



WOMEN IN WATERREUSE: DIVERSITY FOR THE FUTURE TUESDAY MARCH 19TH TOWN HALL PLENARY SESSION & LUNCHEON

THE EVENT

The audience in the ballroom reached over 450; seated at over 50 round tables that filled the room. The session began with inspiring women in our industry taking the stage. These women were the supporting facilitators for the day.



Our professional facilitator, Desiree Adaway, encouraged all attendees to explore topics that often are left unattended. The audience was full engaged; thinking about the content, respectfully sharing their thoughts during the small group discussions and listening intently as groups reported out. This wasn't your normal raucous lunch presentation with different conversations happening all over the room. Few, if any, faces in the audience were reflecting the blue screens of their smart phones. Everyone was present; it was really something.



One supporting facilitator noted that *"This was such a proud moment for me: For the first time since I became involved in WaterReuse, we participated in a plenary session championed, curated, led, and facilitated by women in our ranks."* Another commented that *"Everybody walked away with a sense of belonging from the well-structured discussions at the tables and ready to pay more attention to inclusion and equality at their workplaces and communities."* Many expressed appreciation to WaterReuse, as an organization, and to the broad membership, for being open to these kinds of important conversations. There was overwhelming enthusiasm for the session and the hope is that the work that began on March 19th 2019 continues; with the participants returning to their organizations to create the diverse, equitable and inclusive community that is so important to water reuse.

An inclusive and diverse water sector is necessary to build trust and promote innovation for the future.



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BENEFITS

- Benefits of DEI to our recycled water community is to reflect different perspectives and views for accepting recycled water use.
- Diversity of thought is born from diversity of experience.
- Diversity in education helps form diverse teams.
- Diverse skill sets on a team promotes inclusion of all types of people - internally and externally.
- Diverse and inclusive cultures provide a more comfortable setting to express thoughts.
- Everyone brings something to the table.
- Listening promotes understanding & solutions.
- Creativity and respect are reflected differently if women and minorities are present.
- Inner city communities may relate and respond better to folks in their community.
- The more we resemble communities we serve; the easier the dialogue with constituents.
- Outreach beyond our immediate industry will draw in new talent for diverse ideas and solutions.
- More diversity could open up labor shortages and offer a larger potential labor pool.
- Improving communication creates trust and safety within our organizations and to the communities we serve.
- DEI must consider the work-life balance to attract and maintain a better workforce and better talent.

Understanding and practicing equity and inclusion is an essential leadership skill.

SOLUTIONS

- The reuse industry has come a long way from the non-inclusive, “we’ve always done it that way” kind of thinking, to now seeking the viewpoints from others. This changes the conversation.
- Meaningful and lasting solutions requires different perspectives and experiences.
- DEI comes from the top management and it is often not driven by women or minorities.
- Privilege influences who gets hired; we need to have intentional programs to work directly with schools, trade colleges, etc. to increase interest in our work.
- Create opportunities to bring more diversity into the upper levels of leadership and management.
- Offer mentorship programs to provide a career path for women and minority engineers, operators and administrators.
- Re-examine the power dynamics in your organization to bring the perspectives and contributions of all to the table.
- Create a safe space so that everyone feels like they can share their opinion and contribute to better projects.
- Create opportunities for younger generations and diverse groups to be part of committees/boards that make decisions.
- Break down the silos within our organizations (e.g. water/ww/rw) to bring different perspectives to design and implementation.
- Establish programs to encourage contractors to hire labor from the local community.
- Develop programs where field workers present to and train the community in how to use the systems; this is good for them and good for the community.
- Retain good employees by providing equitable policies to accommodate life situations (e.g. maternity/paternity leave, flexible schedules for single parents/dual-income families, support for aging elders, extended illness).
- Build community relationships before you need it; transformational not transactional takes years of investment.
- Carefully consider the correct dialect for your audience and bring the right members of the community to the table.
- Create teams that can effectively communicate with the community and build trust.
- Incorporate community priorities and perspectives to improve the project and reduce opposition; find the “win-win” solutions.
- Accept that others think differently; listen first, then educate and craft a message to respond.

We love WATER | We have PASSION | We are LOYAL | We are WaterReuse.



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WHO HELPED MAKE THIS HAPPEN??

It takes a village.

CORE COMMITTEE

Dawn Taffler	Kennedy Jenks	Vice President WRCA Board Member
Elizabeth Dawson	El Dorado Irrigation District	Engineering Manager WRCA Board Member
Jennifer West	WaterReuse California	Managing Director
Joone Lopez	Moulton Niguel Water District	General Manager WRCA Board Member
Kimberly Thorner	Olivenhain Municipal Water District	General Manager WRCA Board Member
Mark Tetterer	Irvine Ranch Water District	RW Development Manager Conference Co-Chair
Martha Davis	Martha Davis Consulting	Owner WRCA Board Member
Norma Camacho	Santa Clara Valley Water District	General Manager WRCA Board Member
Patricia Tennyson	Katz & Associates	Executive Vice President WRCA Board Member
Desiree Adaway	Adaway Group (Facilitator)	Professional Facilitator

SUPPORTING FACILITATORS

Cari Dale	City of Oceanside	Water Utilities Director
Carrie Del Boccio	Woodard & Curran	Civil Engineer / Project Manager
Christine Compton	Irvine Ranch Water District	Government Relations Officer
Evelyn Cortez-Davis	Los Angeles Dept of Water and Power	Assistant Director of Water Resources
Gina Dorrington	City of Ventura	Wastewater Utility Manager/ Interim Assistant General Manager
Heather Collins	Metropolitan Water District	Director of Water Treatment
Inge Wiersema	Carollo	Water Resources Practice Lead
Jennifer Duffy	HDR	National Water Reuse Practice Lead
Judi Miller	Jacobs	Senior Project Manager
Julie Minton	Water Research Foundation	Director of Strategic Initiatives
Karin North	City of Palo Alto	Watershed Protection Manager
Leah Walker	City of Petaluma	Environmental Services Manager
Lenise Marrero	City of Los Angeles - LA Sanitation and Environment	One Water Program Manager
Lesley Dobalian	San Diego County Water Authority	Principal Water Resources Specialist
Lindsey Stephenson	Encina Wastewater Authority	Engineering Services Manager
Martha Tremblay	Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County	Technical Services Department Head
Megan Schneider	Municipal Water District of Orange County	Board Member - Director
Melanie Mow Schumacher	Soquel Creek Water District	Special Projects-Communications Manager
Melody LaBella	Central Contra Costa Sanitary District	Resource Recovery Program Manager
Pat Sinicropi	WaterReuse Association	Managing Director
Paula Kehoe	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission	Water Resource Manager
Piret Harmon	Scotts Valley Water District	General Manager
Rhodora Biagtan	HydroScience Engineers	Senior Project Manager
Sandy Scott-Roberts	Orange County Water District	GWRS Program Manager
Seval Sen	Padre Dam Municipal Water District	District Engineer
Sylvie Lee	Inland Empire Utilities Agency	Director of Water Resources
Terri Slifko	Metropolitan Water District	Water Quality Laboratory Manager: Chemistry
Wendy Broley	Brown and Caldwell	One Water Leader