



## High achievers awarded

Congratulations to Jason Vade from the City of Gold Coast and Tyren Cavanagh from Cairns Regional Council who won the 2013 Operator of the Year Civil/ "All Rounder" and Young Operator of the Year Awards respectively. The winners were announced at the Water Industry Operators Association state conference on the Gold Coast on 5 June 2013.

### Operator of the Year Civil/ All Rounder Award

Jason Vade's nomination impressed the judges not only for the sheer number of testaments he received, but also for his impressive track record in customer relations and engagement through his work as a maintenance officer and in various other roles over his almost seven years in the industry.

Jason has demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement including training and support for other staff in work processes while at the same time furthering his own qualifications, completing the **qldwater** Cert II civil operations and maintenance program in record time. He is now well on the way to completing Cert III in Water Operations (Civil).

Jason made a lot of people's lives much more pleasant when he played an important role in the substitution of odour dosing units with activated carbon drums, minimising customer complaints that resulted from hydrogen sulphide releases from gas valves on sewers near residences. His employer is just as pleased with the approximately \$34,000 p.a. business saving resulting from the project. Fitting activated carbon drums on sewer gas valves throughout the network has lowered the number of odour complaints received by council and has enhanced its reputation. The actions also allowed council time to work on finding the source of high hydrogen sulfide without the extra pressure of customer complaints. Jason then implemented a preventative maintenance program for odour control units, helping in the design of new ground breaking odour units, again leading to more cost efficiencies.



Tyren Cavanagh (l) and Jason Vade with **qldwater's** Dave Cameron.

### Young Operator of the Year

Tyren Cavanagh from Cairns Regional Council is a worthy example of someone who demonstrates commitment, initiative and innovation in their work.

During his two and a half years in the industry he has progressed from Assistant Operator to 2IC of three wastewater treatment plants where he has developed and reviewed standard operating procedures and safe work practices, and introduced a number of new spreadsheets and other business improvements.

While education is a key part of our awards submissions – and Tyren completed the Cert III within 12 months – we are also looking for operators that can demonstrate initiative. Tyren fit the bill perfectly.

When Tyren identified that phosphorus results in the final effluent at a treatment plant were well below the licence limits, he initiated a 24 hour discrete sampling programme on the final effluent to review the phosphorus levels which led to a process by which Alum dosing was gradually decreased over several weeks. In developing the programme and results, the hydraulic retention time from point of Alum dose to final effluent sample point had to be considered. The study resulted in a direct saving of Alum usage of approximately \$50,000 p.a. including a reduced maintenance program for the pumping equipment and reduction in lime usage. The procedures have now been incorporated throughout the other Wastewater Treatment Plants.

These awards are a fantastic opportunity to recognise staff in our industry and both Jason and Tyren have demonstrated strong initiative and a commitment to continuous improvement through innovation in their work.

The pair will join the WIOA delegation to New Zealand study tour in 2014 which includes the Water Industry Operations Group annual Conference.



Michelle Hill using clever computer game tactics to lure WIOA attendees to our stall.

## Update from A/CEO

Welcome to Issue 7 of the *qldwater* newsletter.

It is our 10<sup>th</sup> year of operation and in between frequent visits to George Street to do the real work we've been desperately trying to pull our celebratory publication together to publish in time for the events planned later in the year. While it's difficult to write objectively and interestingly about the work we have done, the process is a bit cathartic and a good excuse to organise some things we've been meaning to sort out for a while, including some funky new maps.

We are still on the lookout for good regional stories and photos to include, and have had the sad task of filtering out some fantastic stories that can't be repeated in print. Perhaps over a beer after an event, if you smile sweetly.

There are a lot of people that were responsible for getting the Directorate going in the early days, and many more who claim a key role. The fact that they even want to suggests to me that we're doing something right. Thanks to Desiré for putting in a lot of the hard yards so far, and Sally for pandering to the last few weeks of crazy GIS requests before leaving us to return home to the UK.

