

# KISTERS Australia News

December 2006

## Contents

Contents .....	1
From The GM's Desk .....	1
Kisters News .....	1
Dataview - New Product.....	2
Client Services News .....	3
Travels with Hydstra .....	4
Hydstra Product News .....	4
SODA Update .....	5
WISKI News .....	5
Staff News .....	5
Contact Information .....	6

## From The GM's Desk

2006 seems to have passed us by in a flash. From our perspective 2006 has been one of our busiest years to date and from what we have witnessed it has also been extremely busy for the industry as a whole. I'm not sure where it will all end or whether 2006 was a snapshot of bigger and better things to come.

The water industry in Australia is definitely receiving a major overhaul. Water or lack of is the hot topic in every state. Peter and I recently attended a national conference "Delivering the National Water Initiative: Understanding the Social and Industry Dimensions." The conference provided a forum for discussions on work reform, planning / allocation / auditing, water markets, social / economic and environmental issues, through to legal, regulatory and institutional roles. A few key points that emerged were the lack of data to make informed policy decisions and the critical lack of technical expertise to actually carry out the reforms required. These observations are possibly not news to some of us in the industry, but it is interesting to see that skills shortage and lack of monitoring programs are now being recognized by the policy makers.

So what does the future hold? One would expect that money will filter down to meet the shortfalls in the number and types of monitoring sites and the severe skills shortage to enable the objectives of

National Water Initiative to be achieved.

Over the 27 years I've been involved in the industry I have seen the focus change from quantity to quality and now the wheel keeps moving with a renewed enthusiasm on the relationship between surface water and groundwater. Groundwater monitoring is definitely increasing with greater emphasis on near real time monitoring.

Groundwater within Australia represents approximately 33% of Australia's total available water and more users are turning to groundwater to replenish diminishing surface water allocations.

Other technologies to improve the water shortage include desalination plants and even recycling of waste water has been thrown into the pot. There have even been discussions on notions of urban water trading, where Mr. Average Joe Bloggs can trade part of his annual domestic water use over the internet. Interesting concepts.

In Europe the quick fix was simply increasing the cost of water to the consumer. In the 1970's the world saw a large increase in the price of fuel. To the guy on the street the increase in cost was a sign of the shortage whereas to an economist the increase in cost was seen as a solution to the shortage. Something to ponder over whilst eating your Christmas pudding.

From all the staff at Kisters we wish you all a safe and peaceful Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year

Bill Steen

General Manager  
Kisters Pty Ltd



## Kisters News

### *Kisters Pty Ltd Invited to Join WRON Alliance*



The Water Resources Observation Network Alliance (WRON) is an informal group of agencies that are committed to the WRON vision of improving the management of Australia's water resources. They have agreed to work together with key end-user agencies to

revolutionise the collection, utility and presentation of water resources information. Kisters Pty Ltd provides data management software to most of the Australian water industry, and hence we see ourselves as playing a role in the reform of the water resources industry now underway.

Other WRON members include CSIRO, The Bureau of Rural Sciences, The Bureau of Meteorology, Geosciences Australia, The eWater CRC, The Murray-Darling Basin Commission, The National Land & Water Resources Audit, The Australian Bureau of Statistics, and Sinclair Knight Merz.

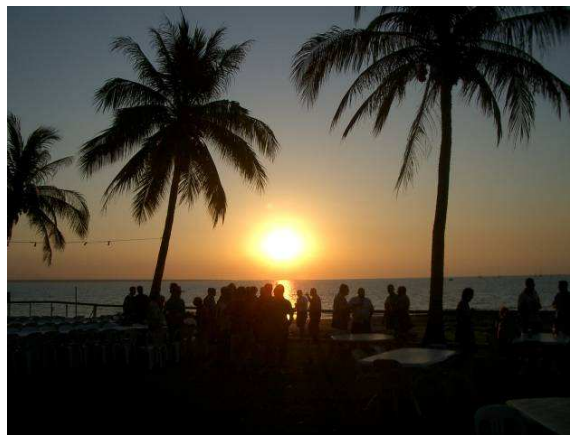
We see our role in the alliance is to facilitate the exchange of water data, and to that end we have already commenced thinking about the nature of a public data gateway component for Hydstra. With the increasing interest of the Federal Government in water issues via the National Water Initiative, plus the effects of the current severe drought, we can expect the need for water data sharing across organisational boundaries to increase dramatically, and soon.

From a computing perspective we expect that data sharing may involve a range of complementary technologies, including batch updates, RSS feeds, exchange of real-time telemetry data, and web technologies such as SOAP. The challenge for Kisters is to provide software tailored to meet industry needs. The challenge for industry will be to agree on national standards for data interchange covering a range of technical issues such as site identification and naming, variable identification, datums and units, quality coding, real-time versus archive quality, data ownership, confidentiality, etc.

