**Queensland Water Skills e-Flash #75**

**Information for Water Industry Managers, Human Resources Personnel and Employees in the Queensland Water Industry**

**(Issue #75 – 16 April 2019)**

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1. **Aqua Card available now!**

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We are excited to advise that the commercial version of the [Aqua Card online course](https://watertraining.com.au/) is now available!

This version allows non-***qldwater*** member organisations and contractors to access the course for $50 including GST. Our new site [www.watertraining.com.au](http://www.watertraining.com.au) hosts the course and provides a certificate of completion and records attempts and completions so we can track and report on usage. Internal employees of ***qldwater*** member and Water Skills Partnership organisations can access this version at no charge. Please email [skills@qldwater.com.au](mailto:skills@qldwater.com.au) to obtain the complimentary member access code. Detailed instructions on accessing and completing the course are available [on our website](https://www.qldwater.com.au/aqua-card-instructions).

The home page of the website provides an opportunity for organisations to promote their specific requirements for contractors to complete the course before working on their assets. We know a number of organisations are mandating the course as part of their contractor induction and it would be great to demonstrate what industry is doing to ensure safe drinking water for communities.

Please contact Carlie Sargent on 3632 6853 to explore options for implementation within your organisation.

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1. **Outcome of the VET Sector Review**

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The Federal Government recently commissioned a review of the Vocational Education and Training Sector. As advised in [Skills e-Flash #73](https://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=247779), ***qldwater*** provided a submission on behalf of members. The final report [Strengthening Skills: Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System](https://www.pmc.gov.au/node/126580) responds to many of our recommendations and provides a six point plan for change:

* Strengthening quality assurance
* Speeding up qualification development
* Simpler funding and skills matching
* Better careers information
* Clearer secondary school pathways, and
* Greater access for disadvantaged Australians.

Money was committed in the Federal Budget for a range of initiatives recommended in the report including:

* Enhancing the role of industry in designing training courses by establishing a National Skills Commission and piloting Skills Organisations
* Establishing a National Careers Institute to raise the profile of the VET sector and improving career advice to young Australians
* Developing skills in areas of need by building innovative partnerships between schools, employers and the VET sector through a new competitive grants program
* Streamlining incentives for employers of apprentices and trainees.

More information is available at on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet’s [VET Review website](https://www.pmc.gov.au/domestic-policy/vet-review) and we will keep members informed as opportunities arise for the water industry.

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1. **eBook: Future Skilling Our Workforce**

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Australian Industry Standards has released an e-book summarizing the key messages from their Industry Skills Forums held around the country during 2018.

Feedback provided during the panel discussions, industry breakout sessions and Leaders’ Dinners has been captured in [Future Skilling Our Workforce – a national conversation](https://www.futureskilling.org.au/ebook). The key messages reflect many of the themes and issues raised in the Federal Government’s VET Sector Review (item 2 above) and are consistent with the challenges and opportunities raised by ***qldwater*** members at our own Water Skills Forum and by Water Skills Partnership members.

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1. **Nominations closing soon for *qldwater* Awards and Scholarships**

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Submit your nominations for ***qldwater’s*** Young Operator of the Year and Operator of the Year (Civil/All-Rounder) Awards, offered in conjunction with the Water Industry Operators Association of Australia (WIOA). These awards recognise the outstanding operational performance of employees of either ***qldwater*** full members or Water Skills Partnership member organizations. Nominations are due by **Friday 3 May 2019** to [csargent@qldwater.com.au](mailto:csargent@qldwater.com.au). Full details about the nomination process along with nomination forms are available [on our website](https://www.qldwater.com.au/qldwaterAwards).

The Queensland Water Regional Communities Innovations Program (QWRCIP) will provide up to four scholarships to employees of ***qldwater*** full member organisations with 10,000 or fewer connections to attend ***qldwater’s*** Annual Forum (September) at Logan City and participate in other activities during that week, including spending time with a technical specialist at an SEQ utility and participation in the ***qldwater*** Technical Reference Group meeting. This year, the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (DNRME) has agreed to provide support for an additional two scholarships, funded through QWRAP. These scholarships will include time with technical experts at a regional council and participation either in a ***qldwater*** regional event, QWRAP meeting or a range of training activities. More information about the scholarships and application conditions are available [on our website](https://www.qldwater.com.au/qldwater-Scholarships). Nominations are due by **31 May 2019** to [csargent@qldwater.com.au](mailto:csargent@qldwater.com.au).

For all awards or scholarship enquiries please contact Carlie Sargent on 3632 6853 or [csargent@qldwater.com.au](mailto:csargent@qldwater.com.au).

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1. **WIOA Webinar: Women in Water**

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WIOA invites members to participate in their next webinar, ‘Women in Water’, to be held on Friday 17 May from 2-3pm. This webinar has a people and culture focus with speakers sharing their thoughts and experiences about working in water and the programs and initiatives that have encouraged women to choose and stay in the industry. WIOA members can [register online](https://wioa.org.au/nevent/women-in-water/).

You can also read about one of our own ‘Women in Water’, Narelle D’Amico, Branch Manager – Water Services at Bundaberg Regional Council, who kindly shared her career journey with ***qldwater*** in support of International Women’s Day. [Read Narelle’s story on our blog](https://www.qldwater.com.au/qldwater-blog/women-in-water-2019).

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

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