



# QueenslandWater

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

Issue 1



## Water Connections Tour 2011 A Great Success for Regional Queensland

"This year's *Water Connections Tour* to regional and remote Queensland was again a great success!" said **qldwater** CEO Dr Rob Fearon.

This year's tour (sponsored by Dial Before You Dig and previously known as the **qldwater** Treatment Plant Tour) visited Roma, Jundah, Mornington Island, Birdsville, Mount Isa, Cloncurry and Normanton during May.

Dr Fearon said "One of the major challenges for our regional members, due to their remote location, is access to industry decision makers and on-the-ground technical support.

"Through the Water Connections Tour we are able to link our regional and remote members with water management and technical expertise to help them plan and safeguard their community's future water supply and sewerage infrastructure needs." ➡

### IN THIS ISSUE

- Operator of the Year and Young Operator of the Year is Awarded to...
- Barcoo wins 'Best of the West' Water Taste Test
- Industry leaders compare performance and pilot public reporting
- Industry response to Draft PC Inquiry Report

## Water Connections Tour 2011 A Great Success for Regional Queensland continued...

This year representatives and experts participating in the tour included one of Australia's most experienced sewerage treatment plant and water treatment plant managers, Michael Lever, senior managers from the State Government Departments of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) and Queensland Health, the Commonwealth Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPC), the National Water Commission as well as **qldwater** Chair David Wiskar (from Wide Bay Water) and other **qldwater** staff.

"For these remote councils, it is rare to have key decision makers and experts visit their local community to focus on local issues and to provide local support."

Dr Fearon said the result of the tour is a collaborative investment in our regional and remote councils and the water they supply their communities.

Since the program commenced six years ago more than 50 visits have been made to regional and remote councils and some councils have participated more than once.

In summary, the tour consists of a half-day delegation meeting with council members, chief executive officers, water managers and technical water operators as well as a tour of sewerage, water treatment plant or other water infrastructure.

Dr Fearon said it is encouraging to receive such positive feedback from past WSPs involved in the tour.

"The tour is designed for the benefit of our members and it is great to receive feedback that it is valued," he said. Some member comments include:

"The tour really supports regional and remote local government interests."

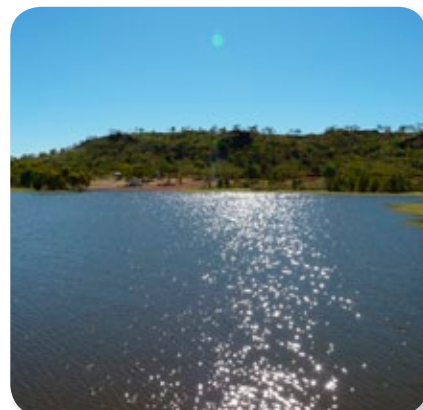
"It was excellent to have representatives here to appreciate and discuss local issues and resources and to gain input into how we manage it in the future."

"It is an excellent way to gain first hand information on changes to industry and legislation."

"**qldwater** understands that one rule is not suitable for all councils and by visiting us to discuss our individual needs is very beneficial."

Dr Fearon said "we are very fortunate to have an industry committed to working together. We thank our commonwealth and state representatives and the councils who participated in this year's event."

Councils interested in participating in future tours should contact [enquiry@qldwater.com.au](mailto:enquiry@qldwater.com.au)



### AWA Northern Conference

// The AWA Northern Conference is in Mackay this year on the **8th and 9th September**. For more information see [www.awa.asn.au/QLD.aspx](http://www.awa.asn.au/QLD.aspx)

# Operator of the Year and Young Operator of the Year is Awarded to...

Brendon Schutz (Allconnex Gold Coast) and Cameron Ansell (South Burnett Regional Council) have been recognised for their outstanding achievements at the Water Industry Operator's Association (WIOA) Conference in Toowoomba last month.

Brendon was awarded the **qldwater** 2011 Queensland Operator of the Year – Civil Award, and Cameron the **qldwater** 2011 Queensland Young Operator of the Year Award.

Dave Cameron, Industry Manager **qldwater**, said the awards acknowledge the recipients' individual contribution to urban water industry and reward innovation, civil expertise and customer service. The young operator award also aims to encourage future opportunities for young operators within the industry.

"Brendon's success is a tribute to his 10 years civil and customer service expertise," he said. "Brendon has effectively managed the Gold Coast's innovative Pressure Leakage Management Project, which is designed to reduce water usage and minimise water loss through the detection and isolation of water pressure and leaks."

