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

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

**(Issue #404– 30 August 2019)**

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**1.  Annual Forum 11-12 September– Registrations must close 4 September
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The ***qldwater*** Annual Forum is just two weeks away, and [registrations close](https://ipweaq.eventsair.com/qwd-annual-forum-2019/registration) on 4 September. If you are planning on attending the technical tour and haven’t registered yet, please do so as soon as possible, **as the space on the bus is full and we need to work out quickly whether there is enough interest to organise a second.** If you’ve already registered but haven’t indicated your attendance for the tour please let me know as soon as possible by email dkislitsyna@qldwater.com.au so you don’t miss out.  Thanks again to our hosts at Logan for being tolerant while we work through these logistics.

The forum presents an opportunity for you to participate in the discussion and help to shape our industry roadmap, particularly to inform collaborative opportunities and policy recommendations.  There will be a series of workshop activities on 12 September, with discussion introduced and supported by topic leaders and ***qldwater*** staff and our professional facilitator Lara Schlinker. Two more short articles prepared in collaboration with our topic leaders are provided here to whet your appetite for what promises to be an interesting event.

**Annual Forum 11 September– Best of the Best Qld Water Taste Test**

Have you selected your top drop to enter in this year’s competition? The ninth annual Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test will take place over lunch on 11 September, with conference attendees putting their taste buds to the test to select the state’s top drop. This year we aim to focus on [the breadth of water sources from across Queensland](https://qldwater.smugmug.com/2019-Best-of-the-Best-Water-Taste-Test/i-XncRff8), and we hope to showcase a wide variety of sources and tastes. Good luck to 2018 winners Mackay Regional Council, who will be defending their title in the battle of the taps.

Please complete the [2019 Taste Test Entry Form](https://www.qldwater.com.au/_literature_250678/2019_Taste_Test_Entry_Form) and return it to dgralton@qldwater.com.au **by Wednesday, 4 September at the latest.**

We require two litres of water in clearly marked containers identifying the name of the water provider and the system/scheme it presents. Samples can be mailed to our offices by Monday 9 September or delivered to the registration desk prior to the bus departing on the technical tour on the 11 September.

The samples being judged are anonymous and will be served at room temperature, to ensure a level playing field. Water Providers entering a taste test sample should make every effort to be in attendance at the event to take advantage of media and photo opportunities.

May the source be with you!

**Annual Forum 12 September– Catchment Resilience in a Changing Environment**

Chris Mooney from the Department of Environment and Science will be known to many forum attendees and has kindly agreed to take on the role of a topic leader at the industry roadmap planning workshop.

Chris has an extensive background in assessments and compliance for the department, particularly working with local government and environmental authorities for sewage treatment facilities. She can lay claim to being the “most capped” government stakeholder to participate in ***qldwater’s*** Water Connections Tour to regional and remote communities, with five trips under her belt commencing in 2015.

“With limited resources and capacity issues we know many sewerage service providers can struggle to manage systems at times and climate change will see more challenges with increased instances of extreme events.  Environmental protection cannot be compromised, but regulators are developing more flexibility to help utilities implement fit for purpose solutions, including point source offsets.  When are you going to get your act together and start taking them up?”

Chris's comments highlight the big challenges facing the industry in this space. There may be tacit support from the regulator for environmental offsets in preference for infrastructure spending, but successful implementation would require a level of industry-wide and cross-industry cooperation that may be difficult to realise. This being the case, are there opportunities for risk sharing and partnerships that are attainable?

**Annual Forum 12 September– Harmonising Water Regulation**

Lisa Welsh, SunWater’s General Manager Customer Strategy has also taken on the role of a topic leader at the roadmap planning workshop.

Prior to her two years with SunWater, Lisa spent a significant part of her career in NSW, working with the State Water Corporation, NSW Office of Water and the Sydney Desalination Plant dealing with a range of regulatory frameworks.  Since arriving at SunWater, Lisa has focused on a range of improvement initiatives but particularly on the implementation of a more transparent and customer-friendly pricing framework.  While the workshop will look at all aspects of regulation, Lisa will specifically target price regulation in her pitch.

