



# Queensland Water

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

Issue 16 - September 2016

## Innovation Forum Wrap

Delegates of the 2016 Innovation Forum experienced a good mix of fun and frivolities while delving deeper to uncover the opportunities and barriers to innovation in the urban water industry.

Day one started with an excellent overview of the history of Mt Crosby by Col Hester from Queensland Urban Utilities. Col's in-depth knowledge and passion provided an interesting backdrop for the bus ride out to Colleges Crossing.

Colleges Crossing Cafe proved to be a great venue not only for the outstanding coffee and food but also for the great views over a part of the Brisbane River that has experienced numerous flood events. A number of Seqwater presentations on innovative trials were interspersed with some fun activities that kept the crowd entertained.

Delegates participated in a blind taste off of 14 water samples from across Queensland as part of the **Ixom Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test**. The top five entries made it through to the taste test finals with a panel of water experts selecting the 2016 winner. A big congratulations to Toowoomba Regional Council with their

sample from Mt Kynoch WTP receiving bragging rights for the year. The runner up was Seqwater's Tugun Desalination Plant.

Gold Coast Water proved their prowess in tapping a live water main with its two teams going head to head in the inaugural Live Mains Tapping Competition after eliminating QUU and Logan Water. Completing the task in just 1 minute 49 seconds, the team set the bar high and kept spectators cool. Thanks again to h2Flow who provided the water truck for the event.

A tour of Mt Crosby Westbank WTP completed the day. Thanks to Seqwater for the immense effort they put in to make this such an entertaining and interesting event.

The second day allowed delegates to explore where the major costs are for utilities and where opportunities for innovation exist, with a focus on value creation for customers through improved products and efficient management. Talks were interspersed with panel sessions to stimulate discussion, considering TOTEX, internal and external drivers, limits of technology and the future of partnerships among utilities and regulators.

Keynote speaker Dan Tindall from the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation set the scene with a fantastic talk about remote sensing and some possibilities to explore for the urban water industry.

DEWS and DEHP regulator sessions allowed analysis of opportunities and included presentations by the Directors General from both departments.

QUU again proved their passion for innovation with a live demonstration of the project refinement process that employees go through to pitch their innovative ideas to the CEO.

The event wrapped up over dinner with an inspiring talk by David Snadden from Yarra Valley Water.

We again thank Seqwater for supporting the event as well as our conference sponsors: Lonza Water Technologies, Aqseptence Group, LiquiMIX, Royce Water Technologies, LGAQ and Ventia (lunch sponsor), our Taste Test sponsor – Ixom and our Water Connections Tour Sponsor – Dial Before You Dig.



## Update from CEO

Greetings all

At the end of a very successful TRG Innovation Forum, I thought I'd use the space I get in the newsletter to talk a little bit about the bigger picture and what this event has achieved for *qldwater*.

We set ourselves several goals for the event, so the simplest thing to do is to provide a short commentary on each.

### Knowledge exchange among *qldwater* members and others present

We witnessed a series of fantastic technical presentations from Seqwater staff, and those who accepted the challenge of presenting against our criteria for the regulator sessions on the 15th. It was great to see senior representatives from DEWS, DEHP and DILGP attending and engaging so candidly, as well as to explore some of the clever work being trialled by members.

### Networking opportunity and celebration of urban water and sewerage services

Our activities at Colleges Crossing and Mt Crosby went down a treat and those who were able to attend the first day and dinner probably got the best opportunity to catch up with people, as the program on the 15th was pretty packed. We were thrilled with the taste test and surprised to see three SEQ samples make the final five (it doesn't seem that long ago that we were making jokes about Brisbane water to promote the test). The live mains tapping competition was quite a spectacle, engaging most senses as well as drenching the odd spectator who got too close. The Innovation Hour, or "shark tank" type session also proved to be pretty popular, and thanks to QUU for providing presenters when we were unable to find enough other people who were game enough.

I think the surprise package this year was Col Hester's fantastic history of Mt Crosby and commentary through the tour. Some real marvels (and disasters) of engineering and governance which enthused delegates and we'll be looking to how we can build on that in 2017.

### Further the goal of utility-led (rather than supply market-led) innovation

This was never meant to be a slight on some of the great things done by suppliers for our sector; rather a recognition that utilities do clever things with limited resources, and are generally pretty lousy at promoting that. We spoke throughout the event about "capturing value" and the importance of embracing some broader commercial principles like building brands, targeting high value (typically capital) efficiencies and recognising that people and expertise are often not considered part of strategic innovation, and appropriately valued. I've lost count of the number of times I've heard "that's not innovation, that's just what we do." To improve the industry's collective lot, I reckon we need to get a bit less humble and consider a broader definition of innovation. We had great presentations which eloquently demonstrated this potential, including from Toowoomba, Cairns, and Unitywater.

