**Queensland Water Skills e-Flash #37**

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

**(Issue #37 - 21 January 2015)**

1. **Clarification of User Choice Funding Eligibility for Water Operations Qualifications**
2. **Reminder: Industry Partnerships Strategy Expressions of Interest due 13th February**

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**1.       Clarification of User Choice Funding Eligibility for Water Operations Qualifications**

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***qldwater*** has recently fielded several queries in relation to eligibility for User Choice funding for Water Operations qualifications. The queries have arisen largely as a result of recent pilot projects for implementation of the *National Certification Framework for Operators of Drinking Water Systems*. The specific uncertainty relates to whether a person is eligible for User Choice funding if they have already undertaken a Certificate III Water Operations qualification and wish to complete a second qualification in water operations at the same level (i.e. another Certificate III Water Operations).

***qldwater*** has sought further advice from the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) as to the circumstances in which a person would be eligible for the second round of User Choice funding. A summary of the response, and additional eligibility details, is outlined below. [Please note that the current User Choice Policy is undergoing review and a new policy is expected to be implemented on 1 July 2015. As such, the below advice may change when the new policy is implemented].

In summary:

* User Choice funding should apply (provided all other requirements of the Training Contract and User Choice are met) where an individual has already completed a Certificate III Water Operations through fee for service (i.e. not through a Traineeship).
* User Choice funding will not apply where an individual has already completed a Certificate III Water Operations qualification (any version/year) through any User Choice arrangement/Traineeship.

Other eligibility details:

* Participants who have completed other previous qualifications not funded through User Choice should be eligible to receive User Choice funding for a Certificate II or III Water Operations (provided all other requirements of the Training Contract and User Choice are met).
* Participants who have undertaken previous qualifications funded through User Choice may still be eligible to undertake a second User Choice qualification under the current Policy, depending on the qualifications. For further detailed information on individual eligibility contact your local Australian Apprenticeship Centre.

Further information on the User Choice Program is available on the DETE website <http://www.training.qld.gov.au/training-organisations/funded-programs/user-choice/index.html>

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**2.       Reminder: Industry Partnerships Strategy Expressions of Interest due 13th February**

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Expressions of interest from water service providers are still open for the ***qldwater*** application for the Industry Partnerships Strategy (IPS) (expected to be open in March 2015). Further information on the Industry Partnerships Strategy is available [here.](http://www.training.qld.gov.au/training-organisations/funded-programs/industry-partnerships-strategy.html)

Funding is available for support strategies that address areas of skills market failure and facilitate the completion of qualifications under these programs. Funded organisations will coordinate, manage and implement the project in partnership with an approved training provider (RTO). There is an expectation of 50:50 financial co-contribution from the participating partners towards the cost of support strategies funded through the project, which is more generous than many previous federal and state opportunities.

The Water Skills Partnership Industry Leaders Group has identified two industry projects to be targeted through two separate IPS applications. ***qldwater*** also intend to lodge a further third application for funding of project management/supervisory qualifications, which are not currently covered in the Queensland Training Subsidies list or other national funding. Details of the three projects are contained in the Skills e-flash # 36 - <http://www.qldwater.com.au/skills_e-flashes>.

If you would like to participate in the 2015 ***qldwater*** Industry Partnerships Strategy application we will require an indication of the numbers of employees you would anticipate participating in the projects as outlined above (i.e. 6 x persons project A, 2 x persons Project B etc.). Based on the responses received we will then work with participating organisations to arrange regional training hubs (where practical), source appropriate RTOs and work through the specific training requirements and further details required for the funding application.  It is likely to be an iterative process knowing what other neighbouring organisations are planning may lever interest in areas which you have not previously considered.

A commitment to providing the co-contribution as well as confirmation of final numbers will be required at time of application submission.

Expressions of interest for this funding application (by email), with expected numbers for each project, will close on **Friday 13th February** and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss your initial interest prior to this date.  If you would like to discuss the funding further please contact Michelle Hill on mhill@qldwater.com.au or 07 3632 6853.

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

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