

## There's no accounting for taste... and boy have we been testing the taste buds lately!

Here's the lowdown on all the taste test action of the last few months, and a heads up for what's to come.



### Livingstone Lager

No longer content with mere bragging rights, we offered the 2017 winner of the Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test a few cases of craft beer made from their winning water. Because we all know it takes good water to make a good brew!

And so, with the help of Michael Dalton, Water Quality Officer at Livingstone Regional Council, 1,000 L of water from the Woodbury Water Treatment Plant was despatched to Bacchus Brewing in Capalaba via TNT on Monday 19 March 2018, destined to become Livingstone Lager- with a Tropical Twist of Pineapple.

We look forward to a taste test with a bit more bite when this very limited edition brew is released, so keep an eye out at our events and you may get lucky.



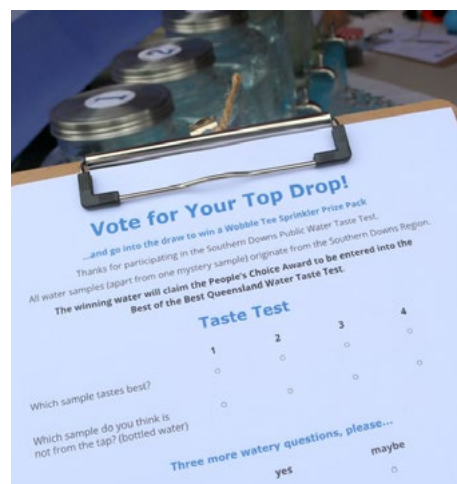
### Toowoomba Goes Global

After winning the Australia wide Best of the Best Water Taste Test, water from Toowoomba Regional Council's Mt Kynoch Scheme was entered into the International Water Taste Test held in the USA on 24 February.

The municipal tap water category was a battle of champions with water from Clearbrook, British Columbia, Canada being declared the winner.

The Berkeley Springs International Taste Test is the longest running and largest water tasting in the world and we again congratulate Toowoomba Regional Council for making it to the final. The next International Competition is being held on 23 February 2019 and we hope to see another Queensland entry taking part.

[Read the full news story](#) as featured in the Toowoomba Chronicle.



### Southern Downs Top Drop

Over the month of March we hosted two community water taste tests in the Southern Downs region to help Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) select their top drop to enter into the regional finals of the Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test to be held in Goondiwindi on 18 July.

More than 260 individuals participated in the taste tests at the Apple and Grape Harvest Festival in Stanthorpe and the Warwick Show.

Participants put their taste buds to the test, selecting a winner from five samples- four from the four different water treatment plants in the SDRC area and one mystery sample of bottled water.

We asked the tasters which sample they liked best, and which sample they believed to be bottled water.

(...continued Page 3)

## CEO Report

Our Technical Reference Group is *qldwater's* primary committee for promoting project ideas and reviewing our progress and includes representatives from a large number of member councils, other utilities, AWA and LGAQ.

"TRG" has become ingrained in our culture but the "Technical" term is perhaps less appropriate these days than when first conceived. The group is predominantly comprised of senior water and sewerage services managers, attempting to positively influence legislation and policy and champion activities which can't be achieved without collaboration.

On 1 March the group met to consider future industry governance (outside SEQ)- what the most appropriate business models might be to achieve sustainable water and sewerage services for Queensland customers into the future. This topic has long been a source of debate, with a range of national reviews (including the Productivity Commission and Infrastructure Australia) suggesting that something needs to change.

The same issue was considered in late August 2017 by a range of industry experts, local government elected representatives and other government representatives as part of the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program strategic activities.

There is and likely never will be agreement on a specific model for a range of reasons; the Queensland industry's incredible diversity being core. However, participants noted a shift in views over the life of QWRAP, with significantly more clustering of preferences around larger, regional-based council structures than existed when the program commenced (see graph below).

TRG discussed at length the general absence of state-supported urban water and sewerage strategy since the demise of WaterQ and steps *qldwater* should be

considering to help address this void. To this end, an approach was made to the LGAQ Water and Sewerage Advisory Group seeking support for a joint approach to advocacy, promoting a set of "Principles" initially developed from the August QWRAP workshop and supported by TRG. This proposal was agreed.