You can find out more about WRON at <http://wron.net.au>. The 'Teasers' and 'News' pages are particularly worth looking at.

#### ***Darwin Users Group***

The Kisters Users Group meeting this year was held in Darwin in conjunction with the Australian Hydrographers Association conference. Everyone had a wonderful time in the balmy Darwin climate (well, at that time of year anyway, for a few weeks before the rain), and a good deal of valuable work was carried out over refreshing beverages while watching the sun set over the sea. Much thanks to the Darwin folks for putting on yet another memorable conference.



The conference dinner was held outside under the stars (try that anywhere else in Australia), and featured variety of entertainment, including audience participation from Michael Natschke.

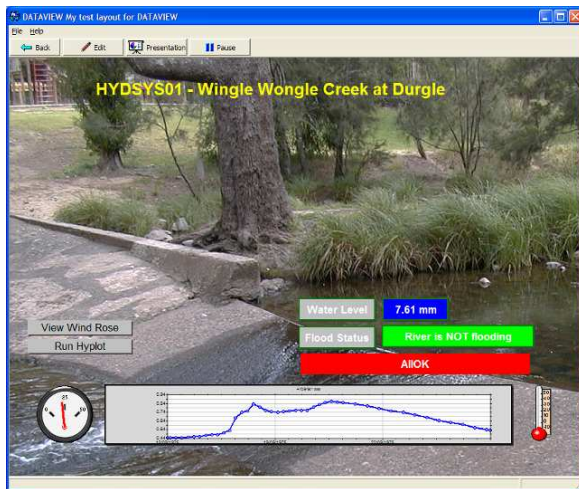


Next year's meeting will be held in Canberra on August 15 and 16, with the USA meeting scheduled for August 20 and 21 in San Diego.

## **Dataview - New Product**

We are in the final stages of developing a new Hydstra product DATAVIEW. The purpose of DATAVIEW is to offer a framework for providing real-time information display in-house and on the web. DATAVIEW works with the concept of widgets, which are small display objects dropped onto a page, and which display data in some textual or graphical form. The widgets update themselves regularly, and the resulting pages can publish themselves to the web.

Widgets can be written by third parties, and DATAVIEW can communicate via user programs, scripts, DLL and SOAP with any time-series data management system, either locally or over the net. It is intended that DATAVIEW will run over Wiski as well as Hydstra.



As part of the development of DATAVIEW we have demonstrated our capability to implement SOAP communications across the web. SOAP (Simple Object Access Protocol) is an XML-based communications technique that allows processes to communicate across the net. We expect that SOAP will play an increasingly important role in the emerging world of data sharing and web services.

## Client Services News

### Running Hydstra under Citrix

Many clients are already running Hydstra under Citrix, and it is a technology we recommend for any organisation with multiple offices. Citrix provides a single system to manage, simplifies data integrity issues, and allows you to distribute access to the system across the country.

Before committing to Citrix you should ensure (by load testing) that you have sufficient bandwidth to each office to provide adequate performance. Citrix literature suggests that 25kbs per user should be adequate. The real catch is finding out how much line capacity is already committed elsewhere. We have seen situations where on paper the line capacity should have been more than adequate, but the reality was sadly different, possibly because uncontrolled web browsing, web radio and junk email was consuming much of the available bandwidth.

There are a couple of licensing issues you need to consider before committing to Citrix. By default your HYACCESS.INI file does not allow Citrix access, but we will provide you a Citrix HYACCESS at no charge. However the terms or the Hydstra licence agreement make it clear that you cannot provide Citrix access to outside users without suitable licensing agreements being in

place. Our policy is that every Hydstra user must be licensed. If you have a corporate licence for your own users and you want to allow someone else to use the software on your hardware you need an additional licence for them. If you are letting an external user who already has their own Hydstra system access your system, the cost of the additional seat will be the cost of one more seat to them. So if you want to provide access to an external user who already has 3 seats, the additional cost to you would be the cost of a fourth seat for that user.

You can still use the region system to control access to data under Citrix by setting the REGION field in PASSWD for each user. If a user needs to be a member of two regions at different times you will need to set up two Hydstra users for them, and they must choose which ID to use when they start the menus.