Thursday 28 November is the date to mark in your diaries for the *qldwater* anniversary dinner to be held in Brisbane (at Alan Border Field). We will be sending out invitations to all members when Heather is back from leave in a few weeks, with one paid spot each and others available for purchase. We're looking to pick up an entertainment sponsor between now and then. We hope to have some sort of celebration as part of the IPWEAQ state conference in October as well, for those who can't make it.

As a way of saying thank you to members, we're also sponsoring two new awards to coincide with the anniversary celebrations. Each recipient will get a trophy and \$500 towards professional development, but the real reward here is a bit of prestige as we are recognising both **Industry Leadership** and **Industry Contribution**.

Keep an eye out in the e-flashes in the next few weeks for nomination details and award criteria, and please start considering someone you think should be recognised. The nomination process will be quick and easy, give us a name and a few dot points against the criteria and we will contact you if we need more. It will be judged by your peers on our Technical Reference Group, and if there is enthusiasm, we'll find a way of keeping it going in future.

Dave Cameron



## Taste test wins...

The quest continues to find the best tasting tap water in the 2013 Orica Australia Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test, with five of the six regional finals now decided.

### Western Queensland

Diamantina Shire Council's Bedourie Water Scheme took out the Western Queensland regional title in Longreach on 27 June 2013.

Water sourced directly from the Great Artesian Basin and cooled in innovative ponds provides Bedourie residents and the travelling public with a refreshingly natural alternative to spring, rain and river water.

Other entries included Diamantina's Birdsville scheme, Longreach Shire Council's Ilfracombe and Isisford schemes and Barcaldine Regional Council's Aramac scheme.



Above: GBA's Stuart Bourne (right) takes possession of the WQ trophy handed over by Orica's George Lech.

### Far North Queensland

Cook Shire Council's Cooktown scheme has been crowned the Far North Queensland winner from six Councils and a total of nine samples at the FNQ Regional Conference on 15 May 2013.

Cooktown gets its water from the Annan River from where alum, soda ash and polymer are added before going to a sedimentation tank and through sand filters. They inject lime and CO<sub>2</sub> to make the water less corrosive and to correct the PH, then chlorine is added to disinfect the water. Fluoride is the final chemical to be added.

## ...and losses!

### North Queensland

Whitsunday Regional Council's Mt Julian scheme got the honours for the NQ region, stealing the limelight from last year's overall winner – Burdekin Regional Council – and Charters Towers Regional Council, Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Mackay Regional Council, Townsville Regional Council.

Mt Julian gets its water from bore fields on the Proserpine River aquifer, from where it goes through a process of aeration, chlorination, coagulation, flocculation, dual media filtration, final stabilisation and disinfection and is then pumped out to the Cannonvale and Airlie Beach Scheme.



Above: Whitsunday Regional Council accepts the prize for NQ top drop: from left Neil Walker from Trillity, James Stewart (Whitsunday), Myles Fairbairn (Whitsunday), and George Lech (Orica).

### South West Queensland

Goondiwindi Regional Council's Inglewood Scheme was proud to beat Western Downs, Toowoomba and Maranoa Regional Councils in the SWQ contest.

The Inglewood supply is drawn from the Macintyre Brook with water stored in the Coolmunda Dam. The water, that serves water users along the Macintyre Brook and beyond Goondiwindi, is dosed with polymer, then passes through sediment tanks and sand filters before being stored in a chlorinated reservoir with gravity distribution.

Below: Tasting in action at the Toowoomba regional conference.



### South East Queensland

The competition kicked off with the South East Queensland regional title in Gympie on 21 February 2013, where Bundaberg's Lover's Walk Scheme won bragging rights for the top drop in the SEQ region.

### State of Origin

While we're battling it out to find this year's top drop in Queensland, we're sad to report that our first national foray ended almost as disastrously as the State of Origin match itself.

