



QueenslandWater

The Water Industry's Resource for News, Events and Information

Issue 13 - August 2015

Go Queensland!



It's been a great year for Queenslanders with the iconic win over NSW in the State of Origin and the knowledge that our water tastes great.

Congratulations to 2014 taste test winner, Richmond Shire Council, who laid claim to the top drop title when delegates at the WIOA Conference gave its sample top scores in the 2015 Ixom Water of Origin taste test, beating the 2015 NSW taste test winner, Orange City Council.

We're now honing in on the 2015 Ixom Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test winner with five of the six regional finals decided. The 2015 regional finalists to date are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Central Queensland | Livingstone Shire Council - Woodbury WTP |
| Far North Queensland | Cairns Regional Council - Mountain View WTP |
| North Queensland | Townsville City Council - Ross River Scheme |
| West Queensland | Barcaldine Regional Council - Barcaldine Scheme |
| South West Queensland | Balonne Shire Council - Dirribandi Scheme |

The South East Queensland event is scheduled for the Gold Coast on 20 August after which the six regional winners will battle it out at the grand final in Maroochydore on 5 November.

Good luck to all, and may the best water win!

Images: From top Queensland supporters celebrate the astounding win over NSW in the Water of Origin; Geoffrey Johnson and Richmond Mayor Cr John Wharton with Dave Cameron; and man of the match, Geoffrey Johnson.



Update from CEO

For this edition I'm going to focus on our upcoming Innovation Forum which also happens to be hosting the grand final of this year's IXOM taste test.

There isn't a lot to offer in advocacy updates that hasn't already been covered in e-flashes. While the election is well and truly over, the time taken in confirming appointments of Directors General has meant that the key agencies are still working through priorities.

We believe the state 30 year water sector strategy will continue, amended slightly and under a different guise. Rob Fearon continues on the Innovation Panel and I have recently been invited to sit on the DEWS Strategic Advisory Committee. Rob is also part of the DEHP Minister's Reef Advisory Panel.

We are working through refinements to our work program based on feedback from our recent member survey, and will be in a position to talk more about these following the August Technical Reference Group (TRG) meeting.

The TRG has been very enthusiastic in supporting the development of a second Innovation Forum, to be held on Wednesday 4 and Thursday 5 November at Maroochydore. Yes it conflicts with the first day of the Test Match and no, it didn't occur to me when selecting the dates and we have meetings all day on the Friday as well to prove it.

I hope you can join us and enjoy the benefits of being close to Brisbane at the most important time of the year. We will be working closely with Unitywater to ensure an interesting tour on the afternoon of the 4th, followed by a day of technical presentations, panel sessions and workshops on the 5th.

While the event will be an excellent chance to exchange ideas, our steering committee has been very focussed on trying to distil key messages from it to inform our regulators. It will include panel sessions looking at customer engagement for DEWS, and opportunities for industry and DEHP to partner to reduce costs of compliance while maintaining a general environmental duty.

Technical presentations will include trial projects run through the

SEQ Service Provider Research and Innovation Network, field mobility projects and sewage technologies. There are sessions devoted to building capacity in operations and support services as well as regulation, data and reporting.

We have invited a keynote speaker who will hopefully create some robust discussion around service provider efficiency, as well as a number of interstate guests from other utilities with case studies looking at regional scale service delivery and innovative strategic HR practices to support operations.

We are still waiting to confirm all agency representation, but Jon Black, Director General of DEHP will present some of the department's recent policy innovations as well as participate in a panel session.

At this stage, Livingstone Shire, Cairns Regional, Townsville City, Barcaldine Regional and Balonne Shire Councils will be competing in the taste test grand final with the SEQ finalist decided on 20 August.

Our colleagues at the LGAQ have again kindly agreed to offer 4 x \$500 sponsorships to assist with representatives from smaller councils to attend. If you are interested in pursuing this option, please contact our office for more information. There are still plenty of other sponsorship options available, so please encourage companies you think might be interested – all are directly invested in offsetting registration costs which we hope to keep to under \$150 again this year. As always, thanks to both IXOM and Dial Before You Dig for their continued support of our tour and event activities and to WSAA and AWA for helping develop and promote the program.

