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

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

**(Issue #402– 16 August 2019)**

**1.   Annual Forum September 12 – Strategic Sector-Wide Investment/ Regional Innovation**

**2.   Queensland Health - amendments to the *Public Health Act 2005***

**3.   Updated Environmental Protection Regulation and Policies**

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

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**1.  Annual Forum September 12 – Strategic Sector-Wide Investment/ Regional Innovation**

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Welcome Taggle Systems, Tracwater and McCullough Robertson as sponsors for the Forum!

Trevor Dean from Fraser Coast Regional Council has taken on the role of a topic leader at the industry roadmap planning workshop at Logan on September 12 as part of the ***qldwater*** Annual Forum.

Trevor has worked for Fraser Coast Regional Council and its predecessors since 1995, predominately in the planning and infrastructure delivery aspects of the water business. The interdisciplinary team Trevor manages has been instrumental in the success of regional initiatives such as the WBBROC D&C Code and the WBBROC Sewer Relining Contract, two of a number of projects that have demonstrated that it is possible to work collaboratively with other water service providers to get good Regional outcomes that benefit all.

“Under-utilised infrastructure, flawed technology, unaffordable OPEX - there would not be a person attending the forum that couldn’t give an example of a ‘dumb’ investment they have seen… or unfortunately been part of.  How do we, as water service providers, make sure that our asset investment programmes are ‘prudent and efficient’? What can we do to ensure that a pipeline of funding is available to allow replacements to be delivered at the optimum time and not just when grant funding permits? All this while still delivering an affordable service. What is the definition of ‘affordable’ anyway?”

These questions must resonate strongly with managers across the water and sewerage industry, but developing policy to address the issue of strategic investment is not straightforward, given the great diversity in utilities including a reliance on external investment to provide community services ranging from 0 to 100 percent. Industry consultation has reflected a strong sector preference for regional collaborative approaches to encourage financial independence, but participation in these initiatives can still be a significant challenge for many small and remote service providers.

Your participation in the ***qldwater*** annual forum on 11 and 12 September will provide an opportunity to be a part of the solution and to assist with the development of our industry roadmap. There will be a series of workshop activities, with discussion introduced and supported by the topic leaders and ***qldwater*** staff and our professional facilitator Lara Schlinker.

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**2.  Queensland Health - amendments to the *Public Health Act 2005***

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Earlier eflash #[380](https://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=246981&A=SearchResult&SearchID=160504451&ObjectID=246981&ObjectType=6) refers.

On the 3rd of April, Parliament passed amendments to the *Public Health Act 2005* that empower the chief executive of Queensland Health, or his/her delegate, to direct a person to issue a pollution notice in response to a pollution event. The purpose of these provisions is to help ensure members of the public are informed of pollution events that could affect their health, in a timely manner, and the measures they should take to protect their health. An example of a pollution event would be the release of a hazardous chemical into a waterway that could adversely affect the health of downstream users of the waterway.

These provisions commenced on 11 April 2019 and the relevant powers have been delegated to Queensland’s Chief Health Officer. Further information on these provisions can be found [here](https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/pollution/pollution-management/notices) or by contacting Queensland Health’s Water Unit at waterquality@health.qld.gov.au or telephone 3328 9348.

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**3.  Updated Environmental Protection Regulation and Policies**

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The Department of Environment and Science today announced that they have completed the review of these regulatory instruments. As described in [eFLash **#393**](https://www.qldwater.com.au/e-flashes-2019) both the Water Policy and the Regulations had minor changes that would impact the water and sewerage sector. The new subordinate legislation will take effect from 1 September 2019, available now at the following links:

* [Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 2019](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/sl-2019-0153)
* [Environmental Protection (Noise) Policy 2019](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/sl-2019-0154)
* [Environmental Protection (Water and Wetland Biodiversity) Policy 2019](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/sl-2019-0156)
* [Environmental Protection Regulation 2019](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/sl-2019-0155).

Notably, the management hierarchy (now section 14 of the EPP (Water and Wetland Biodiversity)) has been re-written specifically for waters to include (in order of preference) the familiar options listed below

(a) firstly—reduce the production of waste water or contaminants by reducing the use of water;

(b) secondly—prevent waste and implement appropriate waste prevention measures;

(c) thirdly—evaluate treatment and recycling options and implement appropriate treatment and recycling;

(d) fourthly—evaluate the following options for waste water or contaminants in the order in which they are listed—

(i) appropriate treatment and release to a waste facility or sewer;

(ii) appropriate treatment and release to land;

(iii) appropriate treatment and release to surface waters or groundwaters.

Offsets have been included but as an element of “appropriate treatment” prior to release to waters or groundwaters. If you have any comment son these new documents please forward them to rfearon@qldwater.com.au and they will be raised for discussion at the next meeting of the ***qldwater*** Sewage and Water Environmental Advisory Panel (SWEAP) on 16th October.

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

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1. **The Water Research Australia** project *Potable Water Reuse – What can Australia learn from global experience?* provides a current update of the global status of planned potable reuse as a water supply strategy. The final project report aims to inform and support Australian decision makers and their advisers, as they consider appropriate policies for future drinking water supply augmentation and management. View the full report [here](https://www.waterra.com.au/project-details/243).