### So what are these magic Principles?

While we all hold personal views on how the industry should be structured in future, the Principles represent a range of concepts that ought to apply to all governance models. These principles should focus current activities so that other opportunities emerge:

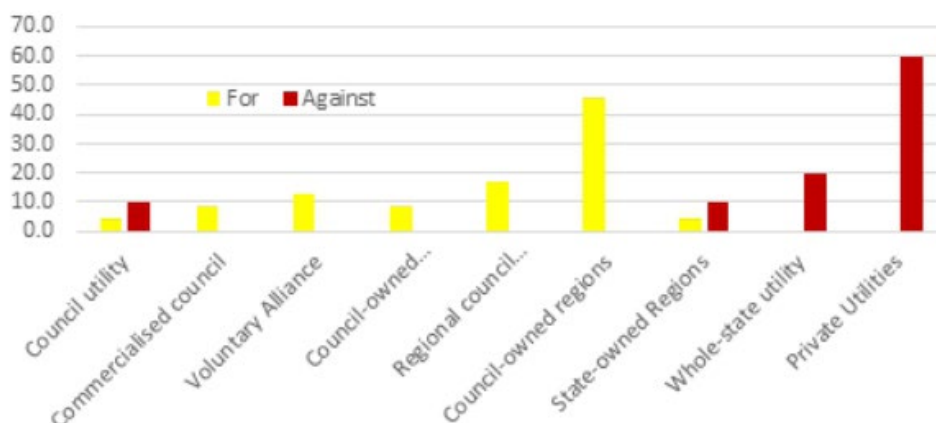
#### Pricing

- Full costing, accountability and transparency about what services really cost to deliver. This does not necessarily result in 'user pays' per se (see CSOs below).
- Avoid monopoly over-pricing. Private monopolies must be strictly regulated but public services delivered by local government already have a high degree of public scrutiny. However, without transparency, this does not automatically mean sustainable pricing practices, regulation and incentives may be necessary.
- Appropriate capital investment. Transparent, fit for purpose, with grant programs structured to support this goal.

#### Sustainability

- Cross subsidisation and CSOs. Transparency and recognition that all tiers of government share responsibility for appropriate services, particularly for small towns.

% TRG votes for different governance models



- Affordability of changing standards. Regulators must coordinate efforts to ensure that all public outcomes (e.g. health, environment and sustainability) are balanced.
- Levels of Service- allowing for different communities' capacity to pay and risk appetite.

### Efficiency

- Local governments should consider operating models that seek to continually improve efficiency and affordability for the benefit of their communities.

### Community and Customers

- Recognition of the specific needs of communities and role of council as an employer and community focus as well as local economic impacts of any change.

- Develop a pathway to deliver at least minimum levels of service and seek to continuously improve and respond to emerging needs and disruptors.

While none of these concepts are “rocket surgery,” the strong support for further conversation from a diverse range of stakeholders suggests that it is time to start talking again about opportunities for positive change.

At the time of writing there have been significant changes in state government and roles and responsibilities are still stabilising. The future of the QWRAP grant was still uncertain and our capacity to advocate in this space is unknown.

This work will continue (most recently being raised at LGAQ’s Water and Sewerage Advisory Group) and we welcome feedback from members on their views.

Till next time,

Dave Cameron

## Taste Test continues...



Water from the Killarney drinking water scheme was the clear winner. Killarney’s winning water is gravity fed from the Spring Creek Weir to the Killarney Water Treatment Plant and an 80 ML off-stream storage dam can be used as a back-up when it’s not possible to use the Creek due to floods or high rain events.

It’s interesting to note that less than 25% of people could pick the bottled water sample from the line up.

The taste test was a great conversation starter to get people thinking about the importance of water in our communities, and we were fortunate to hear many different viewpoints from the Southern Downs community. The children especially liked to tell us about the different ways they manage to save water at their homes.



Thanks to Cr Rod Kelly (pictured with Des Galton) who helped draw the winner of the Wobble-Tee Sprinkler Competition.

### Get your samples ready!

**Regional taste test** events will be held in:

- Cloncurry (18 May),
- Goondiwindi (18 July) and
- Bundaberg (9 August).

The **State Finals** will take place at our Annual Forum on the Gold Coast on 6 September.

The **Water of Origin** event will again be hosted by WIOA at their Queensland Conference in Logan on 7 June, and this year the **National Taste Test** will take place in Toowoomba on 18 October.

## Heather is leaving :(

I am sure almost everyone knows Heather Gold and will share our sadness in her decision to leave **qldwater** in May. Everyone will be equally happy for Heather who is acting on her long-term intention to spend part of her year with her partner in Germany and part together in Brisbane.

