**Queensland Water Skills e-Flash #83**

**Information for Water Industry Managers, Human Resources Personnel and Employees in the Queensland Water Industry**

**(Issue #83 – Thursday 14 November 2019)**

1. Value of Operator Competency Research Report released
2. Your feedback invited about the Certificate IV in Water Industry Operations
3. Promoting the Aqua Card in your organisation
4. Outcome of Australian Qualifications Framework Review
5. Associated Organisations’ Announcements

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1. **Value of Operator Competency Research Report released**

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Previous Skills e-Flashes (#69, #77) have referred to Water Research Australia’s study to demonstrate the value of developing, building and continually growing a competent operator workforce. ***qldwater*** provided input to the research and a [presentation](https://ipweaq.eventsair.com/QuickEventWebsitePortal/queensland-water-skills-forum/event-info-site/Agenda) at the Water Skills Forum earlier this year provided an overview and early findings from the research. The final report and executive summary have been released and are available on the [WaterRA website](https://www.waterra.com.au/research/value-of-operator-competency/).

The research has confirmed there is a need for a well-structured and dedicated approach to frontline operator training and competency and illustrates that organisations that do not provide frontline operators with a diverse set of competencies may be more vulnerable to service delivery failures. The report makes a number of recommendations (for more details refer to the [full report](https://www.waterra.com.au/research/value-of-operator-competency/)):

1. Regulators should review frontline operator training and competency provision at an organisational level, using a nationally recognised and defined minimum competency benchmark with the objective of determining if competency deficiencies reside within the water industry frontline operator workforce.
2. There needs to be a targeted communication campaign to improve the current understanding of frontline operator competency requirements and the knowledge, skills and experience required to fulfil specific roles. The consequence of failing to meet these requirements is a potentially significant service delivery risk to water organisations.
3. The industry should consider a further study targeted at water quality safety incidents and near misses specific to the Australian context to better understand the contribution of frontline operator competency (human error factors) to the root cause of these events.
4. The Australian water industry should consider regulatory changes to drive a nationally consistent governance approach to the provision of frontline operator training and competency; either via mandated operator certification under the Water Industry Operator Competency Framework or by defined minimum competency standards for frontline operator roles.

Following discussion at the Water Skills Forum, ***qldwater*** has been pursuing discussions with DNRME to consider options including mandatory minimum qualifications for drinking water operators and the outcomes of this research will provide useful input to those discussions. In addition, ***qldwater*** has commenced work to develop a Queensland-wide workforce plan for operators to better understand the existing workforce demographics and qualifications coverage. We will soon be in contact with Water Skills Partners and ***qldwater*** members with more information.

Please contact Carlie Sargent on 07 3632 6853 with any queries about the research or the operator workforce plan.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~**Your feedback invited about the Certificate IV in Water Industry Operations**

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Following completion of the review of the Certificate II and Certificate III water industry qualifications, Australian Industry Standards (AIS) has commenced a review of the two Certificate IV water industry qualifications. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been appointed and met recently for the first time at the ***qldwater*** offices in Brisbane.  A number of Queensland industry representatives have been selected to participate in the review:

Brad Milfull (Logan City Council)

Kim Moore (Unitywater)

Kathryn Turner (Urban Utilities)

David Merheb (Urban Utilities)

Colin Hester (Urban Utilities)

Carlie Sargent (***qldwater***)

There are other representatives from other jurisdictions, with a range of different technical expertise of relevance to the qualifications. The intent is to review the Certificate IV in Water Industry Operations and Certificate IV in Water Industry Treatment qualifications and associated Units of Competency with a view to combining them into one qualification. The TAC is interested in any feedback about the qualifications to inform their review. Please submit your feedback via the [review project page](https://www.australianindustrystandards.org.au/projects/nwp-water-industry-operations-and-treatment-review/) or email me at csargent@qldwater.com.au or call 073632 6853 to provide your feedback over the phone. You can also [register to receive updates](https://www.australianindustrystandards.org.au/projects/nwp-water-industry-operations-and-treatment-review/) on the progress of the review.

A number of products in the Business Services (BSB) Training Package are also under review. You can review the draft materials and provide feedback at: <https://www.skillsforaustralia.com/industries/business-services/>. For more information contact info@skillsforaustralia.com.

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1. **Promoting the Aqua Card course in your organisation**

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More than 180 people have now completed ***qldwater’s*** ‘[Aqua Card](https://watertraining.com.au/)’, an online training course designed to provide contractors, and other staff as necessary, an understanding of fundamental drinking water quality issues and how their work can potentially increase risks, including the introduction of contaminants into the drinking water system. A number of organisations have delivered presentations about the value of the course to their staff and ***qldwater*** has developed a short PowerPoint presentation to support those discussions. Special mention to Bundaberg Regional Council who recently presented an overview of the course at a toolbox talk and enrolled 70 employees to complete the course and Logan City Council who are training 60 contractors in the course in December.

***qldwater*** can arrange to upload your employee details into the system to assist with implementation. Please contact Carlie Sargent on 07 3632 6853 to discuss options for your organisation and to obtain a copy of the presentation.

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1. **Outcome of the Australian Qualifications Framework Review**

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A recent review of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) has recommended a number of reforms to ensure that regulations for qualifications continue to meet the needs of students, employers, education providers and the community. The Panel’s recommendations and implementation plan suggest a staged approach to the finalisation of the reforms, under the guidance of a new governance body for the AQF.

Read the [final report 2019](https://docs-edu.govcms.gov.au/node/53081) or contact AQFReview@education.gov.au for more information.

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1. **Associated Organisations’ Opportunities**

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**Leadership for Executive Women in Water Course**

The International WaterCentre’s [Leadership for Executive Women in Water](https://internationalwatercentre.cmail19.com/t/d-l-xjluuid-jdpthkdkj-o/) is a 3-day intensive, residential course specifically designed for busy female executives who don’t have the time to commit to an extended leadership program. The intent of the short course is to catalyse fresh perspectives and honest conversations about the leadership journey, and to book-end this with professional coaching sessions.

Registrations are now open for the course in February 2020. Download the [course brochure](https://internationalwatercentre.cmail19.com/t/d-l-xjluuid-jdpthkdkj-o/) and contact Belinda Pritchard on 0472 502 759 with any queries.

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