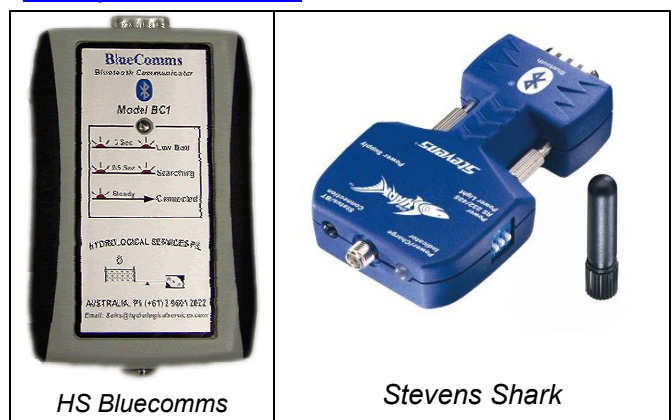
### Bluetooth Logger Communications

At the recent User Group in Darwin we became aware of a couple of Bluetooth products that allow you to connect to a logger from a laptop or PDA from up to 100 meters away - just the ticket for crocodile-infested swamps. The Hydrological Services Bluecomms or the Stevens Shark may save your toes.

See

<http://www.hydroserv.com.au/products/product9.shtml> and

<http://www.stevenswater.com/catalog/stevensProduct.aspx?SKU='80000'> for more details.



### Office Closure over Christmas

The Canberra office will be closed from December 22 and re-open on January 4. During that time staff will be checking support emails occasionally, and emergency phone numbers will be left on our answering machine.



## Travels with Hydstra

Hydstra staff have been travelling extensively in the last few months (which partly explains the lateness of this newsletter). Surprisingly much of our business has been within Australia after a period of many years where the Australian water industry has been in a financial drought.

Paul Sheahan has spent many weeks in Queensland assisting the Department of Natural Resources to install SODA, move to a centralised system under Citrix, and install Hydstra/SRV, as well as periods in Sydney and Darwin.

Peter Heweston has spent periods of a week or more with clients in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney as well as a week in Darwin for HUG.

Bill Steen has been marketing Hydstra in Italy, and travelling extensively within Australia exploring possibilities with the energy market for the Kisters Belvis product suite.

### *Remote Access for Hydstra Pty Ltd*

Both Peter and Paul have observed that recently much of the work they have been doing with clients has been of a system administration nature, and with the technology available these days it would be cheaper for the client and easier on our personal lives to do some of that work from Canberra. To that end we are exploring options with our larger users to provide us with network access directly into their systems to support Hydstra and SODA. The increasing sophistication of the Hydstra suite, particularly SODA, Hydstra/SRV and in future DATAVIEW combined with diminishing staff resources in the water agencies lead us to believe that we will be doing more of this sort of work in the future - and nobody wants to spend months living away from home and family in a hotel room.

If you are planning a significant project involving Hydstra please consider providing VPN access to Kisters staff as part of the project planning.

## Hydstra Product News

### *Alphanumeric Variables*

One of the subjects discussed at the Users Group meeting was a proposal to start moving towards alphanumeric variables. The move will take a while, and we expect most current users may choose to stay with their current numeric variables. However we will provide a facility for end-users to use alphanumeric aliases, e.g. WLEV as well as 100.

The move will take a while, and will happen in two stages. Stage one will require installing and running the last version 9, release (9.6?), and setting up aliases before finally moving to version 10. We will keep you informed.

### *Hydstra Releases*

Hydstra version 9.4 is the current release. We propose to release 9.5 in Feb 2007 to consolidate the patches made since 9.4 was released. 9.5 has been compiled using a much later version of the Delphi compiler, which provides us with a pathway to SOAP, net services and ultimately a possible .Net version of Hydstra.

### *Supported Windows Platforms*

Hydstra and Wiski are no longer guaranteed to run under Windows 95, 98, ME or NT. These operating systems have all been declared unsupported by Microsoft. Use of NT file servers is probably not a problem, but NT as a client PC is unsupported.

We have not yet tested Hydstra, Wiski 6 or Wiski 7 against Windows Vista, and until we do we cannot guarantee that they will run against it. Official Vista release date in Australia and Europe is 30 January 2007. We will acquire copies as soon as possible and start testing.

### *TimeStudio Release*

The current release version of TimeStudio is 4.2.0.8. We have delivered a 4.2.0.8 CD to all registered TimeStudio users. Any further patches will be delivered via the Kisters FTP site. All registered TimeStudio users have been sent instructions on how to log in to the FTP site.

Patches may be found in  
/hydstra/system\_updates/TimeStudio/ and  
/hydstra/system\_updates/TimeStudio/Drivers

Please contact us for a login and password to the FTP site if you don't have them already.

### *WISKI Release*

The current release version of WISKI is 6.3. The WISKI 6.4 ratings editor SKED has the basic development to become the shared rating curve tool for Hydstra and WISKI. The new SKED contains important functionality for Hydstra customers like the new GUI aligned to HyRatEd /HyShift, power 2/5th interpolation and a formula interface for curves.