Within the office, we will miss Heather's never-faltering friendly smile, sense of humour and extensive repertoire of stories about the famous people she has bumped into and knowledge of which grand conspiracy theories are most likely to be true (e.g. the high percentage of cockroach in all chocolate). She always has her finger on the pulse and a knack for passing on information with succinct and often wry observations – a difficult task for someone who never has a mean thing to say and is openly friendly with everyone.

Heather will be missed more broadly as there would not be anyone among our members who has not heard her friendly voice on the phone or in one of our training videos. In fact, we received more praise for Heather's recordings than for many of our other products and a lot of this came down to Heather's accent and dulcet tones.

Heather is the longest acting member of **qldwater** staff and she has been involved in every one of our initiatives cheerfully organising, planning and making sure nothing goes wrong. There is no emergency that she has not been able to help out with and no member request too small for her to provide advice, information and assistance.

In particular her skills in managing our eFlashes, water connections tour and other events as well as being a one-stop-shop for member queries and documents will be sorely missed.

We wish Heather well and enviously imagine her living the high life across two continents sipping German wine and enjoying their chocolate (which is evidently famously absent of cockroach). We hope things will keep running in her absence and that we do not have to send too many pleas to her villa to bail us out.

We will be seeking to fill her position asap but no one will ever replace Heather.

Good luck on your travels and please be sure to stay in touch particularly when you are back in town.



## Zoho Connect

We would like to invite our members to our new online forum platform: Zoho Connect.

Our hope is for Zoho Connect to provide a platform to better manage online discussions and facilitate exchange of documents among members, based on similar interests and experiences. As such, we have started to establish various interest groups including SWEAP, QWRAP regions, SWIM, SWIMLocal and the TRG Platinum Group, to name a few.

We selected Zoho for its simplicity of use. We understand that not many users would log into a website to participate in a discussion – Zoho allows groups to have discussions via email with those conversations then updated to the site so that others within a nominated group can view them.

Thanks to Shaun Johnston, Terry Fagg, Mark Vis and Anna Scott for helping with the initial trial.

Feedback and suggestions are invited. If you would like to join the forum, follow the instructions from <http://www.qldwater.com.au/forums>

## Spotlight On: Round Mountain

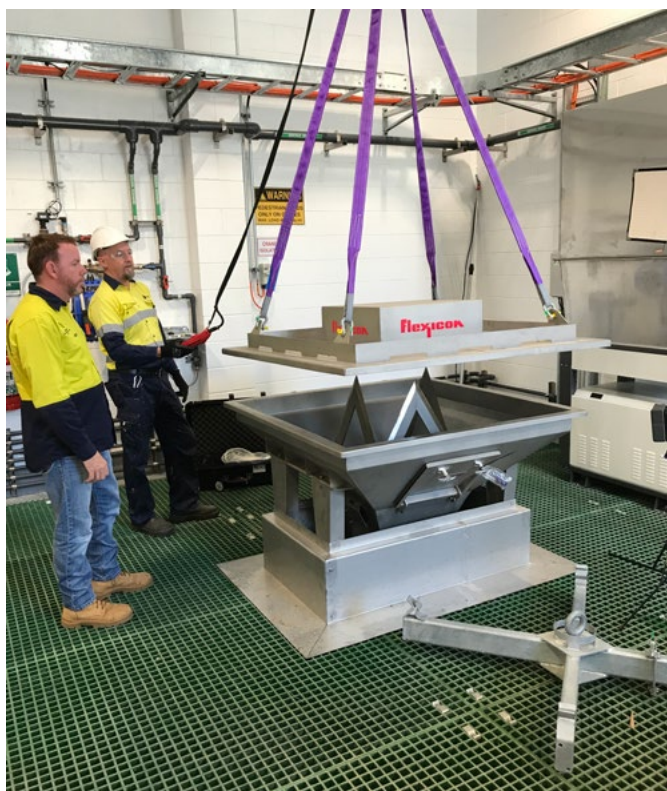
A project by Logan City Council is raising hope for small regional service providers with unchlorinated supplies.

Chris Pipe-Martin, Water Product Quality Program Leader at Logan City Council said the Round Mountain reservoir will ultimately service around 200,000 people.

Powered by 323 solar panels, a chlorinator makes sodium hypo brine from salt during the day when the panels are working, and the battery stores just enough to keep dosing at night.