By the way – after nearly four years I am now formally in the **qldwater** CEO role. A new three year QWRAP grant period was enough certainty for us to lock Rob into his Program Manager role for the foreseeable future.

Enjoy the news.....

Dave Cameron

Quick highlights:

qldwater is in negotiations to provide industry advice to DET

qldwater expects to soon sign a nine month contract to provide the Department of Education and Training (DET) with advice on water industry vocational education and training needs.

The role would see **qldwater** funded to advise DET on RTOs delivering water operations qualifications.

National Water Industry Skills Taskforce Changes

qldwater has taken over the secretariat function for the national Water Industry Skills Taskforce (WIST) for a period of 12 months. Dave Cameron, **qldwater** CEO has been elected Chair.

A release from the WIST covering some of the changes is available on the **qldwater** website.

Awards more than a pat on the back

It's that exciting time of the year again when we get to acknowledge the great people in our industry who go above and beyond the call of duty with the annual Operator of the Year and Young Operator of the Year awards announced at the Water Industry Operators Association of Australia (WIOA) Queensland Conference in Toowoomba on 18 June 2015.

Young Operator of the Year

The 2015 Young Operator of the Year is a new entrant to the world of water treatment.

Geoffrey Johnson from Richmond Shire Council has redesigned his council's workplace health and safety systems (risk assessments, development of safe operating procedures, and creating policies and procedures for WHS); introduced and is maintaining all the safe work method statements for his council and ensuring all his staff have the necessary training to perform their tasks safely. He has completed mapping programs and on-ground reticulation works.

As a qualified plumber, Geoffrey works long hours and takes call outs for both Council business and private requests at all hours of the night. Geoffrey also coordinated contractors in the upgrade of water mains around town while overseeing the construction and implementation of a new water treatment plant – the same plant that produced the water that decimated NSW in the origin taste test.

Geoffrey received an all expenses paid trip to join the WIOA delegation on a tour of water and wastewater facilities in New Zealand as well as attendance at the Water Industry Operations Group NZ conference in May 2016.

Operator of the Year Civil/ All Rounder

With 12 entries received it has been one of the most competitive years for this award category on record, and we were pleased to award the 2015 Operator of the Year Civil / All Rounder to Grahame Dunstan from Cairns Regional Council.

Grahame's long career in the water industry across many different operational roles has given him responsibility for the coordination of water and wastewater services in a challenging and environmentally sensitive region.

Grahame's success has been attributed to his inclusive leadership style and a focus on high quality service committed to the environment, public health and workplace health and safety requirements. Operating 190 pump stations without a dry weather overflow in more than six years is proof of the commitment of his team and the quality of the systems that has been put in place.

Grahame's prize includes up to \$1500 towards professional development which could be used for opportunities such as attendance at conferences, *qldwater* training or for funding expenses for exchange opportunities at neighbouring councils. To top his night off, Grahame also received the AWA Leon Henry Operator of the Year award!

Images from left: Geoff Johnson; Grahame Dunstan; Grahame with Matt Dawson, AWA Qld President



How to win a taste test

By the end of 2015, about 4,000 samples of water will have been tasted from over 140 water supply schemes in a total of 32 *qldwater* tasting events. That's a lot of trips to the toilet!

So why have a taste test, water tastes like water.

Most often heard quote #1

"You should do this with recycled water/ wastewater" or "it's a bit nutty."

Queensland has over 350 public water supply "schemes" spread across the state. We are both blessed and cursed with diversity in water quality with some Great Artesian Basin source waters requiring little or no treatment to meet ADWG standards, while others from highly impacted catchments need a lot of work.

The idea for a taste test came from a casual conversation with some well-travelled *qldwater* members around the worst water they had ever tasted. What followed was a bit of googling followed by a trial in 2011 in Western Queensland which fuelled parochial and competitive fires. We had lots of media interest at the novelty, and believe it has positively influenced perceptions of Queensland's urban water industry.

In 2012, Orica (now Ixom) came on board to sponsor a State event and in 2015, the idea has been picked up by WIOA which is now running events in NSW, Victoria, SA, and Tasmania and of course the Water of Origin between NSW and Qld supplies.

