



# QueenslandWater

The Water Industry's Resource for News, Events and Information

Issue 4

**THE 2012  
BEST  
OF THE  
BEST**



**31 STATE-WIDE ENTRIES**

**6 REGIONAL FINALISTS**

**ONE LUCKY WINNER!**

**QUEENSLAND WATER TASTE TEST**

## The sweet (but salty) taste of success

Congratulations to Burdekin Shire Council who won the 2012 Orica Australia Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test at the exciting grand final event held at the Water Industry Operators Association (WIOA) conference on the Gold Coast on 7 June.

Burdekin Shire Council Operations Manager Wayne Saldumbide said even though Burdekin promoted itself as being built on liquid gold (water), the win was a pleasant surprise and a big event for such a small shire.

"We are extremely fortunate to have an underground aquifer that contains over 20 million megalitres of water which equates to about 40 times the amount of water in the Sydney Harbour," Wayne said.

Burdekin was one of 31 state-wide entrants which had been narrowed down to six finalists at our regional conferences. The winning sample was judged to have no odour and a variety of flavours including "a slightly earthy taste", "fresh", "sweet, but salty", "flat" and "quaffable like grange".

The six regional winners who battled it out at the state-wide grand final were:



South East Queensland	South West Queensland	Central Queensland
<p>North Burnett Regional Council's Eidsvold scheme gets its water from the Burnett River through an alluvial bore and has a fairly simple treatment process with only sand filtering and chlorination before it is distributed to the 297 residential connections in Eidsvold.</p>	<p>Toowoomba Regional Council's Mt Kynoch facility takes water from Toowoomba's three dams and uses conventional treatment - flocculation, settling, filtration, chlorination and fluoridation - before distribution.</p>	<p>Rockhampton Regional Council gets its water from the Fitzroy River and treats it at the Glenmore water treatment plant using conventional treatment processes like flocculation, sedimentation, filtration, chlorination and fluoridation before distribution.</p>
		
Western Queensland	North Queensland	Far North Queensland
<p>Barcaldine gets water straight from the Great Artesian Basin and it needs no further treatment. It has two bores and both are pumped into ground storage reservoirs and then distributed through town by variable speed pumps. There is a single reticulation system into which is fed from both sources with an average temperature of around 45°C.</p>	<p>Burdekin Shire accesses its water supply in the Ayr, Home Hill and Brandon townships from the extensive underground aquifer which is recharged by water from the Burdekin River. Water is pumped from the aquifer to treatment facilities where it is aerated and chlorinated before being supplied under pressure to the distribution network for consumption.</p>	<p>Torres Strait Island Regional Council's Saibai treatment plant gets its water from a rainwater lagoon supplemented by naturally purified swamp water. The water is then filtered and chlorinated before being pumped to the 300 residents across the island.</p>
		



Above: Orica Australia's Key Account Manager, George Lech, hands over the gold plated, limited edition lego water treatment plant to Gary Tickner, Overseer Water & Waste Water, Burdekin Regional Council while the semi-finalists in the background start making plans for a comeback next year!

## Update from A/CEO

Welcome to Queensland Water Issue 4.

Changes as a result of the new State Government are commanding a lot of our current attention. While at least one of the key agencies most commonly dealt with in the past has been fragmented and it's clear that the financial screws are being applied to all, local government has an unprecedented voice in the new political environment. Many of our current efforts (independently and in partnership with LGAQ) are focussed on providing input into red tape reduction strategies and regulatory reform. We'll endeavour to keep up the e-flashes however government announcements have made them redundant before we have been able to publish them on more than one occasion. Feel free to contact the office for up to date news on a particular topic.

We have recently completed our major 2012 event series and are looking forward to some time in the office to start thinking about 2013. I readily admit that I underestimated the parochialism and spirit of competition around the State... 31 entrants in the water

taste test meaning 31 water service providers represented at our conferences state-wide is a spectacular result for the first year. The interaction at the conferences was relaxed, informal and really beneficial – both in shaping our work priorities but hopefully also for those attending.