Unfortunately Queensland not only lost Game 1 at the WIOA Queensland Workshop at the Gold Coast on Wednesday 5 June, but we also had to relinquish the first State of Origin Taste Test trophy to NSW.

WIOA delegates conducted a blind test of the samples from last year's taste test winner (Ayr, Burdekin Shire) and this year's best NSW drop (Taree, Mid Coast Water). The result was close, with Queensland going down 42 votes to 35.

Disappointed **qldwater** A/CEO Dave Cameron said that the event had been good fun except for the last bit (and the football).

"The WIOA events are well run with excellent presentations and trade displays and for the last few years it's been a great opportunity to raise the profile of the Directorate and get people behind initiatives like our skilling programs, the taste test and our **qldwater** On Tap campaign."



Unfortunately not all of our ideas go to plan and we were gutted to see the trophy going South – the rematch can't come soon enough.

"Thanks again to Burdekin for providing the sample and the 35 delegates who knew what they were doing," Mr Cameron said.

Above: Gary Mitchell, EO NSW Water Directorate and **qldwater** Acting CEO Dave Cameron battle it out in the State of Origin Taste Test.

## 2013 Water Connections winds through the Outback

We would like to thank all the communities between Mount Isa and Townsville that played host to the 2013 Water Connections Tour between 29 April and 3 May.

The road trip provided representatives from the water industry and state government with a first-hand experience about the issues facing remote regions in the provision of water and sewerage services.

Starting in Mount Isa, the tour wound its way through the Outback visiting Cloncurry, Julia Creek, Richmond, Hughenden, Charters Towers and finishing up in Townsville.

The Water Connections Tour is one of our signature projects which play a crucial part in giving State and Federal government representatives exposure to the challenges of delivering essential services in regional and remote Queensland.

"This is even more important with recent changes in government, with new staff in key roles and a new focus on water in the State's proposed 30 year strategy," **qldwater** CEO Dave Cameron said.

"The water industry continues to experience numerous challenges from natural disasters to changes in water regulation that impact the way water and sewerage are managed, and while regional providers are very committed to quality water management they often find it difficult to access information and additional technical and management expertise," he said.

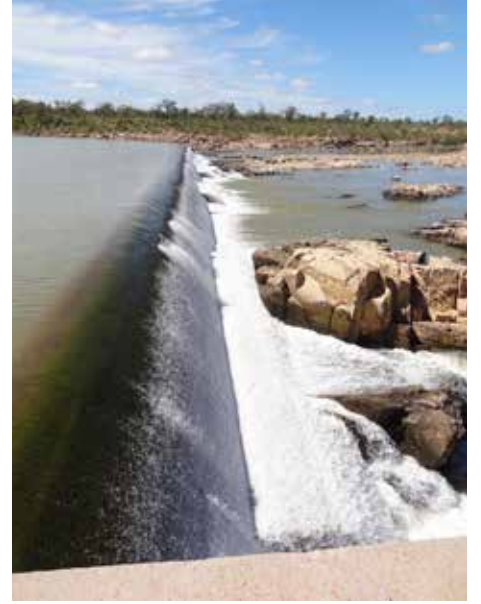
"The tour provides valuable technical information and knowledge exchange as well as a chance to raise issues face to face with government representatives from the Department of Energy and Water Supply and Department of Health. The **qldwater**-led tour also included representatives from the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), and was hosted by councils in each region.

This was the eighth year **qldwater** had coordinated a regional water tour to support Queensland's regional and remote communities. We are very happy that the State continues to participate and that we have been able to secure sponsorship from Dial Before You Dig to support this initiative. This was the third year that DBYD has supported the Tour.