While it is impossible to get complete state-wide coverage each year simply because of the difficulty of getting samples to some of the events, some Councils go to great lengths to get the water delivered. In a typical year we will get over 30 samples or entries from half the total number of *qldwater* members.

We started with tasting panels, but got sick of the format after a couple of years when no new jokes emerged, so a 2015 taste test typically looks like this:

- Samples arriving in the morning
- Representatives from each service provider describing the source water and treatment process in glowing terms along with some appropriate sledging prior to the tasting

- Tasting and scoring of the water samples over lunch and the winner announced at afternoon tea.

In 2015 we also added a water guru competition. It evolved from a "best palate" competition where delegates had to match the treatment description to the corresponding water sample, with a rapid "taste off" in the event of a tie. A lot of fun at the time, but as providers have become sophisticated in providing representative samples the matching seems to have become significantly more difficult and we wanted as many people as possible to be able to participate in a competition with a chance of actually winning. The competition now is a general water quiz with some pretty challenging questions to test the knowledge of delegates at the event. We spread the individual questions throughout the day and tally it up in time for afternoon tea.

So How Do You Win A Taste Test

Most often heard quote # 2

"I'm not tasting this until there's some scotch in it."

So your water meets the ADWG but still has fundamental taste problems. What do you do? Our early theories around what created taste preferences suggested that childhood influences were a big factor – fond memories of drinking from a hose, or rainwater tank. While there may be an element of truth in this, it's not something you can easily address when you have a large group of potential tasters to deal with, so here are a few things to try.

1. If you are a council like Richmond Shire, you could invest in new best-practice treatment processes to develop a treatment solution to deal with sulphide, iron and manganese. Richmond's customer focus is clear – the solution helps council promote its growing tourism industry and address long-standing ratepayer concerns and we hope their win helps with their customer engagement.
2. You could keep it cheap and simple and let the water stand for 24 hours. This is proven to remove some, if not all odour from disinfection chemicals, and sulphites where they are an issue. Being as diplomatic as possible – we can recall a

number of samples from GAB schemes that betrayed a hint of their source but didn't taste a lot like our memory of the water straight out of the tap...

3. Store it refrigerated in a thoroughly cleaned glass container but make sure it is at room temperature for tasting. This is from experts and we can guarantee there will be arguments. We have heard every theory on how best to transport samples, and recall one good natured accusation of us tampering with a sample when it had clearly been tainted by a plastic container.
4. If you are an unnamed but endearingly parochial Council in the Central West you suggest most strongly to *qldwater* that you hold an event in the major town for a week but only conduct the taste test at the end so people "have time to get used to the water."

Then of course there is the more recent phenomenon of event stacking.

Event stacking

Alternative waters have been trialled at various times just to see how they would go against the best from the tap. In one test, a distilled water sample won a regional final by a clear margin. In another it performed miserably. Every time bottled water has been included in a test, it has scored roughly in the middle of the pack. People will pay big money for this stuff which is clearly wasted. So what is the most significant factor influencing taste?

After a couple of years running with the taste tests where conference delegates did the testing, we started observing a trend. We had a good look at the results from six regional events in 2014. The hosts won the taste test in two of the six locations, however where the winners had provided a relatively high number of delegates to the conference, the number

Most often heard quote # 3

a description of the source water and treatment process which would rival any bottled water advertisement - variations of "The water flows through pristine rainforest catchments where it is captured and treated at our plant with little more than love and..."

increased to a clear three of six, and arguably four of six. Four regional tests into 2015 and the results are very similar. People seem to like, or at least vote for, what they are most familiar with.

Conversely, the method used at big events like the taste grand finals each year and the WIOA Water of Origin event is unlikely to demonstrate this bias. At the end of the day we could have over 100 tasters with rarely more than a few who are from the water's "home turf." Of course, if you believe our rhetoric to the conference delegates before the first origin event at WIOA Gold Coast, there is another possibility. You have to imagine the "Roy and HG" origin announcer – "it is your duty to not necessarily pick what you think tastes the best, but what tastes like Queensland."

In short, we can't claim a robust scientific method but believe there is enough anecdotal evidence to suggest sending as many people as you can to the event (especially **qldwater** regional events) is the most crucial success factor.