It's early days but there is clear evidence that the industry is building its public profile on the back of this campaign through a lot of media interest, and for the most part that profile is positive. To people in the industry the benefits of tap water (including drinking water quality, environmental sustainability and simple economics) are clear but the public often gets conflicting advice and we are looking to change that in 2013.

The Victorians have already "borrowed" the taste test concept with their own version planned at the Water Industry Operators Association conference in September. On behalf of the 31, we look forward to the first inter-state competition, whenever they are ready to lose.

## A pat on the back for Tammy and Ashley

While some were basking in the glory of glorious tasting water, two operators received a well deserved pat on the back for a job very well done.

Congratulations to Tammy Beddow from Central Highlands Regional Council (Blackwater) and Ashley Reidy from Isaac Regional Council (Middlemount) who were named Young Operator of the Year and Operator of the Year (Civil) respectively at the WIOA Awards Dinner.

The *qldwater*-sponsored awards aim to encourage outstanding operational performance of Queensland water industry employees and this year we were fortunate to again acknowledge operators known for their excellent performance, initiative and all round attention to detail.

In her nomination form, CHRC described Tammy as "the epitome of quality operation and public service", saying that "she may draw a wage but she genuinely works for her community".

Tammy started her career in the water industry in 2001 as a water operations trainee with Duaranga Shire Council and enrolled and completed her Cert III in water operations off her own bat.

Currently Senior Operator at Blackwater Water Treatment Plant, Tammy has pure pride in her role and claims that she is doing it because of its importance to the Blackwater community.

Tammy said the award was an enormous personal achievement in her career.

"I know what sacrifices I have made to become a better operator, and this award helped to boost my confidence, earn respect from my co workers and further my career," Tammy added.

Ashley Reidy started with council nine years ago as an 18 year old trainee and has since completed a Cert II and Cert III in water operations. He is currently studying a Diploma of Project Management.

Ashley's extensive treatment plant experience led to his promotion to the role of W&S operations supervisor 18 months ago, giving him responsibility for the Middlemount and Dysart W&S treatment schemes.

Council nominated Ashley for the award due to his longstanding commitment to safety as WHS representative, his strong community involvement through a number of clubs, his support to the Middlemount Kindergarten and Day Care Centre and his active involvement in training other operators in laboratory testing procedures and backhoe operations.

Ashley said he felt honoured to receive the award as it acknowledged his achievement in the industry.

"I started as a trainee and worked my way up the ladder to assistant operator, operator and now supervisor, and this award not only recognises my personal achievement but also sets a great example to trainees and other operators that this is achievable," Ashley said.

Ashley said the operators at Isaac Regional Council were multi skilled and apart from water and sewerage treatment he was able to

receive other qualifications that enabled him to work on lift pumps and other machinery as well.

Tammy and Ashley will receive an all expenses paid trip (value \$2,000 each) to join the WIOA delegation on a tour of water and wastewater facilities in New Zealand as well as attending the Water Industry Operations Group NZ conference in May 2013.



## Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) Training Programs

Allocations for the Strategic Investment Fund monies provided to *qldwater* by Skills Queensland have been finalised and training has begun in many of the funded courses. The funding will cover 75% of the course fees for over 180 water industry employees to undertake training in a variety of Certificate IV and above qualifications.

The SIF funding has also been used to fund a pilot program training for the Vocational Graduate Certificate in Asset Management, provided by the Institute of Quality Asset Management. The course will comprise three lots of two day face to face training sessions as well as projects to complete within the workplace.

The initial two day training took place at *qldwater* offices in May and

feedback from participants has been positive. Further courses will be investigated pending feedback from this course and interest from industry.

Queensland Urban Utilities has also engaged Chisholm TAFE from Victoria to deliver Diploma in Water Operations (Civil) training through the SIF funding. The course will combine technical civil units as well as frontline management and leadership content. The course includes a combination of work projects and onsite training visits.

The potential for further SIF funding allocations are unclear at this stage until Skills Queensland's new budget is determined. *qldwater* will continue to work on behalf of the industry to try to secure this and other skills development funding.

## Tackling Skills Shortages Head On



Fifty-two Allconnex employees from Logan, Gold Coast and Redlands celebrated the completion of their Certificate II or Certificate III in Water Operations (Civil) at a graduation ceremony held at the Beenleigh Events Centre on Tuesday, 29 May 2012.