While this particular solution is clearly large in scale, the combination of technologies is now economically viable and likely to continue to become more cost effective for use in locations where road and power access are a challenge.

We will be showcasing the project during regional events in 2018 as an innovative example of what might be possible for current remote unchlorinated supplies.



## Community Engagement in Action

On Monday, 30 April we'll be hosting a workshop with Southern Downs Regional Council's technical, media and communications staff as well as local Councillors to develop community engagement strategies as part of a water efficiency plan.

The aim is to close the gap between different departments within Council and provide a basis for consistent, ongoing response to the drought-flood cycle distinctive of some Queensland communities. An informed community that understands the local issues can be more supportive and provide input for more informed decisions.

We will prepare a report based on the outcomes of the workshop to help other regional Councils build effective community engagement strategies into their management plans.

## Skills Update

As we farewell one staff member, we welcome another. Carlie Sargent formally commenced as Project Coordinator, Skills on 26 February. While Carlie is new to the **qldwater** team, we have been working closely with her over the years in her previous role with IPWEAQ.

### Water Skills Partnership Forum

**qldwater** was pleased to host the first Queensland Water Industry Skills Forum on Wednesday 28 February 2018. With 54 participants from 19 organisations including 40 representatives from Water Skills Partnership Members, the forum included presentations from industry experts about critical workforce and skills issues and opportunities for participants to discuss possible solutions.

Recruitment and retention of staff along with an ageing workforce were identified as the most critical issues for the industry. Participants discussed options for secondment, worker exchanges and traineeships to fill skills gaps and the Water Skills Partnership Group will consider how best to progress those. The next Workforce Composition Snapshot report (due end 2018) will aim to include additional employee indicators in an effort to better understand the challenges.

Certification is still a high priority and work is continuing on development of a Networks Certification Framework, with dams and catchments to be potentially considered at a later stage. Participants identified that it can be difficult to demonstrate the value of ongoing training for operators and are keen to hear more about how best to measure and communicate return on training investment.

### Operator Certification

Congratulations to the seven Operators from Redland City Council, City of Gold Coast and Whitsunday Regional Council who received their Operator Certification at the Skills Forum. The group, who fulfilled the requirements to become Certified Operators under the national Drinking Water or Wastewater/ Recycled Water Treatment Frameworks, received their certificates from the Water Industry Operators Association of Australia (WIOA) Managing Director, George Wall.

Typically participants seeking Certification will hold a Certificate III in Water Operations. Certification maps the existing units of competency held by individual operators to the processes required at the treatment plants for which they are responsible.

So Certification creates an opportunity to pick up necessary process units above the 11 in a standard qualification, as well as a chance to “modernise” the qualification to include other new units which may have been introduced to the training package since training was first undertaken.

It is designed to provide internal and community recognition and build career paths for operators, formalise an ongoing professional development program, as well as give employers assurance that they are taking a proactive approach to skilling people in



*Congratulations to Steven Halliday, Kane Lees, Darren McGrath (Redland City Council), Arama Rapana (City of Gold Coast), Robert Dougan, Benjamin Nurflus, Wayne Phillips, and John Holmes (Whitsunday Regional Council), pictured here with Dave Cameron (on the left) and George Wall (right).*

these job roles which are critical in protecting public and environmental health.

The Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training provided funding to support this initiative for the necessary “gap training” (which was delivered by SkillsTech). A further round of funding has been made available for operators to complete certification by 31 December 2018, and we are currently working through the nomination and enrolment process.

This will be the last opportunity for this type of funding offset, however we are also working through the national Water Industry Reference Committee and Australian Industry Standards to look at building appropriate “Skill Sets” into the National Water Package to provide a longer term solution.

Put simply, the intention would be to declare a different skill set, or group of units of competency in the national water training package, around each treatment process. Once in the training package, it opens opportunities for state training authorities to align with funding programs, like Higher Level Skills in Queensland.

**qldwater** would like to acknowledge the efforts of all who have participated to date including operators, supervisors and committed employers. The program is growing rapidly with 12 operators now having been certified under the national Wastewater/ Recycled Water Framework (all Queenslanders) and 39 under the Drinking Water Framework.

**qldwater** is also proud of our long-standing partnership with WIOA, and thrilled to see that these initiatives are now getting such strong traction nationally. We anticipate the first dual-certified operators (drinking water and wastewater treatment) by the end of 2018.

