

History of the National Water Supply & Drainage Board

The Organization had its beginning as a sub department under the Public Works Department, for Water Supply & Drainage. In 1965, it became a division under the Ministry of Local Government. From 1970, this division functioned as a separate department under the Ministry of Irrigation, Power & Highways and remained so until the present Board was established in January 1975 by an Act of Parliament.



The National Water Supply Drainage Board (NWS&DB), which presently functions under the Ministry of Urban Development, Water Supply & Drainage is the principal authority providing safe drinking water and facilitating the provision of sanitation in Sri Lanka. In accordance with the NWS&DB Act, a number of major Urban Water Supply Schemes operated by Local Authorities were taken over by the NWS&DB to provide more coverage and improved service. Consumer metering and billing commenced in 1982. Rural Water Supply & Sanitation programmes including deep well programmes are also being implemented by the NWS&DB.

During the past years, the organization has considerably expanded its scope of activities.

The NWS&DB is presently operating 324 Water Supply Schemes which cover 34% of the total population with pipe borne water supply. 10.5% of the population is served with pipe borne water supply by some Local Authorities, NGO's and Community Based Organizations. 13% of the population is served with hand pump tube wells. We hope to increase the coverage with pipe borne water to 45.7% by 2015 so that the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of 85% safe drinking water coverage can be achieved by that year. The NWS&DB is also in charge of the sewerage system in Colombo and suburbs, Hantane, Koggala, Hikkaduwa, Kataragama and in few housing schemes.