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

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

**(Issue #302 –  17 November 2016)**

**1.   Actions from *qldwater* Innovation Forum**

**2.   Building over Infrastructure Services**

Over the next few e-flashes we will be highlighting some of the work of ***qldwater*** and in particular the areas of investigation requested by our Technical Reference Group.  Some topics carry sensitivities, and so the detail will be limited, however please don’t hesitate to contact us if you’d like further information.

Please note, we have trialled various web forums and other ways of handling member technical queries without a lot of uptake.  However, in the background, there are a few active and enthusiastic email groups we can call on to help link you up with the expertise and experience of other members, if you are prepared to ask the questions.

Please contact Dave Cameron (dcameron@qldwater.com.au) if you have any queries.

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**1.   Actions from *qldwater* Innovation Forum**

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A number of ideas were captured during our Innovation Forum on 14-15 November, and our Technical Reference Group has now had the opportunity to consider potential actions.  Below is a brief summary of those priorities.

1. Improved event administration

We have thrived for many years on being able to run casual and informal events with great information exchange, and for our regional conferences in 2017, this won’t change.  The Innovation Forum has however grown in scope and delegates, to a point where we believe it requires a higher degree of professionalism.  We have developed an events plan for the year with some changes to incorporate feedback from delegates.  This includes the use of the EventsAir management system to streamline registrations and conference communications.

1. Projects/ issues

There are a number of topics where feedback from attendees has been noted and we will work to incorporate ways of addressing identified needs into existing programs, including:

* Varying levels of service for small communities
* Operator capacity issues including pursuing mandatory drinking water operator certification
* Extended regional collaboration opportunities, including capital planning

There are others for which we plan to develop small projects and materials and we are seeking further input from interested members of the industry:

* Partnerships between industry and regulators – a variety of suggestions including secondments, training, MOUs etc.  TRG has agreed that we will work up some case studies on successful examples, in particular the DBYD Water Connections Tour Week held each year.  Several of the members visited have indicated that the opportunity to show DEHP and other Queensland Government representatives around sites, engage with councillors etc. ultimately led to positive change and resolution of long-standing issues.
* Re-establishment of the ERA Expert group with a chair and defined program of issues to address.  There are a number of other suggestions which will be passed onto this group for consideration including ways of improving the uptake of government initiatives including the “voluntary market-based mechanism for nutrient management.”
* Better linkages with financial agencies, including QTC, QAO, economic regulator with associated communications materials.  Ways of simplifying the benefits of sound infrastructure planning and contributions of industry innovation.
* Revisit a customer’s session at a future innovation forum, given the importance of this area and the focus it has received nationally.
* Set up a series of guests to attend TRG from other industries, to explore areas of common interest and potential learnings.
* Investigate further some of the options explored during the remote sensing keynote, at least around low cost solutions with staff in-house using publicly available data/ imagery.

We are seeking feedback from our members on these issues either formally or informally – if you have suggestions please contact us.

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**2.   Building over Infrastructure Services**

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There is a long history on the introduction of MP1.4 of the Queensland Development Code in late 2014 and residual issues, but little positive to report since.  Below is an update of our actions since the last e-flash on the subject (#283 -  [advice](http://www.qldwater.com.au/BlogRetrieve.aspx?PostID=676393&A=SearchResult&SearchID=86758768&ObjectID=676393&ObjectType=55) that our position paper had been forwarded to Minister De Brenni in March 2016).

* DHPW responded positively and committed to convening a reference group to address the matters raised in the position paper in April 2016.   With the invaluable input of Nick Smith from QUU, further information was provided on residual issues which include combined sanitary drains, proximity exemption distance for large diameter mains and other proximity exemption working, the acceptable solution for lightweight structures, definition of “DN,” and clearance from connections.
* No further contact was received until June, when an officer was appointed to action.
* With no further contact, the department was again contacted in late August and it advised that the Minister was to be briefed.
* With no further contact, a new letter was sent to Minister De Brenni on 26 October, seeking resolution of the outstanding matters and citing the result of a decision by the Building and Development Dispute Resolutions Committee in August which found against Mackay Regional Council for rejecting a building application (for a structure over an access chamber) which did not satisfy the performance requirements of MP1.4.  The decision was effectively based on the assumption that the Code was wrong, and in doing so it has established an unworkable precedent.

We continue to await a response.

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