**Queensland Water Skills e-Flash #40**

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

**(Issue #40 –  4 June 2015)**

1. **Sewage Treatment Plant Operator Certification Framework Released**
2. **National Water Industry Skills Taskforce Changes**
3. **EBA Rates Comparison Document Available (members only)**

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**1. Sewage Treatment Plant Operator Certification Framework Released**

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The final *Sewage/wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification Framework* incorporating industry feedback was formally endorsed by the Water Skills Partnership Industry Leaders’ Group (ILG) on the 27th May. The final Framework is available on the ***qldwater*** website [**here**](http://www.qldwater.com.au/Skills_water_operator_programs).

Development of the Framework began in  April 2014 when the ILG identified the investigation of options for a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) Operator certification framework as a priority activity.  A discussion document outlining the basic principles of the framework was released for broad industry comment in February 2015. The discussion document represented the result of industry meetings to set parameters for a framework, critically consider how to classify the operation of treatment systems (both complexity and risk) and map job requirements to available training and education.

The STP Operator certification framework seeks to set minimum standards for training, education and professional development for various industry roles with a view to improving consistency, portability of skills, access to professional development and career paths for these critical staff.  It is also designed to assist employers to manage risks around their environmental duty with greater confidence.

The final Framework is presented as an industry-developed standard and discussions with the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection for recognition are ongoing.  It has been developed to be as simple as possible - with the clear expectation that it will be adopted on a voluntary basis and should under no circumstances be referenced in a regulatory context.

The Framework is now available to be implemented by organisations on a voluntary basis. Whilst formal arrangements are not yet in place, the Water Industry Operators Association (WIOA) has stated that it is willing to act as the certifying body for the Framework, as it currently fills this role for Queensland for the National Certification Framework for Operators of Drinking Water Systems. Organisations interested in leading the industry and pursuing the option of formally certifying their operators against the Framework can contact George Wall from WIOA (info@wioa.org.au) for further information.

A broader implementation plan for the Framework has been approved by the ILG and includes:

-              Establishing a touchstone/ reference group to review materials.

-              Development of a simple business case looking at costs/ benefits for employers in adopting the framework.

-              Consideration of a pilot program seeking volunteers through ***qldwater*** and Water Skills Partnership members.

Whilst the National Water Training Package that underpins many of the training requirements contained in the Framework is currently under review, the overall framework structure is not expected to change as a result of any changes. Once the new package is released (this is not expected to be until 2016) the Framework will be reviewed to align with any changes.

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**2.  National Water Industry Skills Taskforce Changes**

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***qldwater*** has taken over the secretariat function for the national Water Industry Skills Taskforce (WIST) for a period of 12 months. Dave Cameron, ***qldwater*** CEO has been elected Chair.

A release from the WIST covering some of the changes is available [**here.**](http://www.qldwater.com.au/_literature_194610/WIST_Communication_and_Announcement_-_June_2015)

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**3.  EBA Rates Comparison Document Available (*qldwater* members only)**

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An updated Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) Comparison spreadsheet for 2015 is now available on the ***qldwater*** website - <http://www.qldwater.com.au/skills_workforce_resources_and_publications>. Members will need to log in to view the document.

The data on the first tab in the spreadsheet includes information on pay rates for the Local Government Employees’ - State Award and Queensland Local Government Officers’ Award as contained in a number of Queensland water service provider EBAs (all EBAs are publicly available on the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission website). Organisations have been categorised by small, medium and large water service providers. The second tab includes the specific pay grades and wage rates against a selection of water industry positions with notes included in reference to annualised allowances or other allowances where applicable (note that this information is not exhaustive  - further individual details available in each individual EBA).

The first EBA Comparison spreadsheet was published in 2010, this updated version builds on that data and includes updated rates. Where updated data was not received by organisations involved in the 2010 version the pay rates as per the organisations current EBA with any CPI or other agreed increases have been used to update the figures. Therefore, the data assumes that no changes have been made to the classifications of positions on the second tab where updated information has not been provided. Also please note that some of the data may be for 2013 with annual increases for 2014 not taken into account as they are not available.  The data provided is for information purposes only.

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