Conclusion

The most successful schemes in the history of the taste test include:

- Richmond – regional, state and origin wins
- Bundaberg (Lover's Walk) – two regional and one origin win
- Rockhampton (Glenmore) – two regional finals and two state-wide runners up

They differ significantly in source water quality and treatment processes and arguably reflect extremes. While the Bundaberg scheme is blessed with high quality source water which requires a simple and unique process, Rockhampton must be carefully treated due to variable seasonal source water quality. As detailed above, Richmond's Great Artesian Basin source water has had major issues with both aesthetics and odour.

We can't be sure whether the competition has driven any entrants to try to improve the taste of their water, but it is clear that many have gained professional pride and positive customer reactions from a strong result. We haven't precisely mapped out the future of the competition but as you can see, are prepared to give different ideas a go. Drop us a line if you have a good one.

Having tasted all except a few of the samples across the five years (and picking up those we've missed through other trips as part of the job), at the end of the day, there seem to be a lot of subtle factors influencing taste. Many champions have been beaten thanks to minor changes in treatment or seasonal source issues, and probably thanks to a few of the strategies above.

However, when it comes to the crunch and you have 100 people at a major conference deciding on six of the best samples in the state, regrettably there is little you can do to beat the best...

Left and below - Taste test finals at the IPWEAQ Conference in 2014.



First Drinking Water Treatment Operators Certified Under National Scheme

Two staff from Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council and four staff from Toowoomba Regional Council became the first “Certified Operators” in Queensland at a presentation at the Water Industry Operators Association of Australia Queensland Conference in Toowoomba on 17 June 2015.

Peter Kirchmann, ESO Water and Sewerage for Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council, believes the recognition and awarding of national water certification is proof that water providers, health departments and operators see the great benefits a national certification scheme brings.

According to Peter, a centralised database of approved and current accredited operators will ensure that only relevantly qualified persons are operating plants and distribution using current best practice principles – a win for both public and environmental health plus lower operational costs.

“As water operators have the responsibility to provide clean, safe and aesthetically pleasing water to communities, it’s easy to see how public health could be detrimentally affected by use of inexperienced or none accredited persons,” Peter said.

“Given that the product can be distributed to thousands of unsuspecting customers, it has always seemed odd to me that water (and sewer) operators have not been subjected to trade certification.”

Peter congratulated WIOA and **qldwater** for developing and introducing the scheme in Queensland in conjunction with DEWS.

While Operator Certification has been in place for some time in Victoria, this presentation was an Australian first with staff recognised

against the National Certification Framework for Operators Within Drinking Water Treatment Systems.

While drinking water treatment personnel in Queensland are typically trained to a high standard, this Certification program takes a few extra steps to ensure that the training they receive directly matches their on-the-job requirements and they get ongoing access to professional development. It’s specifically about recognition of the significant skills of these people, building career paths and reinforcing the crucial role they play in delivering safe drinking water to Queensland communities.

While certification is currently taken up on a voluntary basis, we ultimately aim to see it adopted as a regulated requirement to ensure that it is supported by appropriate investment from both employers and government. Water service providers face significant challenges with declining resources, and we believe that this is the single most cost-effective investment that can be made in our industry to support strong public health outcomes.

Below: Peter Kirchmann and Ray Sycamore from Wujal Wujal.

Bottom: George Wall (WIOA), Dave Cameron, Toni Stiles (DEWS) with Toowoomba team including Alan Kleinschmidt (Water Skills Partnership Chair).



Spotlight on Networks/Reticulation staff

qldwater, in collaboration with Logan City Council and City of Gold Coast, presented a short session focussed on networks employees at the Queensland WIOA Exhibition and Conference held in Toowoomba on 18 June. The session featured a Water Industry Worker Program (WIW) panel session and technical networks presentation.

For the panel session, the results of an evaluation of the WIW program undertaken last year were presented along with presentations from Kent Weeden from City of Gold Coast and Brad Milful from Logan City Council, who have both been strong supporters and champions of the program since it began in 2009. Their enthusiasm and ongoing commitment to recognition and training for networks workers is a key factor for the success of the program at both Councils.

