeholders—from startups to established corporations, researchers, and policymakers—can work together to build solutions with lasting impact.

5. What We Don't Want

- **Pre-conceived, off-the-shelf solutions** - This is about pioneering new ideas that truly address the industry's evolving needs. Solutions that have already been developed and are not tailored to the challenge are not of interest.
- **Competitiveness** - While ambition is welcome, an overly competitive mindset that prioritises individual success over shared progress will hinder innovation. Collective impact is valued over isolated wins.
- **Closed-Mindedness** – Innovation requires being open to different perspectives, even if they challenge traditional ways of doing things. Participants who are unwilling to explore fresh approaches may struggle in this collaborative environment.
- **Profit-Only Focus** – While financial sustainability matters, we’re not looking for quick fixes or solutions designed purely for short-term commercial gain. We seek ideas that drive long-term industry transformation and environmental resilience.
- **Fear of Failure** – Innovation involves risk, iteration, and learning from setbacks. A reluctance to experiment and refine ideas can limit progress, so we encourage a mindset of continuous learning rather than fear of making mistakes.

6. Evaluation criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the EOI responses as applicable:

Criteria	Definition
Importance and Relevance (Pioneer and Catalyst)	Clear articulation of why the challenge aligns with the organisation's mission, expertise and strategic goals.
Leadership Capability (Pioneer only)	Strength of the case for why the organisation is best suited to lead the challenge
Conflict of Interest (Pioneer and Catalyst)	Identify any potential or actual conflict of interest and how the conflict will be managed.
Key Contribution (Catalyst only)	Clear statement of how your business will contribute to achieving the outcomes of the challenge
Co-Design Methodology and Collaboration Approach (Pioneer only)	Well-defined, structured methodology for solution development (e.g., design sprints, workshops, stakeholder engagement). Level of inclusivity and collaboration with key stakeholders, including industry partners and customers. Innovation and effectiveness of the proposed co-design approach.
Project Timeline and Governance (Pioneer only)	Realistic and structured 12-month timeline with clear phases and milestones. Thoughtful meeting cadence and reporting frequency to ensure progress tracking and alignment with IWN/Steering Group expectations. Commitment to active participation in In-Stream sessions at IWN and VicWater conferences.
Vision for Challenge Outcomes (Pioneer only)	Clarity and ambition of the proposed outcomes. Alignment of the envisioned outcome with sector needs and transformation goals. Potential for long-term impact and scalability beyond the initial 12-month period.
Success Measurement (Pioneer only)	Well-defined success metrics using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) criteria. Robust plan for tracking progress and evaluating impact.

7. Instructions for response

7.1. Context

- This EOI is an invitation to submit a response to either the *PioneerPlus*, *Pioneer* or *Catalyst* sponsorship opportunity for *In-Stream*
- By submitting an EOI the respondent is confirming an intent to enter into a contract be a sponsor of *In-Stream*. If selected, further discussions will then be held with VicWater/IWN with regards to a sponsorship contract.

7.2. Key dates

The indicative timeline for this EOI is: (all times are AEDST).

Action	Milestone
EOI released	3 March 2025
EOI Briefing Webinar	12pm 7 March
Deadline for Q&A	5pm 19 March
Deadline for EOI submission	5pm 21 March
Notification of selection	26 March
Firm, in-writing letter of commitment from Respondent following selection	31 March
<i>In-Stream</i> commencement	May 2025

7.3. Briefing Webinar and Q&A

EOI briefing webinar will be held on the 7 March at 12:00 pm (AEDST) and is an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarifications on *In-Stream*, sponsorship options and EOI response requirements. To register for the webinar, use the link below.

<https://events.humanitix.com/in-stream-sponsors-eoi-briefing>

Any other questions should be submitted to Jason Cotton at jason.cotton@iwn.org.au before 5pm AEDST on 19 March 2025.

7.4. Submitting your Response

If you are invested in becoming a **PioneerPlus** or **Pioneer** and leading an In-Stream challenge, please complete the 'In-Stream PioneerPlus and Pioneer Response' (Appendix A).


If you are interested in shaping a challenge and being a **Catalyst**, please complete the 'In-Stream Catalyst Response' (Appendix B)

Forms need to be submitted to Jason Cotton at jason.cotton@iwn.org.au before 5pm AEDST on 21 March 2025.

IWN may consider alternative proposals and models for a sponsor's potential engagement.

8. Conditions for participation in this EOI

- Nothing in this Request for EOI, the EOI process (including verbal or written communication), or the EOI response must be construed as creating any binding contract or other legal relationship (express or implied) between the Respondent and VicWater/IWN.
- The Respondent is responsible for clearly stipulating in their submission any aspect they consider should be kept confidential, including reasons. VicWater/IWN is not obliged to treat information as confidential that has not been marked clearly as such and in the absence of any agreement to do so.
- VicWater/IWN will not be responsible for any costs incurred directly or indirectly by the Respondent in preparing a response, and in the event this EOI is withdrawn and the process ended.
- VicWater/IWN reserves the right to accept alternative responses clearly marked as such and accompanied by documentation that supports that alternative in achieving the requirements of the EOI.



Appendix A - In-Stream PioneerPlus and Pioneer Response

Organisation name _____

Contact Person _____

Email _____

Position _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Website _____

Do you want to be a PioneerPlus

1. Which challenge are you applying for?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Water security | <input type="checkbox"/> | Real Zero | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Climate Impact | <input type="checkbox"/> | Customer Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Circular Economy | <input type="checkbox"/> | Embracing digitisation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Contaminants of Concern | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify in Q.2) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. Why is the challenge important to you and why are you the best choice to lead this challenge (i.e., relevance to your organisation). **(Max 150 words)**

3. Are there any perceived conflicts with IWN/VicWater or the water corporations? If so, what are they and how will you manage them? **(Max 150 words)**

4. What is your planned co-design methodology and collaboration activities for developing solution options (e.g., Design sprints etc). **(Max 500 words)**

5. Detail your timeline for the 12-months co-creation process, including meeting cadence, key milestones, reporting frequency to IWN/Steering group (typically every quarter) to share progress and seek feedback, as well as participating in In-Stream sessions at IWN and VicWater Conferences (2 days). **(Max 250 words or timeline chart)**

6. What is your vision for the outcome that will be delivered by the co-design approach for this challenge? **(Max 150 words)**

7. How will the challenge team measure success? Include smart goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound). **(Max 150 words)**



Appendix B - In-Stream Catalyst Response

Organisation name _____
Contact Person _____
Email _____
Position _____
Email _____
Telephone _____
Website _____

How many Catalyst places are you applying for?

1. Which challenge are you applying for? Note: one Catalyst (team member) per challenge

Water security	<input type="checkbox"/>	Real Zero	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Customer Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Circular Economy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Embracing digitisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contaminants of Concern	<input type="checkbox"/>		

2. Are there any perceived conflicts with IWN/VicWater or the water corporations? If so, what are they and how will you manage them? **(Max 150 words)**

3. Why is the challenge important to you? **(Max 150 words)**

4. Describe the ways that your business will be a key contributor to the challenge? **(Max 200 words)**