The group's nationally recognised qualification was funded by Skills Queensland as part of the Queensland Government User Choice Traineeship Program.

*qldwater* Project Manager – Skills, Michelle Hill, who coordinated the logistics of the program as part of the Queensland Water Skills Partnership, said these students now joined a group of almost 200 participants to complete the program across Queensland since its introduction in 2009.

“The Water Operations – Civil program was developed as a collaboration between government, industry and training providers to help retain staff and improve future opportunities for workers through industry specific training, and we believe we have achieved a great outcome for all.”

John Crawley from Chisholm TAFE stated that recognition

of prior learning (RPL) was emphasised in the program and associated gap training was provided in areas where participants could not demonstrate current competency.

“The high level of experience and skills that the participants had gained through their years of employment was evident, and recognising that in the program has helped the participants to further their skills, broadening their career paths and offering opportunities for promotion and professional development,” Mr Crawley said.

*qldwater* CEO, Dave Cameron, said the graduation was a step in the right direction for the Queensland water industry which, according to a recently produced Queensland Water Industry Workforce Composition Snapshot, is facing complex skills challenges.

“Increasing demands, an ageing workforce, falling workforce participation rates and competition from other industries such as mining are all complex challenges that need to be addressed, and collaborative programs like this will ensure the industry has the capacity to support safe, secure and efficient water services across the state.”

# Q-WRAP update

The Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (Q-WRAP) was developed as an industry (Council) led initiative to investigate regional collaboration, including possible institutional models, for improved urban water services outside of SEQ. The two-year program is funded partially by DEWS, LGAQ and *qldwater* and seeks co-investment from Councils.

Three groups of Councils (the pilot groups) are participating to analyse and review their institutional arrangements for water services across their region to investigate whether collaborative processes or institutional reform could provide benefits to their communities. Councils participating in the program include members of:

- RAPAD, the Remote Area Planning and Development Board, namely: Winton, Longreach, Boulia, Barcaldine, Diamantina, and Barcoo; and
- FNQRoC, the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils, namely: Cairns, Tablelands, Cassowary Coast, Cook, Etheridge and Croydon.

Councils in the WBBRoC area (Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils) have expressed interest in forming a third pilot region.

The RAPAD group is well progressed in the project and has been successful in seeking matching project funding for an initial analysis of strengths, gaps and risks within the region. A steering group consisting of mayors from each council will review the finalised report and determine the best approach for the second stage. Stage 2 seeks to review alternative models for collaboratively providing services to the region's far-flung and diverse communities and assess their applicability to the circumstances of each council.

The FNQRoC pilot region have completed an initial high-level analysis of risks and gaps and are cooperating on a review of strategic priorities and benefits for water reform. This review is to be informed by the experiences of experts that were personally involved in Victorian reforms of the 80s and 90s and the recent (2008) restructure of the Tasmanian Local Government Water Industry. A discussion paper investigating the models of reform elsewhere in Australia and overseas and evaluating the potential options with respect to the Australian industry has been completed and will be published within the next month. This document will be forwarded to all Queensland councils for comment. For further information please contact Rob Fearon ([rfearon@qldwater.com.au](mailto:rfearon@qldwater.com.au)).



## Just keep SWIMming...

As if training for their own Olympic Games, the SWIM team have been extremely busy with a whirlwind tour that included five SWIM/SWIM*Local* training days at Cloncurry, Mackay, Townsville, Biloela and Brisbane in July.

The half-day training covered indicators, metadata, webforms and data templates, quality control tools, online training tools and legislative requirements for SWIM, followed by a SWIM*Local* demonstration.

SWIM is a *qldwater* flagship program and it's great to see that, what started as a compliance tool designed to reduce members' regulatory reporting burden, has now become a key mechanism for monitoring and benchmarking business performance.

SWIM has been rewarded by investment from three successive rounds of the Bureau of Meteorology's Modernisation and Extension Fund, recognising its strategic importance in supporting national water reporting.