Operator of the Year – Civil, Brendon Schutz said he was delighted and honoured to receive this award. "I feel as though I'm continuously learning new things everyday about the water industry, so to be recognised for my contributions so far, is a truly rewarding experience."

"I thank Allconnex for the opportunity and am looking forward to the further professional development opportunities that the award will provide," he said.

Mr Cameron said as Treatment Technical Officer, Cameron Ansell had been

instrumental in managing the successful upgrades of the Kumbia Reservoir, Gordonbrook Treatment Plant, Yallakool Tourist Park Sewage Treatment Plant and Murgon Water Treatment Plant projects.

"Cameron's strengths have enabled him to improve service infrastructure while reducing costs and timeframes for the completion of projects. This has resulted in large cost savings for the community, an increase in quality and dependability of water supply and better workplace health and safety outcomes," he said.

Cameron Ansell said he was very pleased to have been nominated and recognised through this award.

"It is great to feel a part of the water industry and for my efforts to be recognised by my colleagues and peers. I am very grateful for the experience I have gained at the South Burnett Regional Council. Working within a smaller council allows for involvement across the entire spectrum of operations from treatment through to reticulation. The projects I have worked on have given me such a broad level of experience," he said.

Both award recipients received a trip to the Water Industry Operations Group New Zealand Conference at a value of \$2000, a perpetual commemorative plaque to be presented to their council and an individual trophy.



Winning nominations were selected by a panel of water representatives from employer submissions demonstrating candidates' commitment to skills training and development, overall plant or system management and responsibility, Occupational Health and Safety, customer service, teamwork and ability to meet Standard Operating Procedures, policies and regulatory requirements.

To find out more about eligibility please contact **qldwater**. Nominations for 2012 awards can be forwarded to [enquiry@qldwater.com.au](mailto:enquiry@qldwater.com.au)





# Barcoo Wins 'Best of the West' Water Taste Test

The small outback Queensland town of Jundah (Barcoo Shire Council) with a population just over 100, has won this year's title of having the best tasting drinking water in the state's west.

During the 2011 Water Connections Tour, **qldwater** took samples from several communities as part of the **qldwater's** inaugural "Best of the West – Water Taste Test" competition. Other competing councils in this year's competition included Maranoa, Diamantina, Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Mornington and Carpentaria.

Mr David Wiskar, **qldwater** Chair, said the competition, initiated by **qldwater** on behalf of the industry, aimed to raise awareness and recognise the efforts of local water service providers in delivering quality water services to their communities.

"This is the first year that we have held the competition but already we are encouraged by the interest from the local service providers across the state who wish to raise the profile of their role.

"Safety and the quality of the water that flows into our homes is the most important issue that water utilities address. Recognition through these awards will help to highlight their commitment to deliver quality water."

Water samples were judged on clarity, flavour, aroma and aftertaste. Jundah was announced as the winner, with the judges saying the water was clear and very palatable, with a fresh, slightly mineral taste.

Barcoo Mayor Bruce Scott said that the award was quite an achievement, with the town's water coming from the Thomson River and two bores.

"You never know how your services stack up until it's tested against other water suppliers, and to have the award bestowed upon us is quite an achievement," he said.

"The proof is usually in a cup of tea or coffee ... and it makes a good cup of tea or coffee and it is very refreshing."

Mr David Wiskar said the 2011 competition was open to a small group of regional western Queensland communities who participated in this year's tour but next year it would be expanded to other areas across the state.



Barcoo Mayor Bruce Scott

"Most councils believe their water is better than the bottled water that many people drink today and they are willing to put it to the test," he said.

This year's competition was held as part of the annual Water Connections Tour, sponsored by Dial Before You Dig. Winners were announced at the recent Water Conference held in Carpentaria.

Enquiries and entries for the 2012 competition can register their interest by emailing [enquiry@qldwater.com.au](mailto:enquiry@qldwater.com.au)

## IPWEAQ Award Nominations



**qldwater** will recognise the best water paper at the IPWEAQ 2011 State Conference to be held at the Brolga Riverside Theatre and Convention Centre, Maryborough from Tuesday 4 to Friday 7 October 2011.

The "Dawson Wilkie - Best IPWEAQ Conference Water Paper" will receive a \$1,000 cash prize as well as recognition across the industry for their contribution.

To submit a paper for consideration please contact Christine at IPWEAQ on phone 3000 2131 or email [cwarne@ipweaq.asn.au](mailto:cwarne@ipweaq.asn.au)

## Need Skilled Staff ?



Join the Water Skills Partnership Today!

Training and skilling staff can be costly. As a Water Skills Partnership member, costs to up-skill and train your staff can be significantly reduced.

