**Queensland Water Directorate (*qldwater*)** ***e-*flash**

**Information for Water Industry Managers and Practitioners in the Queensland Water Industry**

**(Issue #380– 25 January 2019)**

**1.   Important accommodation information if you are planning on attending the qldwater mini-conference in Townsville in July**

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**7.   Federal Government VET Review Submission**

**~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~  1.   Important accommodation information if you are planning on attending the qldwater mini-conference in Townsville in July**

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The Townsville Regional Mini-Conference on 4-5 July hosted by Townsville City Council leads into the Supercars weekend and accommodation will be challenging to get if you don't book early.

We have made some initial inquiries with a view to reserving some apartments to help latecomers, however most facilities with more than one bedroom require a minimum 4 night stay so this hasn't proven possible.  There is single bedroom accommodation available with reasonable cancellation policies.

The event includes  a site tour of the Haughton pipeline and dinner on 4 July with presentations, workshops etc on 5 July.  At this stage, the dinner is planned for the Riverway Art Gallery (<https://www.townsville.qld.gov.au/facilities-and-recreation/theatres-and-galleries/riverway-arts-centre>) and conference will be Riverway Stadium (<https://www.townsville.qld.gov.au/facilities-and-recreation/sport-and-leisure-facilities/riverway-stadium>).

 Our first event for year is the Skills Forum on 7 March, we will open registrations for the mini-conference  and planned safety training opportunity in Biloela later in March very soon.

**~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~   2.   Register now for the Queensland Water Skills Forum!**

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Registrations are invited for the Queensland Water Skills Forum to be held on Thursday 7 March 2019 at the Crosby Park Events Centre, Brothers Rugby Club, Albion from 9am to 4pm. [Register online now!](https://ipweaq.eventsair.com/QuickEventWebsitePortal/queensland-water-skills-forum/event-info-site/ExtraContent/ContentPage?page=1)

Your registration includes a full day program of presentations from industry colleagues who will share their knowledge and experience of skilling, capability building and workforce planning for the water industry as well as morning tea, lunch and closing drinks. [View the detailed program](https://ipweaq.eventsair.com/QuickEventWebsitePortal/queensland-water-skills-forum/event-info-site/Agenda).

Forum attendance is free for up to three delegates from each [Water Skills Partnership member](https://www.qldwater.com.au/Skills_and_Training). ***qldwater*** members (who aren’t part of the Water Skills Partnership) are invited to attend for $50 + GST and other attendees for $100 + GST.

The Forum will be followed by an optional dinner with special guest speaker Neil Brennan, CEO Seqwater. Attendance at the dinner costs $90 + GST and includes a two course dinner and drinks. You are welcome to join us for dinner even if you’re unable to attend the Skills Forum. Please register your attendance via our [online registration form](https://ipweaq.eventsair.com/QuickEventWebsitePortal/queensland-water-skills-forum/event-info-site/ExtraContent/ContentPage?page=1).

We look forward to seeing you there!

**~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ 3.   End of waste code**

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A new End of Waste Code: biosolids became effective on 1 of January and is available [here](https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/assets/documents/regulation/wr-eowc-approved-biosolids.pdf)​.

Former beneficial use approvals that expired in December 2018 now transition to this new code.

The preamble to the document describes the code as "an interim arrangement for the continuous use of biosolids as a resource...."  and advises that "The draft EOW code for biosolids, for which public submissions closed on 29 November 2018, received a significant number of submissions.  As such, this EOW code will be amended to reflect the consideration of the submissions received during the public consultation period."

Eflash #376 describes the ***qldwater***collated industry response and detailed LGAQ response to the draft code.  In short, the sector did not support the draft version of the Code for several reasons but primarily because it will result in biosolids from many STPs being directed to landfill instead of beneficial reuse. This would result in greater costs for Queensland communities as well as wasting a resource that, elsewhere in Australia and internationally, is commonly safely reused. A better balance needs to be struck between managing any risks associated with biosolids and adding more waste to landfill.

​We will continue to support this position with LGAQ as the department considers amendments - no timeframes available as yet.

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**4.   Plumbing and Drainage Legislation**

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As advised in Eflash #375, we prepared a short submission to the Department of Housing and Public Works relating to proposed new versions of the Plumbing and Drainage Regulation and Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code.  The timing of the consultation made it difficult to participate in the face to face session scheduled, however a review of the materials subsequently provided suggests that the issues raised around management of on-site sewerage systems have been considered.

The Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018 was passed in September.  The Department has recently written to us to advise that:

- Once approved, the new Regulation and QPWC will be made available on the Queensland Legislation and DHPW web sites;

- The Government is seeking to ensure there is sufficient lead time for local governments to update any required information technology and administrative processes, and for industry and licensees to make themselves familiar with the new laws ahead of their proposed commencement on 1 July 2019.

There is not, as yet, information available to distribute on what the "new laws" might look like or what changes local government might need to specifically consider, however we will pass such information along when we receive it.

**~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ 5.   Drinking Water Advisory Guideline and Template - Department of Health**

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The Department of Health has released a guideline and templates for drinking water advisories, available [here](https://www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/812691/drinking-water-advisories-guide-template.pdf). The guideline provides a framework and guidance for water service providers in preparing and issuing drinking water advisory notices.  The document provides information to support planning and communication of ‘boil water alerts’ and less common water quality impact events such as ‘do not consume’ and ‘do not use’, along with a template to communicate the lifting of these alerts.

If you have any questions (or would like a Word version of the document), please direct queries to waterquality@health.qld.gov.au.

**~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ 6.   LGAQ Submission - Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018**

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The LGAQ was invited to provide comment on the Bill (available [here](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/pdf/bill.first/bill-2018-035)) in October with a short turnaround.  The submission focussed on the proposed introduction of a new Chapter 7A - Pollution Events into the *Public Health Act 2005*.

The new chapter will "enable the chief executive to take action to respond to a pollution event in a way that informs the public of ... the potential risk to public health; and if appropriate, any actions necessary to avoid or reduce the effect of the pollution event on public health."  In practice this empowers the chief executive to compel "polluters" to notify the public.

The proposed changes are in response to issues arising in 2018 around PFAS contamination detections.  LGAQ's submission considers perceived duplication of legislation, the importance of consultation with local government/ utilities in deciding on how these sorts of events should be communicated to the public, specific circumstances for declared disasters etc.

If you would like to review or discuss the submission, please contact Arron Hieatt, Lead Water and Sewerage Infrastructure (Arron\_Hieatt@lgaq.asn.au).

**~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~   7.   Federal Government VET Review Submission**

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Skills Eflash #72 described an expert review of the VET sector being undertaken by the federal government, and due today (25 January).

***qldwater's***submission is available at <http://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=246959>.  ​It is the result of consultation with skills partnership members, WSAA and Vicwater.  We would like to acknowledge the members who were able to contribute at a time of year when such processes simply should not be conducted.  Particular thanks to Unitywater (Kim Moore, Kenan Hibberd) for contributing ideas and facilitating other linkages.

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