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

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

**(Issue #261 -   19 June 2015)**

1.   Water of Origin Taste Test - Queensland Scores Over NSW!

**2.**   **Operator of the Year Award Winners Announced**

**3.**   **ERA 63 and Sewage Pump Stations Code of Practice**

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1.   Water of Origin Taste Test - Queensland Scores Over NSW!

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Queenslanders devastated by the second State of Origin game loss to NSW can revel in the knowledge that we have some of the best tasting water in the country.

This week, Richmond Shire Council laid claim to the “top drop” title when attendees at the Water Industry Operators Association of Australia (WIOA) Conference in Toowoomba gave its sample top scores in the ***qldwater*** 2015 Ixom Water of Origin Water Taste Test, beating the NSW Taste Test Winner, Orange City Council.

The ***qldwater*** 2014 Queensland Grand Final winner Richmond Shire Council’s water came from their brand new water treatment plant that was commissioned in December last year.  Council secured funding of $3.6 million from the State Government to assist in development and installation of a first class water treatment plant and engaged Aeramix to design and implement the plant.

Richmond Shire Council CEO, Peter Bennett, said the plant formed part of a major overhaul of its water supplies with another $1 million spent to upgrade the water mains.   “These two projects have provided the residents of Richmond with the best water in Queensland – and NSW – and showcase the hard work the Richmond Shire Council has gone through to get the best result possible.”

The water taste test competition started by ***qldwater*** in Queensland in 2011 and this was the third year WIOA had taken advantage of strong interstate rivalry to promote the industry, with support from Ixom.

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**2.**   **Operator of the Year Award Winners Announced**

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The ***qldwater*** sponsored Young Operator of the Year and the Operator of the Year (Civil/All Rounder) award winners were announced at the WIOA Annual Queensland Water Industry Operations Workshop Conference Awards ceremony this week.

Congratulations to Grahame Dunstan from Cairns Regional Council and Geoffrey Johnson from Richmond Shire Council who won the 2015 Operator of the Year Civil/ All Rounder and Young Operator of the Year Awards respectively.

Our 2015 Operator of the Year Civil/ All Rounder, Grahame Dunstan has been responsible for the coordination of a water and wastewater services in a challenging and environmentally sensitive region. He has a long career in the industry working across many different operations roles.   His success has been attributed to an inclusive leadership style and a focus on high quality service committed to the environment, public health and workplace health and safety requirements.  Grahame receives up to $1500 towards professional development opportunities such as attendance at other WIOA conferences, ***qldwater*** training or for funding expenses for exchange opportunities at neighbouring councils.

Geoffrey Johnson, our 2015 Young Operator of the Year’s achievements include redesigning his council’s workplace health and safety systems including risk assessments and development of safe operating procedures, mapping programs and on-ground reticulation works and coordinating contractors in the upgrade of water mains around town, while overseeing the construction and implementation of a new water treatment plant. Geoffrey receives an all-expenses paid trip 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 New Zealand conference in May 2016.

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**3.**   **ERA 63 and Sewage Pump Stations Code of Practice**

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The Minister for Environment has provided in-principle support for the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to proceed with the Code of Practice for Sewage Pump Stations and Sewerage Networks that was created by the industry in 2015 (see [e-Flash #249 and #252](http://www.qldwater.com.au/e-flashes-2015) and [e-Flash #236](http://www.qldwater.com.au/e-Flashes_2014)). Significant changes have been made to the regulation covering sewerage infrastructure over the past few years (see [summary here](http://www.qldwater.com.au/sewage-pumping-stations)) and extensive consultation in the first half of 2014 resulted in an overwhelming response from the urban water industry to transition to a Code of Practice.

Both ***qldwater*** and LGAQ have received a response from the Minister for the Environment indicating support for the adoption of the new Code of Practice for Sewage Pumping Stations and Networks. This week the Department indicated that they were gearing up to formalise the Industry Code and remove the relevant section of ERA 63. This process will proceed over the coming few months and there will be one final iteration of the document prior to it being adopted.

We wish to thank the ***qldwater*** ERA 63 Expert Panel and the numerous councils that have provided input to the Code of Practice over the past 18 months. The industry will be provided a month to review any final changes and this draft will be circulated to the Expert Panel and to the broader industry via e-Flash as soon as it is available.

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