**Queensland Water Skills e-Flash #36 (special edition)**

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

**(Issue #36 – 19 December 2014)**

**Significant training support funding opportunity - water industry submission for Industry Partnerships Strategy - EOI**

The Industry Partnerships Strategy (IPS) is a key initiative under the Queensland Government's five-year training reform action plan. ***qldwater,*** through the Queensland Water Skills Partnership, will lodge an industry application of behalf of water service providers for the next funding round, expected to be open in March 2015. Further information on the Industry Partnerships Strategy is available [here.](http://www.training.qld.gov.au/training-organisations/funded-programs/industry-partnerships-strategy.html)

Funding is available for support strategies that address areas of skills market failure and facilitate the completion of qualifications under these programs. Funded organisations will coordinate, manage and implement the project in partnership with an approved training provider (RTO). There is an expectation of 50:50 financial co-contribution from the participating partners towards the cost of support strategies funded through the project, which is more generous than many previous federal and state opportunities.

The Water Skills Partnership Industry Leaders Group has identified two industry projects to be targeted through two separate IPS applications. ***qldwater*** also intend to lodge a further third application for funding of project management/supervisory qualifications, which are not currently covered in the Queensland Training Subsidies list or other national funding.

**Project A.** Drinking Water Operator Certification Project

This project will involve coordination of collaborative training projects targeted towards up-skilling water treatment operators for Certification under the *Framework for Certification of Drinking Water Operators*. The application is expected to include a case for

funding of both full Cert III qualifications and gap training/skill sets only. The Industry Partnerships Strategy application would fund the coordinator role, additional learning support, training venue and travel costs and mentoring arrangements. Certificate III

Water Operations is currently funded at $2,816 under the Qld Training Subsidies List (slightly higher for concessional students), and the application would specify a per unit cost for funding for skill sets. User Choice funding cannot be accessed in line with participation in Industry Partnerships Strategy Projects.

**Project B.** Workplace Language, Literacy and Technology Project

This project would involve coordination of collaborative training projects targeted at up-skilling water industry employees to communicate effectively in the workplace including the use of appropriate technology – this could link for example to the introduction of a new asset management system. The training would link to Course in Core Skills for Employment and Training - Communication (Basic, Intermediate or Preliminary) as listed on the Queensland Training Subsidies list ($2,810 funding) or a full Certificate III qualification. The IPS application would fund the coordinator role, additional learning support, training venue and potentially travel costs and mentoring arrangements. The role of the coordinator would be to work with RTOs, other training providers and employers to ensure that the training is applied specifically to the employers individual requirements (such as the implementation of a new asset management system, computer skills or workplace language and communication).

**Project C.** Water Industry Career Paths/Project Management Qualification Project

This project would involve coordination of training delivery for Diploma Project Management or similar qualifications with regional training hubs arranged where possible. The application would include a funding component for training delivery of the qualifications and it is anticipated that the project would operate similar to the Strategic Investment Fund in which ***qldwater*** manages a funding pool for employers and administers the project (i.e. establishes contracts with RTOs, reporting etc).

**Key advantages of participating in this process**

-        Councils and other government-owned organisations are ineligible to apply directly, however as an independent association, ***qldwater*** has been encouraged to apply on your behalf.

-        The funding covers some key gaps in existing training support which we have been lobbying to have recognised for some time.  In return, DETE has a high expectation of completion, so it is important to target staff who are highly motivated to complete the training.  If successful, this application will help guide the future IPS rounds.

-        ***qldwater*** will act as the coordinator and we will do everything in our power to reduce your administrative burden for this training.  In the interests of full disclosure – we sought clarification on whether Water Skills Partnership membership fees could be considered as the “industry contribution” towards the projects but it can not.  Employers would therefore need to agree to co-fund the project (50:50) but this will be on a cost recovery only basis shared amongst applicants (and will likely require ***qldwater*** to hire a support staff member). Contribution towards the qualification training fees may also be counted in the 50% industry co-contribution.

If you would like to participate in the 2015 ***qldwater*** Industry Partnerships Strategy application we will require an indication of the numbers of employees you would anticipate participating in the projects as outlined above (i.e. 6 x persons project A, 2 x persons Project B etc.). Based on the responses received we will then work with participating organisations to arrange regional training hubs (where practical), source appropriate RTOs and work through the specific training requirements and further details required for the funding application.  It is likely to be an iterative process – knowing what other neighbouring organisations are planning may lever interest in areas which you have not previously considered.

A commitment to providing the co-contribution as well as confirmation of final numbers will be required at time of application submission.

Expressions of interest for this funding application (by email), with expected numbers for each project, will close on **Friday 13th February** and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss your initial interest prior to this date.  If you would like to discuss the funding further please contact Michelle Hill on mhill@qldwater.com.au or 07 3632 6853.

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