A number of workshops focussed on water quality and maintenance of networks have also been run across Queensland this month. Workshops were held in Yeppoon, Brisbane City, Beenleigh and the Gold Coast with over 150 attendees in total.

These workshops, delivered by the Water Industry Operators Association, have been run many times in Queensland and always receive positive feedback. The workshops focus on highlighting the important role that networks operations staff have in maintaining safe drinking water supplies to the community.

Access to quality accredited and non-accredited training is important to recognise the significant role that networks operations staff play in the water industry. The **qldwater** Workforce Composition Snapshot Reports have consistently demonstrated that networks employees make up a substantial component of the water industry workforce and their role in maintaining quality services cannot be overlooked.

If you are interested in hosting a Water Quality and Distribution System Management Workshop in your region or finding out more about the Water Industry Worker program please contact Michelle Hill at mhill@qldwater.com.au.



Sewage Treatment Plant Operator Certification Framework released

The final Sewage/wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification Framework incorporating industry feedback was formally endorsed by the Water Skills Partnership Industry Leaders Group (ILG) on 27 May 2015. The final Framework is available on the **qldwater** website at www.qldwater.com.au/Skills_water_operator_programs

Development of the Framework began in April 2014 when the ILG identified the investigation of options for a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) Operator certification framework as a priority activity. A discussion document outlining the basic principles of the framework was released for broad industry comment in February 2015. The discussion document represented the result of industry meetings to set parameters for a framework, critically consider how to classify the operation of treatment systems (both complexity and risk) and map job requirements to available training and education.

The STP Operator certification framework seeks to set minimum standards for training, education and professional development for various industry roles with a view to improving consistency, portability of skills, access to professional development and career paths for these critical staff. It is also designed to assist employers to manage risks around their environmental duty with greater confidence.

The final Framework is presented as an industry-developed standard and discussions with the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection for recognition are ongoing. It has been developed to be as simple as possible - with the clear expectation that it will be adopted on a voluntary basis.

The Water Industry Operators Association (WIOA) has stated that it is willing to act as the certifying body for the Framework, as it currently fills this role for the National Certification Framework for Operators of Drinking Water Systems in Queensland.

Organisations interested in leading the industry and pursuing the option of formally certifying their operators against the Framework can contact George Wall from WIOA (info@wioa.org.au) for further information.

A broader implementation plan for the Framework has been approved by the ILG and includes:

- Establishing a touchstone/ reference group to review materials.
- Development of a simple business case looking at costs/ benefits for employers in adopting the framework.
- Consideration of a pilot program seeking volunteers through **qldwater** and Water Skills Partnership members.

Whilst the National Water Training Package that underpins many of the training requirements contained in the Framework is currently under review, the overall framework structure is not expected to change as a result of any changes.

Once the new package is released (this is not expected to be until 2016) the Framework will be reviewed to align with any changes.

SWIM stays abreast of industry changes

This year has seen major changes in the SWIM system in relation to both the indicators and the data upload methodology. We have now moved to a database system of data input and upload (called *SWIMLocal*) that will help prevent many of the common issues we previously experienced while using Excel and have greatly streamlined the management of indicators and data submission.

The other big change has been the introduction of the Queensland Government's Key Performance Indicator (KPI) framework. This framework requires the mandatory submission of data on key indicators (as per the Official Notices you would have received from the Water Supply Regulator (DEWS)) under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act*.

Under the new KPI framework the Water Supply Regulator will be producing a public comparative report using the 2014/15 data. At

present *qldwater* is unsure of what will be in the report or how it will compare service providers. We will keep you informed of any developments.

The 2014/15 SWIM annual data reporting period has started with BoM data due in by 31 August. All other data (such as the KPIs, NPR and ABS) are due by 1 October. If you are having any trouble installing the new software or completing your SWIM annual data please contact David Scheltinga at dscheltinga@qldwater.com.au.

SWIM training for this year has been completed with sessions held at 14 locations around the State, with over 125 people from 50 members attending. If you couldn't attend the training and wish to find out more information about the SWIM system (software and indicators) please contact David Scheltinga.

Get your water on tap!

