

Getting out and getting dirty (spend a day in their shoes)

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Many organisations have divisions and departments that work together with varying levels of success. Office based staff may not fully understand what it takes to operate and maintain assets. Conversely operational departments may not fully understand decisions made by office-based staff. Spend a Day in Their Shoes is an initiative at TasWater, the state-wide water and sewerage authority in Tasmania, where individuals spend days in other teams, departments or divisions. Longer experiences, in the form of fixed term secondments, are also frequent occurrences. This results in a learning environment where barriers are broken down and relationships built up across the organisation. This paper presents information on the initiatives. It includes case studies highlighting various exchange experiences in TasWater. One example is when a primarily office based asset management engineer spent time with the field based bulk water distribution team. The case studies demonstrate that this can be a straightforward, easy to implement initiative has many short and long term benefits for organisations.