Top: Charters Towers STP; Bottom Left: Cloncurry Water Tower from WTP; Bottom Right: Mt Isa STP





*Charters Towers (above); McKinlay (below)*



*Bottom left: Mt Isa STP and Right: Council Chambers*



## Skills Update

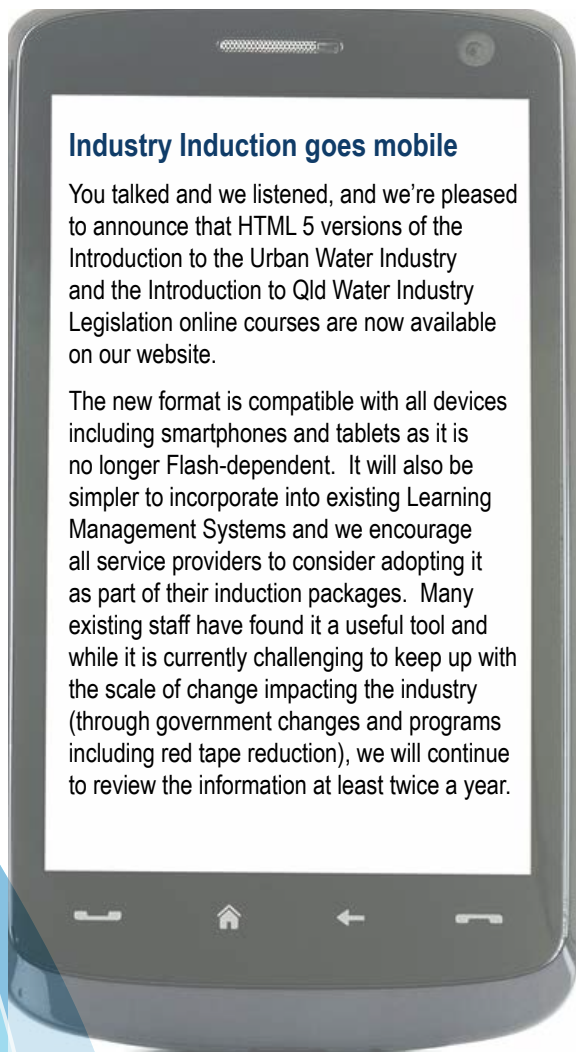
### Skills Queensland Workforce project gets the go-ahead

We are delighted to have secured a grant from Skills Queensland to undertake a project trial focussed on technical assessment, upskilling and mentoring for regional water treatment services.

Starting in and around Longreach, the project will see technical experts provide suggestions to help optimise existing plant and systems, identify skills gaps and deliver training to operators. It is hoped that the work will see the establishment of a network of operators who can provide mutual support to help address the tyranny of distance in Western Queensland.

Following Western Queensland, a second pilot is planned for councils on the outer fringe of SEQ (Burnett, Wide Bay, Toowoomba and so on). A number of these councils have been proactive supporters of our skills work for many years and are enthusiastic volunteers in offering support to their neighbours. **qldwater** plans to develop communication strategies and a continuity plan to ensure the outcomes and learnings can be applied in other regions.

The Drinking Water Operator certification framework is highly relevant to this work and continues to build momentum with strong interest from industry and enthusiasm from state government.



### Queensland Urban Water Industry Workforce Composition Snapshot Report Published

The second edition of the **qldwater** Queensland Water Industry Workforce Composition Snapshot Report is now available on our website and hard copy versions will be posted to all **qldwater** and Water Skills Partnership Members.

The 2010 Snapshot report, published in 2011, was very well received by industry and provided a good basis for negotiating government funding to help address the current and imminent skills shortages facing the industry, as well as provide an information baseline to support our participation in national water skills discussions.

There has been more structural change in the industry and increasing workforce pressures since the last report and the 2012 Report has again helped highlight the areas in which to focus efforts to support our workforce.

This is of critical importance as the Queensland Government's 30 year water strategy is developed.

We plan to publish a Snapshot report potentially every two years to monitor trends, and while we are aware that there are a number of other surveys/reports coordinated by national bodies, we intend to collaborate to streamline the data collection process to ensure efforts are not duplicated. This is the only substantial workforce data collection exercise for Queensland Service Providers, has clear objectives and is simple in structure. We would again like to thank the organisations that participated by providing data and other assistance and welcome feedback to improve the publication in future.