## Diploma Water Operations

Revisions to the Diploma of Water Operations is nearing completion thanks to extensive assistance by Julia Krawitz (City of Gold Coast) and Brad Milfull (Logan City Council) as part of the Technical Advisory Committee. The uptake of the Diploma has historically been far more significant in Queensland than elsewhere, and the work on these revisions to make the qualification usable again was initiated by **qldwater** (Michelle Hill).

Unfortunately the audit and release of the package has been delayed due to a decision to incorporate a hydrography/ hydrology stream, currently under development.

Australian Industry Standards has agreed to work with us to try to gear RTOs to be ready to take enrolments as soon as possible after the final release date, estimated to be September 2018.

## Aqua Card

Work is progressing on the Queensland version of the UK Water Hygiene Card, an online training course covering basic water quality awareness for those working around drinking water infrastructure.

While many of our members already provide induction programs to contractors working on their sites, we have received positive feedback and helpful advice for a broader industry approach. The course is supported by the SEQ Joint Operations Committee, **qldwater** Technical Reference Group and Water Skills Partnership. The pilot program should be completed by mid-2018.

Thanks to Cairns Regional Council for supplying some images of real world examples around contamination risks (see examples below). If you have some great shots of people, tools, equipment, etc that you are willing to share, please contact Desiré Galton on 0427 596 478 or email [dgralton@qldwater.com.au](mailto:dgralton@qldwater.com.au).



# Statewide Water Information Management (SWIM)

**The Statewide Water Information Management (SWIM) system continues to evolve as we localise and visualise tools around big data.**

**gldwater** is currently in the process of setting up the SWIMLocal to SWIM automated data transfer system. This will allow those Service Providers with a full SWIMLocal licence to automatically push data from their Operations Tool (i.e. daily data) into their Annual Data Tools (e.g. annual SWIM Key Performance Indicator (DNRME KPI) data).

**Recent analysis from Fraser Coast Regional Council, as a new subscriber to the fully licenced SWIMLocal product, estimated that the system will save 256 days per year (or approximately \$70,000) across various roles for a \$5,000 investment in the SWIMLocal software.**

## Visualisation Tool

Over recent years we have entered into a partnership with Lutra to create a fit-for-purpose platform to help our members make sense of their data. SWIMLocal users are now able to get easy, web-based access to dashboards and graphic displays of their operational data thanks to Lutra's Infrastructure Data platform.

Lutra's understanding of treatment processes and their flexibility in taking advice from operations experts and SWIM users to tailor the layout of dashboards and reports means our members now have access to powerful analytics, automated reporting and visualisation of water quality and treatment plant performance data. **gldwater** is supporting a number of new trial service providers for a period of twelve months. Barcoo, Burdekin and Goondiwindi are currently trialling the system with Gympie and Torres Strait Islands sites under development.

Make sure you drop in to see the joint presentation by David Scheltinga and Lutra's Product Manager, Maseina Koneferenisi at the WIOA Conference in Logan on 6-7 June.

Image: Sample dashboard

## SWIMLocal automated data imports/exports

**gldwater** is currently working towards improved data imports into SWIMLocal including:

- commencing a trial with Queensland Health Laboratories on direct importing of lab results; and
- data exports from SWIMLocal sent to WaTERS (sewerage data reporting) to the Department of Environment and Science.

These processes will save time and money and result in less manual handling of data, thus greatly improving data quality.

## Competition by Comparison

**gldwater** has identified a range of potential new projects which are gradually being scoped and will be introduced for TRG discussion when suitably mature.

The activity identified with the highest priority centres around benchmarking: building tools to support members' business improvement efforts as well as our advocacy agenda to better realise the potential of the





Queensland Government KPI framework.

The seventh **qldwater** annual benchmarking report released two weeks ago has not substantially changed in focus for a number of years. Performance reporting in the Queensland water and sewerage sector has matured significantly over the past decade but has not yet developed effective competition by comparison because of the number and diversity in size and constraints of service providers.

There is currently some talk in government of expanding process benchmarking approaches however many service providers would struggle with the necessary data capture and management.