In a bid to fight the growing issue of plastic pollution, not-for-profit organisation Healthy Waterways has released the trial of a revolutionary new initiative, Water on Tap® - the first vending machine in Australia to dispense both reusable water bottles and free chilled water.

Water on Tap® is an innovation-patented water vending machine empowering the community to choose to reuse by dispensing reusable water bottles and free chilled water. Sparkling water is also available for \$2 and the machine has a digital display for community service announcements and advertisements. All net profits are donated to help support the Healthy Waterways Clean Up Program.

Machines are currently being trialled at Redcliffe Jetty, Roma Street Parkland and Griffith University's Gold Coast Campus. Healthy Waterways hopes to harness support from the trial for a full-scale roll-out of the initiative in 2016.

Healthy Waterways CEO, Ms Julie McLellan said Water on Tap® empowers the community to choose to reuse and reduce waste.

"We understand that convenience plays a big role here- remembering to take a reusable bottle with you and then finding somewhere to refill it are barriers we are aiming to overcome with Water on Tap®."

"For the last 8 years, our Clean Up Program has recorded plastic bottles as the number one litter item they collect from our waterways. Plastic pollution is not only unsightly, it causes

serious damage to our ecosystem, killing marine animals and even entering the food chain," Ms McLellan said.

To further support the use of reusable water bottles, Healthy Waterways has developed a mobile website waterontap.org. The site locates the nearest drinking water fountain to you, so you can easily refill your reusable water bottle while you're out and about. As Water on Tap® vending machines are installed, they will also be added to the app.

When *qldwater* first met with the team from Healthy Waterways three years ago to talk about possible collaboration between our organisations, it was clear that we were on the same page even though we were viewing it from different angles.

The aim of our *qldwater on tap* campaign was simple – to promote the fact that we have excellent quality drinking water here in Australia that negates the need for people to buy expensive bottled water. For Healthy Waterways, who have been tracking the environmental health of our waterways for many years, the dramatic increase in single-use plastic bottles collected through their Clean Up Program and on community cleanup days and the impact this has on environmental health was of great concern.

We are pleased that Healthy Waterways, through the breadth of their connections, are successfully implementing the trial phase of their Water on Tap® initiative.



Healthy Waterways encourages interest and involvement from *qldwater* members via a form on their website at www.healthywaterways.org/waterontap

The concepts around the *qldwater on tap* campaign have inspired more tap campaigns and in future editions we will showcase QUU's Turn To Tap and Unitywater's Get Back to Tap for Turtles campaigns.

The *qldwater on tap* campaign materials are still available for easy download from Dropbox, so why not start your own tap campaign today!

There are now over 20 Queensland and one NSW service providers using the full licenced version of the SWIMLocal software. The software allows WSPs to manage their own data in a database that synchronises with the SWIM system and thus provides many benefits such as off-site data back-up, direct 'click of a button' SWIM annual reporting, improved access to all data for all your staff and data with a point of truth.

SWIMLocal has a full audit trail and currently consists of four modules:

- Admin – to create sites and indicators;
- Operations – to enter 'daily' data;
- Annual – to enter 'annual' data; and
- Reporting – to report on data.

A Task module is also available (individually or as part of the full package) which allows users to set up scheduled tasks which result in email/SMS alerts if not completed on time. Development of a tablet (iPad/Android/windows) data entry module has begun and should be complete within the next month or two. If you are interested in trialling SWIMLocal or the new Task Module please contact David Scheltinga.

Queensland's fourth water and sewerage benchmarking report has been completed using 2013/14 data and is available from the **qldwater** website at <http://www.qldwater.com.au/reporting>.

Operator training in focus for Wide Bay Burnett ROC

Operators in QWRAP's Wide Bay Burnett ROC (WBBROC) region have fully endorsed the first water operator continued professional development placement trial which coincided with a two-day coagulation, flocculation and jar testing training course presented by Peter Mosse Phd in Gympie in May 2015.

According to Justin Vicary, Water and Waste Water Operator at North Burnett Regional Council, the jar testing training with Peter Mosse was one of the best courses he had ever attended.

"The knowledge of Peter in the field is vast – the man knows his stuff – and the knowledge I took away will help me in my future career," Justin said.

