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

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

**(Issue #246 – 5 December 2014)**

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**1.  Expression of Interest for 2015 Queensland Water Directorate Event Hosts**

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In 2014 ***qldwater*** either coordinated or had a strong presence at 11 Queensland events including our 6 regional conferences and innovation forum, the WIOA, IPWEAQ and LGAQ state conferences and Ozwater, along with Water Connections Week.

In 2015 the model will change with fewer formal regional events and more informal events.  This is not to say that we won’t revert to a 2014-style model in future, but we believe given the difficulty in being able to get presentations this year, members need a break.  It also allows us to attend more other regional events including IPWEAQ branch conferences.

Confirmed Conference dates at this stage include:

CQ regional conference and taste test – 16 April 2015

FNQ regional conference and taste test – 8 May 2015

and we would plan on attending IPWEAQ events in Kingaroy on 14 May and Biloela on 11 March.  Water Connections Week will be 4-8 May, visiting councils around Cairns.

We again welcome both Dial Before You Dig as Water Connections Tour major sponsor and Orica as Taste Test major sponsor.

**Expressions of interest are invited from other *qldwater* members to host a simple information exchange opportunity and potentially regional taste test in 2015.  We would aim to have a number of other planned but informal visits where we can invite surrounding councils, provide and update and get feedback on our work programs.  It may be possible to align this with a training activity through the Water Skills Partnership or SWIM.  If you are interested in exploring, please contact Dave Cameron.**

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**2.  Registrations open – 20 February 2015 Steve Hrudey “Ensuring Safe Drinking Water” Workshop**

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***qldwater***is pleased to host aone day workshop on 20 February 2015 with Canadian author and academic Steve Hrudey who has written a number of publications on drinking water quality incidents including the June 2014 book: “*Ensuring Safe Drinking Water – Learning from Frontline Experience with Contamination”*, published by the American Water Works Association. This workshop will provide a practical learning opportunity for all professionals engaged in the provision of safe drinking water.

The book consists of 21 case studies of drinking water disease outbreaks and chemical contamination episodes from authentic events that occurred in Australia, Canada, England, Finland, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland and the U.S.A.  Steve Hrudey has delivered workshops in the United States and Canada and is now offering limited workshops in Australia, with this being the only event in Brisbane.

The registration form is [available here](http://www.qldwater.com.au/events) with early-bird registrations priced at $99 (inc GST) per participant.  It will be promoted through WIOA and supported by the Queensland Department of Health, and conducted at their facilities at Herston near the Royal Brisbane Hospital.  The workshop is limited to 100 places and there is already strong interest – ensure you book early to avoid disappointment.

We have pre-ordered a limited number of copies of the 2014 book which will be available at a bulk discount rate negotiated with AWWA. We will advise when it can be ordered and it will be available for collection on the day of the workshop.

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**3.  Inaugural *qldwater* Urban Water Innovation Forum**

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Despite Brisbane’s largest hail storm since 1985 damaging every car at Allan Border Field the event on 27 November was a resounding success.  Peter Zemek was in the process of concluding an impassioned presentation about challenging regulatory boundaries as the storm hit; leading some to wonder if he had attracted nature’s wrath.

Our thanks go to the speakers and presenters who contributed and especially to QUU for the huge effort put into the tour to Luggage Point the preceding day along with our sponsors - Trility, Takadu, Unitywater, Lonza, LGAQ and DEWS.  We aim to publish proceedings before Christmas and at this stage another event around November 2015 is likely.  Photos are available [here](http://qldwater.smugmug.com/Events/Water-Innovation-Forum/46084294_sG62Cf#!i=3734643962&k=kXm76jr).

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**4.  Water Expert Panel 100 Day Plan and QWRAP funding announcement**

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Minister McArdle made two key announcements at the ***qldwater*** Urban Water Innovation Forum on 27 November.

The Minister announced $130,000 in funding to support the ongoing work of the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP) which is led by LGAQ and ***qldwater***.

“QWRAP is an industry led initiative helping regional councils to improve their urban water services by working together across council boundaries,” Mr McArdle said.

Mr McArdle also released the 100 day plan from the Government’s Expert Water Panel.

“In August I announced the formation of the Water Expert Panel to assist in the implementation of the Queensland Government’s strong 30 year plan for the water sector, WaterQ,” Mr McArdle said.

“The expert panel includes some of Australia’s leading water experts including scientists, engineers, environmental planners and a futurist and is undertaking a long-term advisory role in identifying and promoting innovative solutions that meet the needs of Queensland customers.

“The panel’s 100 day plan, Smart ideas and innovations, outlines a series of recommendations to improve customer service, support emerging technologies and improve the skills of workers.

“The funding for QWRAP will help deliver some of the 100 day plan’s recommendations, including a state-wide profile of water and energy consumption for regional and remote communities; the exploration of mechanisms to guide future investment and skills development.”

“The grant to QWRAP reaffirms the Queensland Government’s commitment to encouraging innovation and collaboration that is focused on finding real solutions to local problems.”