The most recent Bureau grant has contributed to the development of SWIM*Local* – a software system designed to operate within each WSP, synchronise with the central system and most importantly, see the Quality Assurance procedures built into SWIM moved closer to the point of data capture.

The system synchronises data across all relevant computers within one organisation and the SWIM database thus allowing easy access to all your data and streamlined reporting.

SWIM*Local* and SWIM talk seamlessly to each other making it very easy to submit new data as well as access/correct/download any of the data you have previously submitted to SWIM.

We will be travelling in the remainder of 2012 helping WSPs implement SWIM*Local*, so contact Sally via email: [swalding@qldwater.com.au](mailto:swalding@qldwater.com.au) or on 3632 6852 to discuss.



## Water Connections 2012

This year Rob Fearon and Dave Cameron from *qldwater* were joined by representatives from DERM, Queensland Health, SEWPaC and DEEDI on our annual tour to visit regional and remote members. Michael Lever (technical advisor and taste test star) also came along, with Bruce Gardiner (Cairns Regional Council, *qldwater* Chair) and Alex Ung from Cairns joining in for the Wujal Wujal and Cooktown legs.

The week started with the Longreach conference and finished in Bowen, with trips to Croydon, Etheridge (Georgetown and Forsayth), Cooktown, Wujal Wujal, Innisfail and Ayr in between.

The delegation was welcomed at each site. Michael Lever was able to offer technical advice and assistance in some areas and also provided a confidential report back to each council visited. Other technical and policy issues were discussed at each council with the Government and *qldwater* staff. Feedback from participating councils has been very strong.

The tour week remains a vitally important part of the *qldwater* year. While it is primarily aimed at helping members, it is important not to underestimate the value of exposing senior government staff to the challenges of service delivery in regional and remote locations. Thanks again to all of our 2012 host councils. Let's take a look at some of the highlights:

### Croydon



### Etheridge (Georgetown and Forsayth)



## Cooktown



## Wujal Wujal



## Innisfail



## Ayr



## Out and About



George Wall from WIOA interviewed by Channel 10 and Channel 7 on the Gold Coast following the Taste Test Final.



The judges under pressure to find the best tasting tap water in Queensland.



Sunset Bowen to Brisbane - a nice way to finish off a successful Water Connections Week!

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### August

- 1-3 ICEWarm Australian Water School, Adelaide
- 9-10 ICEWarm Climate Change Adaptation, Brisbane
- 10 *TRG Meeting*
- 14-15 AWA WICD Skills Workshop, Darwin
- 21-22 AWA Coal Seam Gas - The Science, Brisbane
- 21-23 SRIT Introduction to Australian Groundwater, Brisbane

### September

- 12-14 AWA National Operations Conference, Darwin
- 20-21 AWA North Queensland Regional Conference, Cairns
- 20-21 ICEWarm Hydraulics and Hydrology for non-Engineers, Melbourne
- 28 ICEWarm Water Essentials, Brisbane

### October

- 9-12 IPWEAQ State Conference, Brisbane
- 9-10 LOGOV Exhibition, Caboolture
- 19 *TRG Meeting*

## WHAT'S NEW?

We've been sprucing up our website with a range of extra features including an online training calendar and a blog site.

Entitled "Furpheys and Scuttlebutt - conversations around the water cooler", the blog aims to generate some general discussions about issues surrounding the water industry. This is by no means a technical discussion, but rather an avenue for us to find out how you feel about some of the changes we are seeing in the water industry, and how we should position ourselves for the future.

We have also added some photos of our recent conferences and the Water Connections Week, so have a look at [www.qldwater.com.au](http://www.qldwater.com.au)



qldwater - Unit 4, 43-49 Sandgate Road, Albion QLD 4010  
PO Box 2100, Fortitude Valley BC QLD 4006

T: 07 3632 6850  
F: 07 3632 6899  
E: [enquiry@qldwater.com.au](mailto:enquiry@qldwater.com.au)  
W: [www.qldwater.com.au](http://www.qldwater.com.au)

"The Queensland Water Directorate (*qldwater*) is the central advisory and advocacy body within Queensland's urban water industry and represents members from Local Government and other water service providers across Queensland."