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

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

**(Issue #337– 27 October 2017)**

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**1.   Telecommunication Carriers on Water Infrastructure**

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[Eflash #327](http://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=233153) detailed ***qldwater’s*** submission in response to the federal government’s “possible amendments to telecommunications carriers powers and immunities.”  The department has since held a consultation session in Brisbane to discuss the responses and likely direction (attended by several SEQ utilities including Seqwater), with more meetings elsewhere in the country planned.

A significant level of concern with the amendments has been expressed but there is perhaps more contention with the existing legislation and the conduct of some telecommunications service providers.  The department was clear that this revision will not include an opportunity to address existing issues, but has recorded the concerns and promised to explore non-regulatory options.

The SEQ entities plan to meet again next week to consider future approaches and we will keep members informed as the process develops.  A more detailed summary of the proposed changes, the department’s response to submissions and planned approach is available by contacting Dave Cameron (dcameron@qldwater.com.au).

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**2.   IPWEA Queensland 2017 Excellence Awards Winners**

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IPWEA Queensland presented its Excellence Awards at the Queensland State Conference and Gala Dinner held in Townsville this week.  We congratulate all award nominees and winners at the awards and particularly the recipients of the Water Project Awards:

**Water Projects over $5 million - Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils**

The Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils (WBBROC) collected the award for water projects over $5 million for its Joint Sewer Rehabilitation Program, supported through the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program.

The WBBROC comprises Bundaberg Regional Council, North Burnett Regional Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council and Cherbourg Aboriginal Council.

After an extensive period of planning, the collaborative group delivered a large scale joint procurement of sewer relining services to extend the life of sewer assets and deliver efficiencies for water and sewerage customers due to the significant efforts of the collaborating councils, and specific leadership of Fraser Coast Regional Council.

**Water Projects $2 million to $5 million – Bundaberg Regional Council**

The Burnett River Discharge Facility for Rubyanna Wastewater Treatment Plant is the result of significant planning to address regional growth, regulatory compliance and to improve water quality in the Burnett River. The project attracted cultural heritage challenges, time and cost pressures but technical innovation delivered a river pipeline through an environmentally sensitive river bank, protecting the cultural heritage significance of the area and ensuring that the final flood resilient solution was fit for purpose.

**Water Projects under $2 million – Outback Regional Water Alliance**

The Outback Regional Water Alliance comprising of Barcaldine Regional Council, Barcoo Shire Council, Blackall-Tambo Regional Council, Boulia Shire Council, Diamantina Shire Council, Longreach Regional Council and Winton Shire Council has taken out the award for water projects under $2 million for its Regional Outback Water Quality Infrastructure Program.

The infrastructure program, seeks to bring improved water quality to the region through collaboration and innovative approaches whilst meeting the individual needs of each of the communities across the seven contributing councils.

Over the past twelve months the alliance has delivered infrastructure works and cleaning on water reservoirs, joint audits of Drinking Water Quality Management Plans along with inspections, condition assessments and cleaning of water mains across the region.  The collaboration is supported through the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program.

**Innovation in Water Award – Mareeba Shire Council**

Mareeba Shire Council has also taken out two accolades at this year’s Excellence Awards.  The Council collected the award for innovation in water, waste water, sewerage and drought management for the upgrade of Mareeba’s Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Council completed a $16 million upgrade to the Mareeba Wastewater Treatment Plant to cater for population growth over a 20-year horizon and deliver significant environmental benefits. Through innovative planning, Council has upgraded the existing infrastructure to deliver a cost-effective wastewater treatment solution at half the cost of a new treatment plant.

Mareeba Shire Council’s Acting Director Infrastructure Services Glenda Kirk also took home the Woman in Engineering Award.

As Acting Director Infrastructure Services, Ms Kirk has been responsible for the delivery of a number of council’s large scale and complex engineering projects including the award-winning Mareeba Sewerage Treatment Plant Upgrade and the partially completed Mareeba Airport Upgrade. Ms Kirk is well recognised for her strong leadership and professional approach and she delivers projects on time and within budget for the benefit of the Mareeba community.

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**3.   Security of Critical Infrastructure Bill**

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The Federal Attorney-General’s Department has released an [exposure draft](https://www.ag.gov.au/Consultations/Pages/Security-of-Critical-Infrastructure-Bill.aspx) of the “Security of Critical Infrastructure Bill” and invited submissions by 10 November 2017.  ***qldwater*** provided a submission to an earlier discussion paper.

The major focus of the proposed regulation is foreign ownership and the risk of state-sponsored espionage, sabotage and coercion.

In the short term it is expected to impact service providers with more than 100,000 property connections by requiring a register of critical infrastructure, with provision for a “last resort” power of intervention where it deems that there is an appropriate risk.

The department has consulted strongly with the state government and representatives of the impacted providers with more sessions scheduled this week (which we are unable to attend).  We will follow up and determine whether a further submission is warranted, however members are encouraged to consider their own directly.

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**4.   *qldwater* Response to the Productivity Commission**

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Following our [eFlash #335](http://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=234071) calling for comments and feedback on the Draft ***qldwater*** Response to the [Draft Report on National Water Reform](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/water-reform/draft), the comments received have been incorporated into the ***qldwater*** collated response which has now been submitted to the Productivity Commission.  The ***qldwater*** response on behalf of the industry is now available [here](http://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=234466).

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**5.   *qldwater* Membership Update**

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We are proud to announce our ***qldwater*** memberships for 2017/18 have grown marginally since last year with 71 full members and 5 affiliates.  The Water Skills Partnership has achieved 45 members with 26 SWIM*Local* full product subscribers.  While strong membership obviously helps the Directorate’s financial security, this response is fantastic for a voluntary not for profit organisation and particularly important in supporting our advocacy to government on behalf of the sector.

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