**Queensland Water Skills e-Flash #73**

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

**(Issue #73 – 26 February 2019)**

1. Have you registered for the Queensland Water Skills Forum?
2. Qualifications and VET Sector Review Update
3. The Future of Work in 2030 in Queensland
4. WIOA Queensland Charity Bowls Day

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1. **Have you registered for the Queensland Water Skills Forum?**

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Have you registered to attend the Queensland Water Skills Forum next week on Thursday 7 March 2019? More than 65 delegates have already confirmed their place to hear from industry representatives share their experience in skilling, capability building and workforce planning for the water industry. [View the detailed program](https://ipweaq.eventsair.com/QuickEventWebsitePortal/queensland-water-skills-forum/event-info-site/Agenda). Presentations will also be made to newly certified operators who completed gap training during 2018 with the assistance of DESBT funding.

Forum attendance is free for up to three delegates from each [Water Skills Partnership member](https://www.qldwater.com.au/Skills_and_Training). ***qldwater*** members (who aren’t part of the Water Skills Partnership) are invited to attend for $50 + GST and other attendees for $100 + GST. [Register online now!](https://ipweaq.eventsair.com/QuickEventWebsitePortal/queensland-water-skills-forum/event-info-site/ExtraContent/ContentPage?page=1) Registrations close this Friday (1 March).

The Forum will be followed by an optional dinner with special guest speaker Neil Brennan, CEO Seqwater. Attendance at the dinner costs $90 + GST and includes a two course dinner and drinks. Please register your attendance via our [online registration form](https://ipweaq.eventsair.com/QuickEventWebsitePortal/queensland-water-skills-forum/event-info-site/ExtraContent/ContentPage?page=1).

Please contact Carlie Sargent on 3632 6853 or csargent@qldwater.com.au for more information about the forum. We look forward to seeing you there!

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1. **Qualifications and VET Sector Review Update**

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The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviewing qualifications in the National Water Training Package (NWP) met last week in Sydney to continue its review of the Certificate II in Water Industry Operations and Certificate III in Water Industry Treatment and Certificate III in Water Industry Operations. The focus of the review at this point is reviewing the core units across each of the qualifications and considering whether any new units need to be developed. A number of suggestions have been made for new units and there was general agreement for additional SCADA/Remote Monitoring units to be explored. All units are now being reviewed by smaller, focused working groups so if you have any comments about any of the units in the qualifications please send those through to Carlie Sargent at csargent@qldwater.com.au.

The TAC also discussed the importance of adding Skill Sets to the training package and this is being pursued by the Water Industry Reference Committee (Water IRC). The Water IRC has been attempting to develop Skill Sets to provide a mechanism for those with existing qualifications to undertake additional units of competency to achieve Operator Certification. Certification is an important vehicle in addressing the shortage of water and wastewater operators that has been identified as a critical issue in Queensland. LGAQ's recent [Local Government Workforce and Future Skills Report](https://www.lgnsw.org.au/files/imce-uploads/1/Local_Government_Workforce_and_Future-Skills_Reports_%E2%80%93_Australia.pdf) identified water and wastewater treatment operators as the top two skill shortages across all Queensland councils, with:

- 28.3% of councils reporting a shortage of wastewater treatment operators, 13.2% reporting that they have been forced to recruit less skilled applicants and 35.8% flagging the job role as a future shortage; and

- 22.6% reporting a shortage of water treatment operators, 9.4% reporting that they have been forced to recruit less skilled applicants, and 30.2% flagging the job role as a future shortage.

This is consistent with previous ***qldwater*** Workforce Composition Snapshot Reports and has been corroborated by Australian Industry Standards (AIS) in its draft Skills Forecast for 2019 with those job roles identified as the highest priority skill shortage facing the water industry nationally. The Water IRC believes that Operator Certification can help address these critical role shortages by elevating the status of these job roles, recognising the skills and competency of operators and providing access to ongoing skilling through CPD requirements. ***qldwater*** on behalf of the Water IRC attempted to develop Skill Sets for water and wastewater treatment however the packaging rules are too rigid to be applied. The Water IRC agreed to raise the profile of the issue in the Skills Forecast, and is working with AIS to advocate for more flexibility in the package.

This coincides with a Federal Government review of the Vocational Education and Training Sector and this has already identified issues in the packaging rules for Skill Sets. ***qldwater*** has provided a submission to the review and recently attended a consultation forum with the Hon Steven Joyce who provided a summary of the key issues identified from consultation so far:

* Slowness in making changes to qualifications
* Issues of quality with providers
* Complicated funding arrangements
* Poor skills matching to what industry needs
* Poor reputation of VET
* Confusing secondary VET pathways
* Complicated second chance training pathways

What does it all really mean? Fundamentally, change needs to occur to ensure that VET qualifications remain fit for purpose. Rigid rules mean learners often undertake some unnecessary training which places an added burden on trainees, employers and training providers. In addition, there is no permanent support funding mechanism for units of competency required beyond a standard qualification and something like Skill Sets are needed to address this – while DESBT has been very generous in supporting two cohorts of operators for certification, the temporary allocation has expired.

These issues reflect much of what was included in ***qldwater’s*** submission which you can read on our website: <http://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=246959>. Thank you to those members who provided comments to inform our submission and we will continue to keep you informed as the review continues. A report is due in March.

All of the above issues will be explored at the Queensland Water Skills Forum on 7 March. Registrations close Friday 1 March so please [register online today](https://ipweaq.eventsair.com/QuickEventWebsitePortal/queensland-water-skills-forum/event-info-site/ExtraContent/ContentPage?page=1)!

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1. **The Future of Work in 2030 in Queensland**

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The discussion paper considers three key drivers of change:

* technology impacts
* demographic and social changes
* legal, institutional and policy influences

Jobs Queensland is inviting input from stakeholders about how these drivers of change are shaping the nature of work and the skills and training that will be needed for the jobs of the future. Feedback can be provided either by attending a consultation session or providing a written submission. Submissions are due by Friday 15 March to engagement@jobsqueensland.qld.gov.au.

***qldwater*** will provide a submission on behalf of members. If you have any comments to contribute to our submission, please send them through to Carlie Sargent at csargent@qldwater.com.au or contact 3632 3850 to provide your feedback over the phone by Monday 11 March.

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1. **WIOA Queensland Charity Bowls Day**

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The WIOA Queensland Advisory Group will be holding a**Charity Bowls Day** at the Yandina Bowls Club on Friday 8 March 2019. WIOA members and guests are invited to enjoy the networking opportunity and a relaxed game of bowls. The event aims to raise $2,000 with funds distributed to charity at the WIOA Queensland Conference in June. More information and registration is available at: <https://wioa.org.au/nevent/queensland-2019-bowls/>.

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