### Water Skills Partnership continues to grow

We have seen a steady increase in membership over the last few years, jumping from 11 members in 2011/12 to 21 members in 2012/13. Since our call for subscribers to the Water Skills Partnership for the 2013/2014 financial year, we have seen a very positive response and would like to welcome the following organisations as new financial subscribers to the partnership:

- South Burnett Regional Council
- Barcardine Regional Council
- Carpentaria Shire Council

- Gympie Regional Council
- Bundaberg Regional Council
- Winton Shire Council
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council

To subscribe to the Queensland Water Skills Partnership, please contact Michelle Hill at [mhill@qldwater.com.au](mailto:mhill@qldwater.com.au). An industry leaders group meeting will be scheduled in the new financial year to prioritise activities.

# SWIM Update

## ABS data now in SWIM

We can now confirm that all ABS "Water and Sewerage Services Annual Survey" indicators will be included in the 2012/13 SWIM data template.

After lengthy discussions with the ABS to try to remove duplication of data requested in its annual water and sewerage services survey that had already been captured via SWIM, the 80-odd indicators previously requested in hard copy will now be added to the SWIM annual data template.

This work also resulted in the ABS reviewing all its current indicators and definitions which should hopefully further reduce these numbers in the future.

The 2012/13 indicator list for the National Performance Report is still to be finalised but we are not expecting changes this year. A major review of indicators is planned for next year.

## Changes to Webforms

SWIM 'webforms' will no longer be available to enter SWIM data for 2012/13. They will be replaced next year with a free 'SWIMLite' system based on the SWIMLocal system. This is part of our ongoing review of SWIM to ensure that we can keep costs of maintaining the system as low as possible (by establishing a single tool and interface), while continually improving usability.

**qldwater** will work directly with each member who has used the forms in the past to make the lodgement process as simple as possible.

## SWIMLocal

We are pleased to welcome McKinlay Shire Council who has recently subscribed to SWIMLocal. Several other newcomers are now trialling and evaluating a test version of the software.

New functionality is continually being developed with the release of the 'SWIM annual' indicators for use in 2013/14 reporting being completed now and expected to be in testing during July.

We will be introducing a new pricing structure for 2013/14 which aims to reward early adopters. Members who sign up this year will receive a discount, hopefully growing each year as membership grows.

## Getting ready for KPIs

As we move away from many existing mandatory planning and reporting requirements into the likely possibility of Key Performance Indicators, **qldwater** has been working closely with DEWS towards making SWIM ready to accept the new mandatory KPIs currently under development.

## Farewell Sally

The **qldwater** team is sad to farewell Sally Walding who is returning to the UK at the end of June.

Sally has been an integral part of the SWIM team and no doubt SWIM members will miss her friendly voice at the end of the line to help sort out data queries and other SWIM-related activities.

Sally joined us towards the end of 2011 and has put a huge effort into the development of new SWIM tools as well as the often-thankless task of error checking and quality control.

Dave Scheltinga will be increasing his hours to try to cover her role for now... we think he's fooling himself.

*Right: Sally with an Aussie friend she noted was "all paws".*



## BoM Water Standards Meetings

The Bureau of Meteorology is currently running a national forum to discuss and formalise 'water' monitoring standards and reporting across the nation.

Dave Scheltinga has been participating in these national BoM Water Standards and NPR meetings on behalf of members.

As part of the forum's work they have recently set up the Australian Hydrographers Association (AHA) Data Technical Reference Group and BoM is inviting forum members to put forward nominations of staff or organisations that may have an interest in any facet of the Data TRG's work. Whilst the Data TRG is being convened by the AHA, participation is not restricted to AHA membership.

The Data TRG is currently developing objectives and scope for the activity, including:

- transfer of site specific knowledge;
- communication of information on the monitoring program;
- standardised transfer of information; and
- assessing a data set's fitness for use.

