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

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

**(Issue #222 – 28 February 2014)**

**1.   Procurement of Treatment Chemicals**

**2.   ERA63 and Sewage Pumping Stations**

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**1.  Procurement of Treatment Chemicals**

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Eflash #219 discussed some of the actions taken from our 2013 member survey and advised that Gold Coast Water would be sharing their recently developed specification document to assist other members who were considering tender processes.

The document is now available at <http://www.qldwater.com.au/WSP_examples>.

Please advise [hgold@qldwater.com.au](mailto:hgold@qldwater.com.au) if you have difficulty accessing this document.

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**2.  ERA63 and Sewage Pumping Stations**

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Legislation regulating sewage pumping stations under Environmentally Relevant Activity 63 (ERA 63) under the Environmental Protection Regulation 2008 has changed markedly over the past few years. Late in 2012 the environmental regulator released a new Code of Environmental Compliance for sewage pumping stations (see eFlash #184) and since that time the industry via the ***qldwater*** ERA 63 Expert Panel has been advocating for a more practical interpretation of some of the conditions contained within the mandatory Code.

After extensive discussions during 2013, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection came back to the industry in February this year with a counter proposal that would see a dramatic change in the way that sewage overflows are regulated across the state. The proposal is to remove pumping stations from ERA 63 (which would then only apply to STPs) and replace the legislation with and Industry Code of Practice. Moving to this form of Code would represent a significant change for the industry compared with the current (confusingly) named Code of Environmental Compliance and **the ERA 63 Expert Panel is seeking broader industry input into a decision on making the change**.

An Industry Code of Practice (CoP) is a guideline created by the industry itself, describing ‘best practice’ operations, maintenance and planning. Following a CoP can be used as a defence against a charge of causing environmental nuisance or harm or certain other offences (like releasing contaminants to waters). The CoP would be expected to reflect the outcomes targeted under the standard conditions, but it can be more flexible than a rigid list of requirements, allowing for risk-based management relevant to conditions of each scheme. Adhering to the Code would be voluntary, but operators who had an overflow and did not comply with the code would need to prove that they had complied with their GED to avoid enforcement action.

There are serious considerations for each service provider in transitioning to a CoP . For example, a CoP would apply to all pump stations and the entire sewage network regardless of size and age. It also puts the onus on the industry to maintain best practice standards but removes the direct legislative requirement/penalty reflecting this need. Under a CoP, the current ERA for pumping stations over 40kl/hr would be deleted, and those pumping stations would no longer need an environmental authority.  The CoP must be created and maintained by the industry but would be in place for seven years before needing to be reviewed.

If you have a view either way on this proposed change we would appreciate a response to this email or contact Rob Fearon or Heather Gold on 3632 6855. The Industry expert panel will be meeting with the Department to discuss this matter later in the month so **any feedback needs to be received by Friday 21st March.** Any Queensland sewerage service providers who wish to attend the meeting with the Department on the 26th March should contact Rob or Heather on the number above.

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**This message may be passed on to interested individuals and organisations.**

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