Find out more and become an active participant in helping to guide the development of skilled staff within the water industry by joining the Water Skills Partnership.

Contact Dave Cameron [dcameron@qldwater.com.au](mailto:dcameron@qldwater.com.au) for more information.

# Industry Leaders Compare Performance and Pilot Public Reporting

Ever wondered how your water service stacks up against other providers? Have you considered promoting your performance indicators more widely?

Well now you can. Councils are invited to volunteer to participate in a pilot project for comparative and public water reporting.

**qldwater** CEO Dr Rob Fearon said public reporting is common practice for large service providers and is present in most other Australian jurisdictions.

"There is no doubt that public reporting will expand in Queensland in the coming years," Dr Fearon said.

"For now, **qldwater** is providing an opportunity for councils to opt-in and trial public reporting through SWIM."

Dr Fearon said the pilot report would only publish the results from service providers who have volunteered to take part in the project. "We understand that public reporting might not be for everyone just yet. But for some leading providers, it is a priority to provide the community greater exposure to their performance. They want to be able to show transparency and say to their communities, 'look at the job we do for our community and how we compare with other providers'."

To participate in the public reporting simply contact **qldwater** to opt-in to the process to develop SWIM's new Public Report. This new report will complement the existing (confidential) Comparative Reports that allow service providers to self-assess performance against other WSPs indicators across the industry.

SWIM coordinator, Patrick Morgan said the existing Comparative Reports are available for download from **qldwater** and SWIM websites and help service providers compare individual reporting indicators with the median of combined industry results.

"Individual performance can be compared with results from others across the same region, with similar soil types and of a



similar size. They can also see individual data for each of their schemes using this feature, which helps to provide a more useful measure of performance," he said.

Other recent SWIM improvements enable data for selected indicators to be presented for the first time as graphs, providing easier internal communication of data through greater visualisation of results.

"These graphs show individual council data with comparisons to medians and 10th and 90th percentiles of other similar service providers," Patrick said.

To assist you to decide whether to opt-in to this year's pilot public reporting program, an example of the types of data that could be included in the public report have been provided as a sample in the final worksheet of the Comparative Reports Workbook.

Please visit [www.swim.qldwater.com.au](http://www.swim.qldwater.com.au)

## Free Water Reporting (SWIM) Workshops

Members are eligible to attend free water reporting (SWIM) training workshops, held across Queensland in July and August.

What you will learn?

- Data submission procedures
- SWIM Quality Control Tools (New)
- SWIM historic data submission (New)
- BoM data submission (additional procedures for BoM users only)

To find out more information including when the next free training is available please contact [pmorgan@qldwater.com.au](mailto:pmorgan@qldwater.com.au)

# Industry Response to Draft PC Inquiry Report

Reform of the Queensland industry has been under review for some time, particularly following the Local Government amalgamations in 07/08 and the seemingly unending SEQ institutional restructures.

In 2008 an Industry Taskforce convened by **qldwater** and LGAQ questioned wholesale restructure of the regional water sector and developed a list of 10 principles as a foundation for any future changes.

Based on these principles **qldwater**, in collaboration with LGAQ, has reviewed and developed a response to the Draft Productivity Commission Inquiry Report released in April 2011.

In general, **qldwater** commends the Inquiry on a comprehensive and robust review of the national water industry and the comments and concerns of the Queensland urban water industry have been well captured in the Draft Report. In summary the PC Inquiry:

- sought meaningful input from a broad range of stakeholders and was more thorough than previous reviews;
- openly recognised the necessary diversity of water management approaches nationally;
- called for significant change to the Queensland regional industry;
- made recommendations that reflect the need for fit-for-purpose responses to this diverse sector; and
- supported many of the changes that have occurred in SEQ.

**qldwater's** response focuses on correcting errors within the report about the Queensland industry.

**qldwater** also states within the response the need to acknowledge the high performing service providers across the state and to seek change only where and when real cost benefit analysis have been undertaken with meaningful involvement and input from local government service providers.

The full **qldwater** response is available on our website [www.qldwater.com.au](http://www.qldwater.com.au)



**qldwater welcomes new SWIM Manager**

Dave Scheltinga has recently joined **qldwater** as the new SWIM Manager. Dave has 8 years experience with indicator frameworks and worked with DERM prior to commencing with **qldwater**. We welcome him to our team.

Please contact Dave or Patrick Morgan [enquiry@qldwater.com.au](mailto:enquiry@qldwater.com.au) for future SWIM enquiries.



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"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."