Activities will include the investigation of:

- describing data fitness for use;
- assessment and reporting of data quality and reliability;
- quantification and reporting of data uncertainty;
- description of monitoring stations and their limitations;
- the original monitoring program purpose when considering data reuse;
- quantify benefits; and
- national site numbering.

Anyone interested in participating in the Data TRG can contact David Scheltinga ([dscheltinga@qldwater.com.au](mailto:dscheltinga@qldwater.com.au)) who can put forward your nomination.

## Events & Training Calendar

### July

- 1 AWA Membranes and Desalination Conference, Brisbane including Water Recycling Workshop
- 11 WSAA forum Townsville
- 12 AWA annual gala dinner, Brisbane

### August

- 1 **qldwater CQ Regional Conference and Taste Test, Rockhampton**
- 11 IPWEA national conference, Darwin (to 15 August)
- 23 **TRG Meeting**
- 25 NZ Study Tour (jointly hosted by **qldwater** and LGAQ) – (back 1 September)
- 29 AWA North Queensland Regional Conference, Townsville
- 29-30 ICEWaRM Adapting to Changing Climate: Impacts on Water Management - Gold Coast

### October

- 8-11 IPWEAQ State Conference, Cairns
- 21-24 LGAQ State Conference, Cairns  
**(Taste Test Grand Final afternoon of 22 August)**

### November

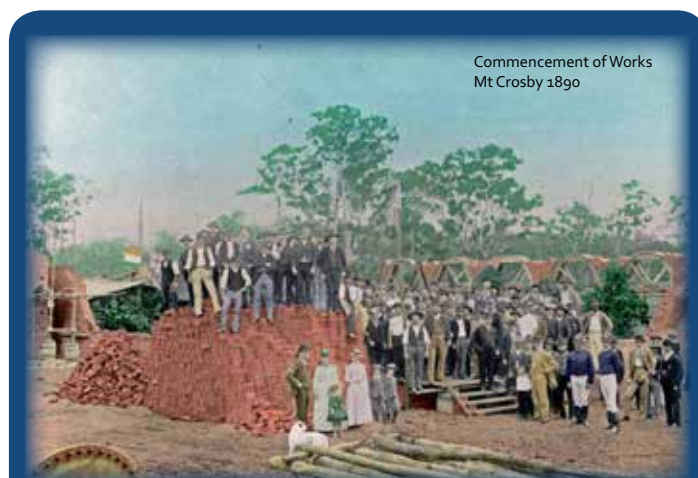
- 6 **qldwater Management Committee meeting**
- 8 AWA QWater13 Conference
- 13-15 ICEWaRM Hydrology and Hydraulics for Non-Engineers: Water Science for Practitioners, Managers and Policy Makers – Gold Coast
- 28 **qldwater 10th anniversary dinner, Brisbane**
- 29 **TRG Meeting**

### 2012 Award Winners Return from New Zealand

2012 **qldwater** award winners, Tammy Beddow from Central Highlands Regional Council (Young Operator of the Year) and Ashley Reidy from Isaac Regional Council (Operator of the Year – Civil), have just returned from the WIOA Operators Tour of NZ.

The tour was the cherry on the cake for the pair, and included attendance at the WIOG NZ conference in Invercargill as well as a number of site tours of water and wastewater treatment plants.

We look forward to hearing more about their experiences which we will share in our next edition.



Commencement of Works  
Mt Crosby 1890

### Can you help?

Our collection of photos for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary publication is starting to grow, but we'd still like some more please! We love this image of the commencement of works at Mt Crosby in 1890 (courtesy from the Mt Crosby Historical Society). Any photos of old infrastructure, water towers, interesting technology and images of flood events in your region is welcome. Please forward them on to Heather Gold at [hgold@qldwater.com.au](mailto:hgold@qldwater.com.au).



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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.”