“As a state-owned entity, SunWater is monitored by QCA.  There are pros and cons to regulation and for smaller organisations the cost of delivering rigorous pricing oversight will often outweigh any benefits to customers.  Whether regulated or not, every Queensland publicly-owned utility has an obligation to work towards understanding its costs and benchmarking appropriately for the ultimate benefit of its customers.  Indeed, with successive national reviews recommending independent economic regulation for urban water service providers, the ability to demonstrate some rigor in these areas is becoming increasingly important.”

Water pricing regulation is just one of many areas where increased regulation is possible in the long term. Others include:  water security, water efficiency, drinking water quality and public health – including operator capability, compliance, emerging contaminants, and HBTs to name a few. The challenge for the industry is to identify the opportunities for improving existing policy and regulation, and with them areas for “lead” policy to form the basis of industry advocacy.

These issues and more will be the basis of topics to be addressed on the second day of the ***qldwater*** Annual Forum as part of a planning workshop to assist with the development of our industry roadmap. We look forward to seeing you there.

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**2.  DNRME Comparative Report**

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Annual reporting KPI data that is supplied to the Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy (via SWIM or otherwise) is currently published ([in Excel format](https://data.qld.gov.au/organization/natural-resources-mines-and-energy?q=water+and+sewerage&sort=score+desc%2C+metadata_modified+desc)) on the Government’s open data portal and has been used previously to publish two comparative reports – (15/16 sample available [here](https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/mining-energy-water/water/industry-infrastructure/industry-regulation/performance-reporting/requirements). The Department is now developing a digital Urban Water Comparative Report which is due to be published later this year.

The digital report will contain interactive dashboards, making it easier for users to compare water and sewerage service provider data. The functionality of the digital report allows service providers to track their own performance over time, and also to select other service providers for comparison. The report will be publicly available so that customers will also be able to access the digital report.

As this year is the first time the report will be released in a digital format, it will only contain data relating to select themes.  However, from next year the report will contain all the KPI data collected by DNRME.

The Department has been working with ***qldwater*** and LGAQ throughout the development of the report and will be providing further information about its release over the coming months.

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**3.  SWIM 2018/19 annual water and sewerage data due date**

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All Water Service Providers in Queensland have been asked to collated and submit their annual 2018/19 water and sewerage data.

**Important dates**:

* All QLD Government (DNRME) KPI data, for all service providers, is required under legislation by: **Tuesday 1st October**

If you are using the SWIM system this means that your data (in the Annual Data Tool/Web Portal) must be fully completed, set to ‘Published’, and synchronised by 5 pm on Tuesday 1 October at the very latest.

If you are not using SWIM then the data (entered into the DNRME Excel template) must arrive at DNRME by CoB on that same date.

We urge you to submit your annual water data through SWIM on time to avoid the possibility of PINS being issued by DNRME and so that its future as a water-industry-driven system is assured.

Please contact David Scheltinga if you have any queries regarding your SWIM reporting – we appreciate reporting can be a complicated task and are happy to assist you in any way we can (dscheltinga@qldwater.com.au or 0415 881 195).

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**4.  Seminar on Analysis of Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) In Water and Wastewater, Townsville City Council**

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The James Cook University, College of Science and Engineering and the Townsville City Council, Townsville Laboratory Services cordially invite you to attend a seminar on  Analysis of Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) In Water and Wastewater presented by Edgar Salvador from Townsville Laboratory Services on Thursday September 5, 12-1pm.

The seminar is also available by video link at JCU Cairns Room A002-201.

Please advise of your attendance by calling 07 4727 8667  or emailing  labenquiries@townsville.qld.gov.au

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

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1. **The National Health and Medical Research Council** (NHMRC) is seeking feedback on draft *Guidance on Short Term Exposure Values*. The consultation is open until Monday 14 October 2019, 4pm (AEST) and you are invited under section 13(d) of the NHMRC Act 1992 to make a submission to NHMRC through the NHMRC public consultation website. This website contains the draft Guidance document and information on how to make a submission. You will need to create an account to view the public consultation questions and make a submission. For more information please contact Alan Singh on water@nhmrc.gov.au
2. **The Queensland Police Service** has released the QPS Security Forecast - September 2019  and QPS Industry Advisory Bulletin which are now available in the members area of our website -  <http://www.qldwater.com.au/Counter-terrorism>.   The information contained in the QPS documents may be viewed and circulated internally, however it should not be provided to the public / media or forwarded to external third parties.  Members must log in first to access this information.

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

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