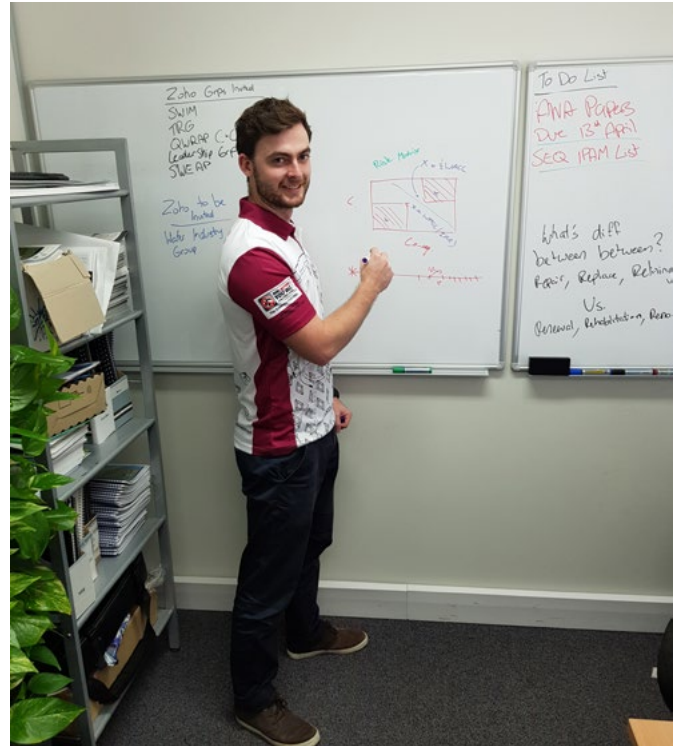
The existing KPI framework is coarse, with most indicators focused on WSP-wide values, limiting the potential of comparisons.

The proposed work would see:

- identification of 'clusters' of reporting entities based on analysis of similar cost drivers;
- selection of priority KPIs to headline benchmarking;
- formal support based on existing mechanisms (benchmarking taskforce, annual summary workshop, Program Help Desk, and centralised document library);
- development of annual 'scorecard' for transparent publication by industry.

In addition, LGAQ has recently sought expressions of interest in its "LG Sherlock" analytics projects with one proposed option being "Drinking Water (treatment, storage and supply)."

**qldwater**, through its Technical Reference Group, will discuss options and propose a planned approach.



## SEQ Code

Ryan Cosgrove (pictured above modelling our brand new shirts) has been responsible for administering the SEQ Code since July 2017 and the group now holds meeting on a quarterly basis.

The meetings include a regular update of the Industry Products and Materials list approved for use in SEQ.

Carl Radford from WSAA presented in December on the future of the WSAA Codes. WSAA has invested in software which allows for web hosting of the Codes and toggles to switch between different modified versions for different regions. Currently users need to refer to both the WSAA Codes and SEQ amendments.

Redland City Council is sponsoring the Code administration for 2018/19 and we are hopeful that **qldwater** will be able to continue to manage the Code.

## D&C Codes

A number of groups are developing regional codes including WBBROC, Cairns, Townsville and Mackay, and we understand that there is the intention to reinvigorate the CTM Code.

# Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program Update

## Infrastructure Cliff Research

The research into the Infrastructure Cliff for in-ground assets continues to be well received by the water industry.

Report one of the research is expected to go live on the QWRAP website in the coming week.

Interest in the research has afforded the opportunity to present findings of the research at various conferences and meetings held by WSAA, IPWEAQ and LGAQ.

Part two of the research is currently underway with a focus on estimating the potential cost of the infrastructure cliff modelling on the trade-off between repair vs. replacement over time.



## QWRAP Review and Future

The recent QWRAP review by Deloitte involved interviews with numerous councils (councillors and managers), QWRAP coordinators and Chairs, Queensland Government staff as well as **qldwater** and LGAQ. The review has not been released but we have had positive responses about the continuation of the program in some form from DNRME and Minister Lynham, as well as the Queensland Premier.

The restructure within DNRME has resulted in David Wiskar being the GM responsible for the Policy team that is in charge of the current QWRAP funding and the review program. David was instrumental in creating QWRAP (in a previous role as Chair of **qldwater**) and will likely play a role in its ongoing development if State funding is successful.

LGQA and **qldwater** have proposed an expansion of QWRAP to extend it from the five current regions to be accessible by all Queensland regions and councils.

The ultimate scope of the program is yet to be determined and is in the hands of those developing the State budget.

## Regional Updates

Updates for the existing regions are on the map on Page 11.

Two emerging regions have also been holding meetings.

### Central Queensland

Investigations continue for a possible MoU between Central Highlands and Woorabinda.

