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

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

**(Issue #355 – 7 June 2018)**

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**1.   Department of Health and PFAS**

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Department of Health and PFAS

To ***qldwater*** members

On 22nd of May 2018  we wrote to you individually in an attempt to explain your obligations in relation to a letter sent to most of Queensland’s water service providers requesting monitoring for PFAS.  This advice has not changed, however we have been considering what, if any, further action we should take on behalf of members to the department.

We do not wish to downplay the potential seriousness of positive detections of these chemicals; but their impact on public health remains largely unknown.  The current regulatory framework for drinking water in Queensland has mechanisms for managing these types of concerns, built around risk assessment and mandated drinking water quality plans.

It is difficult to see how the department’s approach to these issues is meeting its desired objective of reassuring the public.  The issue has become strongly politicised.  Arguably, it has imposed a range of monitoring costs on communities, including those with little or no risk of a positive detection.  The only positive we can see is for service providers which have been considering monitoring for some time, and now have an excuse, and a reduced price for analyses.

From ***qldwater’s*** perspective, advocacy around an emotive topic risks drawing further public attention to something which should be managed through the existing regulatory and reporting framework designed for such matters.  At this stage we do not plan on formally approaching the department, instead informally appealing for a stronger consultation process with the water industry on potentially contentious matters.  Queensland’s service providers are directly linked to the communities they serve, and well-meaning but ill-informed “blanket” approaches do little to support the delivery of quality drinking water services.

Should you have other views on our approach, please don’t hesitate to contact Dave Cameron, dcameron@qldwater.com.au or 0407 761 991.

Dave Cameron

***qldwater***  - The Queensland Water Directorate

***qldwater*** works to strengthen the Water Industry, through leadership, support and representation for its Queensland members.  We provide technical input into policy development, guidelines, and coordination to respond to the needs of a changing industry.

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