Rob Fearon, ***qldwater*** Director Innovation Partnerships said the new investment will be prioritised towards additional funding for QWRAP regions, a project to look at drivers affecting pricing including a review of the impact of energy costs on water provision in “off grid” communities.

“The Water Expert Panel will continue to provide advice to ensure the WaterQ strategy delivers the best outcomes for Queensland families and businesses, now and in 30 years,” Minister McArdle said.

More information on the Water Expert Panel is available [here](https://www.dews.qld.gov.au/policies-initiatives/water-sector-reform/30-year-strategy/water-expert-panel) and a link to the 100 day plan is available [here](https://www.dews.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/229059/100-day-plan.pdf).

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**5.  Update from *qldwater* TRG**

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The last Technical Reference Group meeting of 2014 was held on 28 November and thanks to all TRG representatives for their contributions and support for the year.  Follow this [**link**](http://www.qldwater.com.au/TRG) for a summary of current projects and please contact Dave Cameron for more information.

We would like to recognise the efforts of our outgoing Chair, Mr Trevor Harvey from North Burnett Regional Council.  Trevor has been a long-standing member of TRG and fortunately will be continuing his role as a member.  John Betts from Toowoomba Regional Council takes over as Chair, and David Brooker from Mackay Regional Council is the newly elected Deputy Chair.

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**6.  MOU Signed for Operators Within Drinking Water Treatment Systems Certification Project**

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The Department of Energy and Water Supply, ***qldwater*** and the Water Industry Operators Association of Australia have signed an [**MoU**](http://www.qldwater.com.au/Skills_water_operator_programs) in relation to the Drinking Water Operator Certification project.  Members must log in to our website to access this document. The primary purpose of the memorandum is to ensure that operators who are “certified” under the 2012 Draft national framework are not required to be re-certified under a future mandatory scheme for 5 years from the date of initial certification.  It commits the parties to work together to encourage adoption of this approach which has significant benefits to employers but importantly a defined continuous training and development pathway for staff.

The business case prepared by ***qldwater*** earlier this year promoted mandatory adoption of operator certification reflecting the original intent of the national framework and recommendations of the Queensland steering group.  While it is currently not possible for a regulatory amendment to make this happen, DEWS has been very supportive of the program.  It has proposed to develop a guideline to be released by Q2 2015 which explains its position on Certification and recommendations made in the business case to make minor modifications to the draft national framework to suit the Queensland context.

An update on the activities of the ***qldwater*** pilot program will be provided in a future Skills e-flash.  Contact Dave Cameron for more information.

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**7.  DEWS – reminder of key due dates, requirements for publication and relaxation of KPI audits**

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With amendments to the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act in June, a number of new reporting dates and requirements have been introduced.  There has been some confusion expressed by members due to the terminology used in the Act and we hope that [this reference table](http://www.qldwater.com.au/Reporting) helps reduce that.

Most reports and plans must be made available for inspection and purchase but a number of documents must now be published online including Drinking Water Quality Management Plan Reports.  Through SWIM we aim to produce a public “Performance Report” based on the new KPIs from 2015 which should satisfy member requirements for web publication.  Templates will be developed in the coming months.

The Regulator will be issuing new notices to large service providers some time before the end of the financial year given a number of likely changes to NPR indicators.  DEWS convened a business advisory group earlier in the year which agreed that 36 were now redundant.  We understand that WSAA will be surveying its members and other states and territories will also have input to determine a final national list.

**Finally, DEWS has advised that at this stage it will not be requiring routine audits of KPI data (including the NPR data) through the Water Supply Act section 108A power.**  This may be revisited for individual providers, classes of providers, or everyone, if there are concerns about the quality and integrity of the data as it comes in.  This is primarily designed to reduce duplication and costs for service providers.

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**8.  Amendments to QDC MP1.4**

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Building Codes Queensland published amendments to this part in November 2013 and has been considering feedback from stakeholders since June on further changes which are designed to reduce the number of concurrence requests received by some service providers (e-flash #233).

The consultation process has been a source of frustration.  There have been some reference group meetings and follow-up emails to a select group of representatives but consultation ceased in early October with no final opportunity to discuss proposed changes.  The [BCQ web site](http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/construction/BuildingPlumbing/Building/Pages/BuildOverInfrastructure.aspx) advises that the amendments will now commence on 15 December 2014.  The current (final) document draft is available [here](http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/QDCMP1.4BuildingOverOrNearRelevantInfrastructureDec2013.pdf).

We are evaluating further steps with previously interested members as significant concerns remain with the document.  There appears to be no opportunity to influence the Part to be introduced on 15 December.

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**9.  Christmas wishes and office closure**

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While this is unlikely to be our last eFlash before Christmas, people will start taking leave soon and so on behalf of ***qldwater*** we’d like to wish all our members and stakeholders a safe and rewarding break after what has been a very busy year.

Our office will be closed from 25 December to 2 January inclusive.  In the event of any emergencies both Dave Cameron ([dcameron@qldwater.com.au](mailto:dcameron@qldwater.com.au), 0407 761 991) and Rob Fearon ([rfearon@qldwater.com.au](mailto:rfearon@qldwater.com.au), 0428 300 208) will monitor emails and phone messages.

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