# SODA Update

## NetComm Intra V.92 Multi-modem card



The NetComm Intra Multi-modem card is a modular PCI card that incorporates 1 to 8 modem modules on a single card. The phone lines (RJ11 connectors) are plugged directly into the card, resulting in much tidier cabling at the back of your SODA box.

The card has been tested with an extensive range of loggers/modems used in Australia and all of them connected without even requiring initialisation strings. We have tested the card with Campbell, MACE 2000 & 2001, Unidata, SDS, Mindata/Greenspan, Datataker, RRDL3 and FloPro loggers.

The card is manufactured by Exar as XR17D154 and branded by NetComm in Australia under the name SCINTRA604:

<http://www.netcomm.com.au/industrial/RAS.php>

While the card is not part of the default SODA server package, you can purchase it yourself from one of the many NetComm resellers:

[http://www.netcomm.com.au/Where\\_to\\_Buy.php](http://www.netcomm.com.au/Where_to_Buy.php)

We will give you the simple instructions required to activate the card once installed. Note that you need to have the appropriate number of SODA ports licensed (1, 4 or 8).

### Campbell Dial-In (Callback)

SODA can use one or more of its communication lines to wait for incoming calls from Campbell loggers. This allows for a tight integration of alarm management mechanisms using SODA and Hydstra.

### Campbell Scientific PAKBUS communication protocol

Campbell PAKBUS capable loggers are being more and more widely used, especially now that

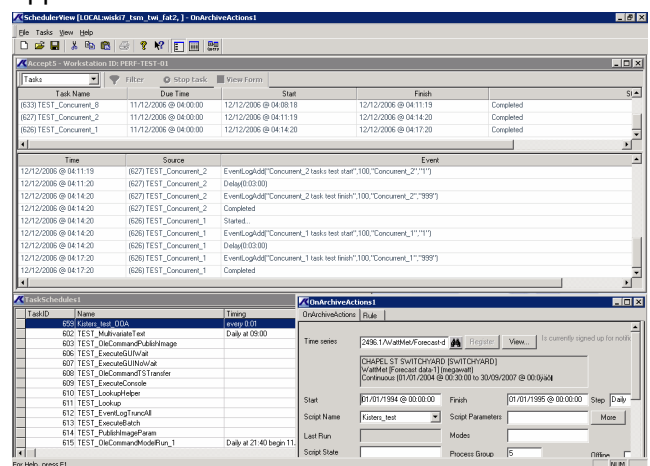
the CR510 and CR10X have been discontinued.

The PAKBUS logger driver has now been added to the list of SODA supported communication protocols and is being increasingly used by our customers.

With the PAKBUS protocol, it is possible to connect multiple data loggers in a network, connect them in various ways, with relays, radio systems, poll network attached loggers from a single modem. PAKBUS works with packets of data, addresses and is quite similar to TCP/IP in some respects.

## WISKI News

A significant amount of development has been put into WISKI 7 during the last quarter of 2006. The integration of the core TimeStudio Modules has been completed with the TWI Iteration 2.2. In the current iteration the TimeStudio Scheduler has been successfully integrated into the WISKI7/TSM environment. Scheduler is now interfacing to the KISTERS Time Series Management Server TSM to receive OnArchive actions. Task management including failover, conversions, ole commands etc are fully integrated into the WISKI Scheduler application.



### Wiski 7 Acceptance Testing

Lukas Salkeld, Crispin Smythe and Gavan Smith from Hydro Tasmania visited the KISTERS German Headquarter in Aachen during December to test the current WISKI iteration, and initial results seem good.

The first product release of WISKI 7 is expected in June 2007. It is anticipated that at this stage the water quality package will conceptually developed and be completed in a December 2007 maintenance release.

## Staff News

### ***Denby Angus joins Kisters***

We are pleased to welcome Denby Angus to the Canberra office. Denby has a strong background in IT and web development, and has even worked with Hydstra in previous positions. He will be joining Paul Sheahan and Peter Heweston in the consulting group, with a focus on developing Perl solutions for clients.



*Denby Angus*

## Contact Information

This newsletter is published by Kisters Pty Ltd and edited by Peter Heweston.

Homepage: <http://www.kisters.com.au>

All support and accounts questions should be directed to [support@hydstra.com](mailto:support@hydstra.com).

All personal Hydstra email addresses are of the form [firstname.lastname@kisters.com.au](mailto:firstname.lastname@kisters.com.au), but all general emails should be addressed to [support@hydstra.com](mailto:support@hydstra.com).

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