The other CQ Councils are discussing regional cybersecurity, sharing information about environmental regulation issues, follow-up on regional skills shortages and trade waste.

### North Queensland

A regional network of subject-matter experts has been formed and at their recent meeting, the group met with senior representatives from the regulatory areas of DES and DNRME resulting in improved communication and ideas for joint projects.

### Far North Qld Region of Councils

Councils in the FNQRoC have agreed to form two sub-groups overseen by coordinator Lachlan Rankine (FNQROC) to cope with the large scale of the region and are discussing a number of projects including:

- A region-wide information portal ;
- a study of current approaches to Water Security Planning across the region;
- Coordination of workforce planning.

### Cairns-Yarrabah

A bilateral agreement has been formed between the two councils to create projects including a review of Yarrabah infrastructure and agreement on priority issues that can be addressed jointly.

### Whitsunday Isaac Mackay Water Alliance

WIMWA recently bid farewell to chair Linda Roberts and welcomed Nicole Davis (Mackay) who along with coordinator Peter Zemek (Zemek Environmental) is leading work on:

- ISO Readiness;
- focus groups on Asset Management and SCADA development;
- collaboration on infrastructure planning; and
- An investigation of joint chemical procurement opportunities.

### Emerging: North Queensland

### Wide Bay Burrett Urban Water Alliance

Chaired by Jeff Rohdman (Bundaberg Regional Council) with coordination through Steve Brown (WBBROC) the Alliance has taken the lead on a number of projects including:

- developing a Regional Technical Code;
- A regional sewer relining program (following the initial award-winning project);
- planning to improve environmental compliance and communication with regulators;
- alignment of DWQMPs reviews; and
- Development of a draft Regional Water Strategy and engagement program.

### Emerging: Central Queensland

### RAPAD Water and Sewerage Alliance

The RAPAD group, led by Cr Ed Warren (Longreach), Greg Clarke (Barcoo) and the regional coordinator Neil Stiles (George Bourne and Associates) has recently completed a Strategic Implementation Action Plan to complement the strategic directions set out by the RAPAD mayors.

Other projects include:

- further development of the visualisation of KPI performance using the SWIM system;
- a joint sewer relining program;
- initial discussions with the Department of Energy and Science about environmentally relevant upgrades; and
- regional water security planning.

### Downs and Surat Basin Water Group

Chaired by Trevor Seth (Goondiwindi) with John Betts (Betts Advisory) the DASB group was ratified by all Councils as of January 2018. Ongoing projects include:

- review of alternative regional models;
- scoping a common SCADA Framework and Standards;
- water security planning and community engagement; and
- A review of joint chemical procurement.

## 2018 Events Calendar

We have an exciting calendar of events lined up for the year and look forward to seeing you around the traps!

### April

11 **qldwater** Strategic Advisory Committee Meeting

18-20 IPWEAQ NQ Conference, Cairns

### May

4 Water Skills Partnership Meeting

4-12 WIOA NZ Tour

8-10 Ozwater 2018, Brisbane

14-18 Water Connections Week – Mount Isa, Normanton, Gununa, Burketown, Doomadgee, Cloncurry

18 **qldwater** Mini Conference and Best of the Best Water Taste Test, Cloncurry

31 TRG Workshop- SCADA & Control Systems, Cyber-Security

### June

1 TRG Meeting

6- 7 43rd WIOA QLD Water Industry Operations Conference & Exhibition, Logan

7 Water of Origin Taste Test, Logan

14-16 IPWEAQ CQ Branch Conference, Barcaldine

### July

18 **qldwater** Mini Conference and Best of the Best Water Taste Test, Goondiwindi

26-27 AWA NQ Conference, Cairns

### August

9 **qldwater** Mini Conference and Best of the Best Water Taste Test, Bundaberg

### September

5 **qldwater** Annual Forum Technical Tour of Commonwealth Games Infrastructure, Gold Coast

6 **qldwater** Annual Forum Regulator Day & Infrastructure Cliff Workshop, Gold Coast

6 Ixom Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test, Gold Coast

7 TRG Meeting

### October

10-12 IPWEAQ State Conference, Gold Coast

18 National Taste Test, Toowoomba

29-31 LGAQ Annual Conference, Brisbane

### November

7 **qldwater** Strategic Advisory Committee Meeting, Brisbane

### December

7 TRG Meeting, Brisbane



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“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.”