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

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

**(Issue #260 -   12 June 2015)**

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1.   First Drinking Water Treatment Operators Certified Under National Scheme

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Two staff from Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council and four staff from Toowoomba Regional Council will become the first “Certified Operators” in Queensland at a presentation to be held at the Water Industry Operators Association of Australia Queensland Conference in Toowoomba on 17 June.   While Operator Certification has been in place for some time in Victoria, this presentation is an Australian first, as the staff are being recognised against the National Certification Framework for Operators Within Drinking Water Treatment Systems.

This pilot program has been delivered through a partnership between ***qldwater,*** WIOA and the Queensland Department of Energy and Water Supply which aimed to test the implementation of the scheme with a view to its broader adoption.

Water service providers face significant challenges with declining resources, and we believe that this is the single most cost-effective investment by government and industry that can be made in to support strong public health outcomes.

The Victorian Operator Certification has been in place since 2010 and the national Framework was developed through the National Water Commission, building on the Victorian experience.  WIOA has certified a number of operators in Victoria to date and as the key representative body for operational staff in the water industry, is excited to see the expansion of this important initiative.

While drinking water regulation in Australia remains the responsibility of individual states and territories, it is hoped that these steps towards an integrated national program will drive improved standards in training and portability of skills.

The full media release from WIOA and ***qldwater*** with further information is available [here](http://www.qldwater.com.au/_literature_195111/First_Drinking_Water_Treatment_Operators_Certification_-_Media_Release).

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**2.**   **Great Barrier Reef Water Quality**

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The new Queensland Government has made a number of strong commitments to halting the decline and improving the Great Barrier Reef (see <http://www.gbr.qld.gov.au/priorities/>) aligned with the [*Long Term Sustainability Plan*](http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/d98b3e53-146b-4b9c-a84a-2a22454b9a83/files/reef-2050-long-term-sustainability-plan.pdf)recently released in March this year. These include the establishment of the Office of the Great Barrier Reef (within EHP), commitment to ambitious water quality targets and the creating a Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce to provide advice on how the targets might be met. Rob Fearon was nominated by LGAQ to participate in the Taskforce and attended the first meeting in early June.

A [*Communique* summarising the findings of the first Taskforce meeting](http://www.gbr.qld.gov.au/documents/taskforce-communique1.pdf) highlights that despite important increases in understanding and management of the reef in the past decade, significant  further change and investment will be needed if the targets are to be achieved. The ongoing work of the Taskforce and a parallel ‘Expert Review Group’ will focus on prioritising key strategies to achieve the targets aiming to step-up activities to protect the reef.  It was agreed that “poor water quality caused by agricultural and sediment run-off, climate change, coastal development and events such as cyclones and crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks are the key threats to the reef”.

This week the Queensland Audit Office released their audit of  [*Managing water quality in Great Barrier Reef Catchments*](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Documents/TableOffice/TabledPapers/2015/5515T575.pdf)which highlights the need for change and calls for improvements to the governance of reef management strategies and programs as well as monitoring and verification and better communication with the public. This report reflects the existing scientific consensus and the emerging whole-of-government approach to better management of the Reef.

The next formal meeting of the Reef Taskforce is planned for early September and in the interim, communication with local governments is being coordinated through the LGAQ. For further information please contact Rob Fearon ([rfearon@qldwater.com.au](mailto:rfearon@qldwater.com.au)).

**Background Information**

* QAO Audit, June 2015 - [*Managing water quality in Great Barrier Reef Catchments*](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Documents/TableOffice/TabledPapers/2015/5515T575.pdf)
* [*Long Term Sustainability Plan*](http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/d98b3e53-146b-4b9c-a84a-2a22454b9a83/files/reef-2050-long-term-sustainability-plan.pdf), March 2015
* [*Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report*](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/cdn/2014/GBRMPA-Outlook-Report-2014/), August 2014
* [*Reef Water Quality Protection Plan*](http://www.reefplan.qld.gov.au/resources/assets/reef-plan-2013.pdf), 2013
* 2012-13 [*Reef Report Card*](http://www.reefplan.qld.gov.au/measuring-success/report-cards/2012-2013-report-card.aspx), 2013
* [*Scientific Consensus Statement*](http://www.reefplan.qld.gov.au/about/assets/scientific-consensus-statement-2013.pdf), 2013
* Queensland Government’s [Living Wonder, Great Barrier Reef website](http://www.gbr.qld.gov.au/documents/taskforce-communique1.pdf).

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**3.**   **SWIM Training – Additional Training Session**

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There has been some changes to the SWIM training schedule for south-west Queensland. We have added a new session in Charleville on Monday 13th July. The Roma and Goondiwindi sessions have therefore moved back one day. SWIM training is free.

The new SWIM training days in SW Qld are:

1. Monday 13th July, Charleville
2. Tuesday 14th July, Roma
3. Wednesday 15th July, Goondiwindi

If you would like to attend one of these days please contact David via email: [dscheltinga@qldwater.com.au](mailto:dscheltinga@qldwater.com.au)

If you would like to attend SWIM training and cannot make any of the SWIM sessions across the State then please let David know and we will try and work out something for you.

The training is generally a half to ¾ day affair with lunch provided by the host Council. Training is important this year with the introduction of the new SWIM data input tool and the new mandatory KPIs.

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**4.  QUICK LINKS – ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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* Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities (CRCWSC) has been working with its government and private industry partners to develop novel scenario assessment and decision support tools that help to address the complexity of managing water. A seminar will be held to share and discuss these tools on 16 June in Brisbane.  Click [here to register](https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/crc-for-water-sensitive-cities-seminar-novel-decision-making-tools-for-planners-and-designers-registration-17181282679).
* QWater’15 – Call for Papers.  The AWA Queensland Branch invites you to showcase your ideas at this year’s QWater’15 conference. Papers are sought from all levels of management and operation that interact with the water industry.  Download the call for papers [here](http://www.awa.asn.au/uploadedFiles/Content/Events/QWater'15%20Call%20for%20Papers.pdf).
* “Back-flow prevention devices for rainwater tanks” - Building Codes Queensland latest Building and Plumbing Newsflash 542 is now available online. Visit the [Department of Housing and Public Works website](http://www.vision6.com.au/ch/40202/27rmx/1712206/36499j184.html).

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