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

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

**(Issue #427 – 25 March 2020)**

**1. COVID-19 Update**

**2.  Key considerations for service providers in managing COVID-19**

**3.  Staff movements**

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**1.  COVID-19 Update**

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Best wishes to all our members and stakeholders in managing through the current tough times – the willingness to share information and offer support has been overwhelming and is a credit to our sector.

[*Zoho Forum*](https://connect.zoho.com/portal/qldwater/group/covid-19)

New information is being added daily, currently the site includes:

* [Links to useful videos, respected web sites and other sources along with fact sheets provided by the Water Services Association of Australia](https://connect.zoho.com/portal/qldwater/announcement/covid-19-resources)
* High level guidance on business continuity planning ([key things to consider](https://connect.zoho.com/portal/qldwater/stream/214742000000619484))
* Great, simple planning resources provided by councils, e.g. [Pandemic Management Plan](https://connect.zoho.com/portal/qldwater/stream/214742000000603273)
* [Discussion documents](https://connect.zoho.com/portal/qldwater/question/environmental-compliance-during-covid-period) on collective industry responses/ submissions to key regulators to assist in managing compliance as members start to face supply shortages
* Updates on broader efforts including Queensland Government planning

If you need access to the forum, it’s best to email [rfearon@qldwater.com.au](mailto:rfearon@qldwater.com.au) directly in the short term.

*Other activities underway*

DNRME has formed a working group which is now meeting a couple of times a week.  It includes all key regulators (DNRME, DES, DOH and DLGRMA, the ***qldwater*** TRG chair and deputy and other industry representatives).  Our current understanding of the various activities underway under the auspices of the group:

* DNRME’s Water Supply Regulation division has sent a survey to all service providers on the impact of COVID-19.  We provided some input through the working group and expect to have an ongoing role in collaboration with the department in managing contact with service providers and supporting responses.  At this stage the department is managing the survey and calling each provider, with DLGRMA dealing directly with indigenous councils.  **If you have any questions at all about the process or how to respond to the survey we are happy to offer assistance – call Dave Cameron or Rob Fearon in the first instance.**
* ***qldwater*** is also working with Urban Utilities in making contact with a number of commercial providers which may be able to offer support for regional members in the coming weeks/ months.  A teleconference has been scheduled for 31 March.  We are compiling a broader list (including individuals) with whom we’ll engage after we’ve sorted processes out and with the benefit of survey feedback.  It is envisaged that with the support of department we will be helping match-make with impacted members.
* Separate pieces of work are underway to look at broader supply chain impacts including potential future shortages of chemicals and critical spares, currently being led by DNRME and supported by LGAQ/ Local Buy.
* DNRME will soon be sending me an email to all CEOs of service providers and their list of key water managers describing processes at a high level.  If you’ve not received this by the end of the week and should have, please contact us.

The list of contributors to this effort has grown to a point where it’s impossible to acknowledge everybody – the key message is for everybody to consider gaps in the available information, if you’re sitting on something that you think might be useful there’s every chance that it will be to someone so please get in touch so we can include in the growing library of resources.  Similarly, if you are aware of available/ excess resources – people, supplies, spares etc – let us know and we’ll ensure the right people are made aware.

**Events**

After consultation with our hosts for Gympie and Goondiwindi events, we can confirm that neither will proceed in March and April.

Everything is organised, and we will be in a position to reschedule these relatively quickly in the event travel restrictions etc ease, but as you can no doubt appreciate, it’s not possible to suggest alternative dates at this point.

We are working through the list of those registered (and sponsors) and will be in touch directly soon to work out preferences with refunds etc.

We were well advanced in planning for our lengthily titled “Getting the most out of your existing systems – a focus on networks – our most valuable and largely unseen infrastructure” workshop in June, but have ceased this for now to focus on other priorities.

Short free webinars with select presenters who had been enlisted for these events are on the cards and relatively quick and easy to set up, however we will be waiting for the current impacts to become clearer before promoting these.

Our staff are currently largely in the office, but this is a day to day decision at present and the transition to working from home is relatively easy.

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**2.  Key considerations for service providers in managing COVID-19**

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The following is the final version of a discussion post made on the Zoho forum (with contributions from members incorporated), for general distribution.

Individual service providers are best placed to assess local risks linked to COVID-19. The constantly evolving threat and public response means that risks are different for each community. This information is provided to assist decision making for issues specific to water and sewerage services based on processes that have been effective in other areas.

1. While reviewing council business continuity planning consider:

* Contact processes for field staff as they are essential front-line managers and will be in short supply
* Workplace meeting options and spatial distancing particularly for field staff
* Options for remote or online monitoring (or use of surrogates) to limit fieldwork.
* Customer interaction options (front desk/ fieldwork/meter reading community/education)
* Potential impacts on compliance requirements
* Emergency management planning
* Review and test links with local and regional emergency planning processes
* Review incident management structure and governance

1. Review local availability of:

* spares for critical operational items (e.g. dosing pumps PLCs, valves, fittings, PPE)
* chemicals, energy/liquid fuels (for vehicles and generators)
* consumables (testing kits, equipment and reagents, lab supplies, safety equipment)
* essential non-operational items (e.g. laptops/tablets, phones, stationery and hygiene supplies)
* technical expertise (e.g. specialised maintenance, SCADA, calibration and testing, repairs)
* professional services (e.g. legal, training, WHS, cleaning, traffic control, fire and safety services, RPEQ, biosolids collection)

1. Determine supply and staffing risks and communicate any issues (e.g. to council, local and district emergency management processes, and regionally – some QWRAP regions are already collaborating on mutual aid arrangements).

If you are having problems with any of these steps, you are not the only one. Contact us and we will try to hook you up with contacts, documents or people with experience in other councils.

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**3.  Staff movements  
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Diana Kislitsyna has resigned from ***qldwater*** and will be leaving us in around 3 weeks to pursue other opportunities.  We wish Diana the best with these and thank her for her significant efforts since joining us in April 2018.

Diana will be replaced in the short term by a familiar face – international travel bans have meant Heather Gold is currently in the country and happy to return to the directorate while things are a bit uncertain and we work out our future staffing needs.

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

**To add your name** to the distribution list, email “subscribe” to [dkislitsyna@qldwater.com.au](mailto:dkislitsyna@qldwater.com.au)

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