**Queensland Water Skills e-Flash #82**

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

**(Issue #82 – Thursday 3 October 2019)**

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1. **Federal Government Skills Package**

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The Federal Government recently announced a number of initiatives to strengthen the VET sector as part of its [Skills Package](https://www.employment.gov.au/delivering-skills-today-and-tomorrow) in response to reforms identified in the Joyce Review. The review and proposed reforms were previously referred to in [Skills e-Flashes #73 and #75](https://www.qldwater.com.au/e-flashes-2019) and ***qldwater*** participated in consultation and provided a [submission to the review](http://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=246959).

Consultation has now commenced for three of the Skills Strategy’s key initiatives:

* the [National Skills Commission](https://www.employment.gov.au/NSC), which will oversee the Australian Government’s investment in the VET system and promote a nationwide approach to skills forecasting;
* two [Skills Organisations](https://www.employment.gov.au/SO) pilots (human services care and digital technologies), will trial new approaches to industry leadership to help improve the national training system for both industry and students; and
* the [National Careers Institute](https://www.employment.gov.au/NCI), established in July 2019, to provide leadership in the delivery of high quality, evidence-based career development to help Australians make informed decisions about their learning, training and work pathways.

Discussion papers have been released inviting input into the design of the [National Skills Commission](https://docs.employment.gov.au/documents/co-designing-national-skills-commission-discussion-paper) and ‘future-state’ [Skills Organisations](https://docs.employment.gov.au/documents/skills-organisations-national-co-design-workshops-discussion-paper). Submissions close Friday 15 November. Co-design consultations are taking place around the country and ***qldwater*** will participate in those workshops and communicate any relevant outcomes. If you have any feedback in relation to the discussion papers or the Skills Strategy, please contact Carlie Sargent on 07 3632 6853.

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The Water Industry Operator Certification Taskforce (WIOCT) has approved minor updates to the [Water Industry Operator Certification Framework: Drinking Water, Wastewater, Recycled Water 2018](https://www.qldwater.com.au/Skills_water_operator_certification). The WIOCT comprises CEO-level representation from the water industry and related education and government sectors with the purpose of championing the implementation of Operator Certification in Australia and to consider any future expansion of the Framework.

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) along with the Victorian Water Industry Association (VicWater) recently confirmed its adoption of the national framework. In making the announcement, DHHS and VicWater highlighted the benefits of the national framework in providing uniform professional recognition for water treatment operators and the alignment of competency and capability requirements with the tasks performed by operators.

Previous initiatives to promote Certification in Queensland have been well supported by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training with more than $150,000 contributed to subsidise Operators in completion of their gap training, however, there are no further subsidies available in the absence of a formal mechanism in the training package to link to existing funding programs. We continue to work to address this, but VET reform processes mentioned above have made progress slow. More information about funding for training is available on the [***qldwater*** website](https://www.qldwater.com.au/skills_funding) and we will seek to clarify any changes to eligibility for funding when the revised Certificate II and Certificate III qualifications are released. It’s worth contacting your local [Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) Provider](https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/search-aasn) to check eligibility for any potential funding for qualifications under the User Choice program.

***qldwater*** can support members and Water Skills Partners with engaging RTOs and provide assistance with preparing water or wastewater competency training matrices. Please contact Carlie Sargent on 07 3632 6853 for assistance. Details of RTOs providing water industry qualifications are available [on our website](https://www.qldwater.com.au/Skills_Vocational_Education). Unfortunately we have been advised that Chisholm Institute is no longer offering water industry qualifications and will be finishing existing students in 2020.

Any questions about the WIOCT or the Certification Framework should be directed to Dave Cameron and for more information about the Certification scheme, contact WIOA.

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1. **Training Opportunities Survey Results**

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[Skills e-Flash #80](https://www.qldwater.com.au/e-flashes-2019) invited feedback on water industry training needs with a particular focus on micro-credentials, higher education and online training courses. Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey.