As part of the pilot, Justin also had the opportunity to complete a two day placement with Gympie Regional Council to learn more about Gympie's treatment plants, develop linkages and look for opportunities to apply the knowledge at his Councils plants.

The placement involved visits to three smaller Valley water treatment plants including site inductions, operational checks and tests, jar testing for dose rates and assisting the operator with daily duties and operations. The second day involved a visit to the Jones Hill Water Treatment Plant which provides the town water for Gympie.



According to Justin, the operator placement was a great learning tool and an opportunity to soak in some new skills from operators at both smaller and larger plants than their own.

"I had a very good two days with the boys in Gympie learning new stuff and establishing new contacts to use as a networking tool in problem solving that we may face in future, and vice versa for them. "

Gympie WTP Operator Ivan Ward (pictured here with Justin) said it was interesting to hear what water quality problems they have at other plants around the region and the types of treatment technologies they use to get the job done.

"It opens your eyes to the different ways we can get things done," he added, which meant a lot from someone who has been at the plant for over 40 years!

For Gympie Regional Council Manager Treatment and Compliance, Shaun Johnston, there is no better conduit to grow capability than the exchange of ideas amongst peers, especially in such a technical field.

"I think that generally the work that operators do goes largely unseen and therefore under-appreciated. We should do all we can to recognise the value of what they do and that includes providing opportunities for their continued professional development."

Matthew Cook, Water and Wastewater Supervisor at North Burnett Regional Council, agrees that it is imperative for water and wastewater staff to regularly attend programs that support professional development and operator networking.

"The skills learnt through these courses are beneficial to not only the operator but also to their employer as the one goal for the staff and the organisation is to provide safe drinking water at all times. North Burnett Regional Council has found the training programs that have been organised through WIOA and **qldwater** very beneficial and look forward to participating in future events."

Events Calendar

The 2015 events calendar is filled to the brim with networking and training opportunities across the State. We look forward to seeing you at an event near you!

August

- 19 WSAA Regional Forum, Gold Coast
- 20 Gold Coast Conference, technical tour and SEQ taste test
- 21 TRG Meeting, Brisbane

October

- 8 Queensland Water Skills Partnership Industry Leaders Group Meeting, Brisbane
- 9 National Water Industry Skills Taskforce, Brisbane
- 12-15 IPWEAQ State Conference, Mackay
- 19-21 LGAQ State Conference

November

- 4-5 Innovation forum and taste test grand final, Maroochy RSL. Hosted with Unitywater
- 6 TRG Meeting, Brisbane
- 12-13 AWA Q'Water Conference, Brisbane
- 25 *qldwater* Management Committee

RATs and BATTs inspect sewers for Queensland Urban Utilities

Queensland Urban Utilities is harnessing the power of 'sound' to inspect its sewer network in a joint trial with the nation's peak water body, the Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA).

The innovative technology uses sound rather than sight to assess the condition of underground pipes.

Queensland Urban Utilities spokesperson, Michelle Cull (pictured right), said both the SL-RAT and Sewer-BATT were used to inspect 7km of pipeline in Brisbane last month as part of a joint trial with the Water Services Association of Australia.

"This new technology could provide us with another tool to quickly find blockages in our sewer network," she said.

"The SL-RAT and Sewer-BATT assess the condition of a pipe by emitting a signal and recording the acoustic response, effectively 'listening' for any blockages or defects.

"There is no need for the operator to enter the maintenance hole or come into contact with waste water."

"Queensland Urban Utilities is assessing the effectiveness of these technologies which have the potential to provide significant savings by streamlining the use of existing jet cleaning and CCTV technologies."

Executive Director for the Water Services Association of Australia, Adam Lovell, said results are expected soon.

"The trial is expected to finish at the end of June with the final report to be completed by the end of July 2015."

Four other water utilities are also participating in the trial.

We look forward to hearing more about this innovative technology at the *qldwater* Innovation Forum on 5 November 2015.



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qld water

"The Queensland Water Directorate (*qldwater*) is the central advisory and advocacy body within Queensland's urban water industry and represents members from Local Government and other water service providers across Queensland."