The results showed there is a real need for the development of micro-credentials to provide opportunities for up-skilling and re-skilling in a number of areas, particularly water operations for engineers, leadership/supervision, introduction to SCADA and cybersecurity awareness. The Queensland Government is looking to pilot the introduction of micro-credentials in the VET system and whilst there are no current funding opportunities available, ***qldwater*** will continue to work closely with the Department to look for opportunities to pilot courses as funding becomes available.

The survey results indicated a need for higher education in asset strategy and planning. The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) provides a number of resources to support asset management and planning, including the IPWEA Professional Certificate in Asset Management Planning. Find out more about [IPWEA’s National Asset Management Strategy](https://www.ipwea.org/communities/assetmanagement). There was also interest in further study in Catchment Management and Science and we will work the International WaterCentre to discuss potential opportunities.

80% of survey respondents agreed there is value in ***qldwater*** developing an online training course for those working on Wastewater and Recycled Water network assets. Following the positive response to our water quality online course, the [Aqua Card](https://watertraining.com.au/), development of a similar course for wastewater and recycled water is underway and a draft is expected to be available at the 2020 Water Skills Forum. If you’re interested in providing feedback on the table of contents, please visit the [dedicated page on our Zoho forum](https://connect.zoho.com/portal/qldwater/group/wastewater-and-recycled-water-networks-online-training-course). To continue to receive updates and provide feedback as the course is developed, select ‘Join Group’ at the top right hand side of the [forum page](https://connect.zoho.com/portal/qldwater/group/wastewater-and-recycled-water-networks-online-training-course). Contact Carlie Sargent if you have any queries about accessing the forum or if you have feedback about the proposed training course.

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1. **Save the Date for the 2020 Water Skills Forum**

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The 2020 Water Skills Forum will be held on **Thursday 5 March in Brisbane**. For those who have attended previous forums you’ll know that the day provides an opportunity to hear the skilling and training challenges of other organisations and how they’re addressing them. Based on feedback from previous years, the 2020 event will include some workshop style sessions in addition to the usual presentations. More details will be released soon but in the meantime, reserve the date in your diary!

Any suggestions for topics or presenters you’d like to see included in the program are welcome to Carlie Sargent on 3632 6853.

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1. **National Water Industry Skills Survey**

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Australian Industry Standards (AIS) who oversees the development of the National Water Training Package invites your feedback about skilling issues affecting the water industry. AIS conducts an annual industry skills survey to capture any new or emerging skills issues to inform the Water IRC’s discussions on skilling priorities and training packages.

Your feedback is requested by Friday, 17 January 2020 by completing a [short, 10-minute survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IRCSkillsSurvey2020). Any enquiries should be directed to Australian Industry Standards.

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1. **Associated Organisations’ Opportunities**

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**Leadership for Executive Women in Water Course**

The International WaterCentre’s [Leadership for Executive Women in Water](https://internationalwatercentre.cmail19.com/t/d-l-xjluuid-jdpthkdkj-o/) is a 3-day intensive, residential course specifically designed for busy female executives who don’t have the time to commit to an extended leadership program. The intent of the short course is to catalyse fresh perspectives and honest conversations about the leadership journey, and to book-end this with professional coaching sessions. Registrations are closing soon for the 2019 course which runs from 13 – 15 November. New dates for 2020 will be announced soon. Download the [course brochure](https://internationalwatercentre.cmail19.com/t/d-l-xjluuid-jdpthkdkj-o/) and contact Belinda Pritchard on 0472 502 759 with any queries.

**WIOA FNQ Water Interest Day and Charity Bowls**

The WIOA Queensland Advisory Group is holding its annual Water Interest Day and Trility Charity Bowls Day on Friday 11 October in Cairns. WIOA members and their guests are invited to enjoy this professional development and networking opportunity and a relaxed game of bowls. Registrations close Wednesday 9 October. View the program and register online at: <https://wioa.org.au/nevent/fnq-wid-bowls-2019/>.

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