### Educate stakeholders and decision makers and "elevate" the discussion around strategies to enable innovation

As above, the engagement with state agencies was extremely valuable and we hope to be able to continue with the approach of these targeted sessions.

DEHP in particular challenged our sector to talk to them about alternatives to big infrastructure spends, which were still able to achieve desired environmental outcomes. This sort of thing will be the focus of the work of our TRG over the coming months as it works through suggestions from the Forum – there is willingness from government to expand the dialogue, talk about principles like shared risk, so we need to embrace the opportunity and try to tackle perceived impediments.

There are a heap of other little process improvements to consider from very good feedback. For now, thanks for all who contributed to an event which we think is starting to develop into a great mechanism for building capacity for innovation in our industry.

Dave Cameron



## QWRAP Update

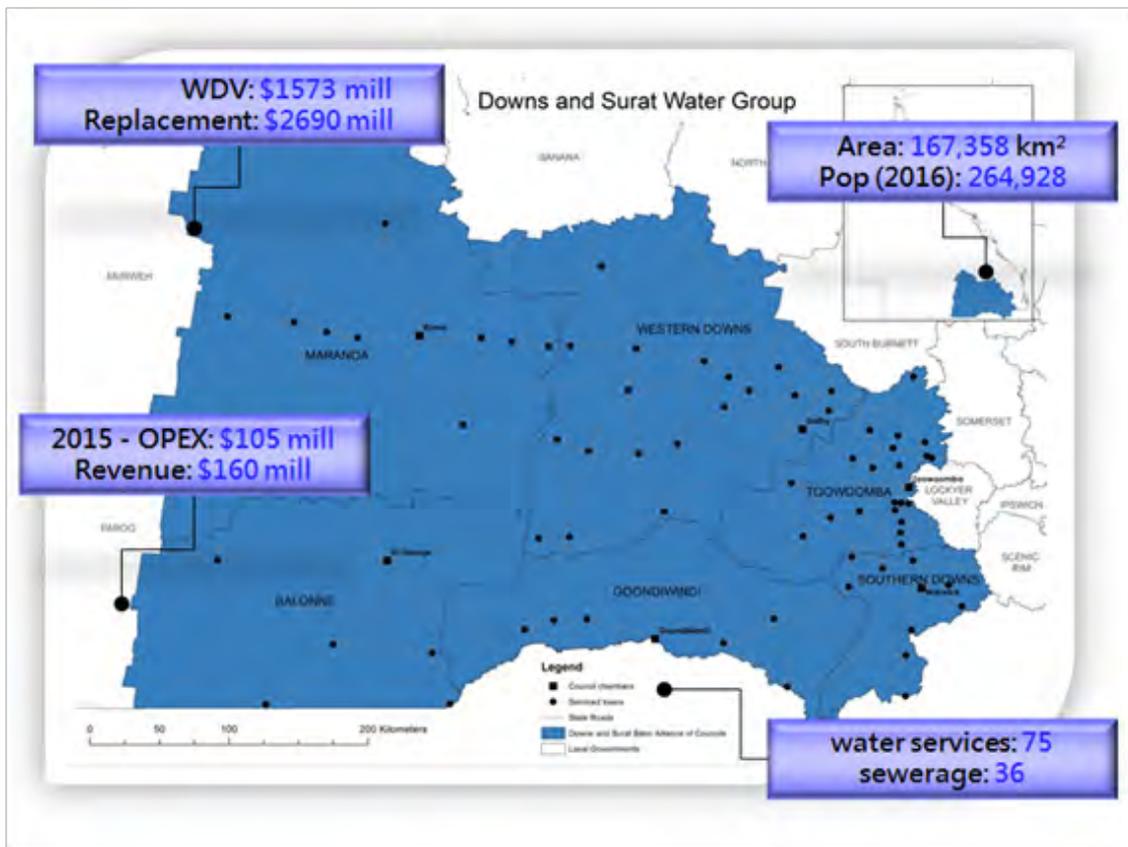
The Queensland Water Regional Alliances Program was pleased to welcome the Downs and Surat Basin Region to the program in July 2016. Comprising the Councils from Balonne, Goondiwindi, Maranoa, Toowoomba and Western Downs, the group formally agreed to participate in QWRAP investigations into alternative regional approaches and is in the process of developing initial cooperative projects.

This region was strongly affected by council amalgamations in 2008 with all but one council (Balonne) involved in mergers. The other councils are the product of amalgamation of over 20 previous local governments, the highest of any region in the state. Building regional approaches is thus familiar to the

councils but there is a natural degree of fatigue amongst staff and councillors.

Another striking feature of the region is the large number of small communities with 75 water and 36 sewerage services. Maintaining these schemes which often service very small communities is a difficult task complicated by constantly improving standards and expectations.

The group has an agreed Terms of Reference and is currently seeking to appoint a part-time regional coordinator to lead the agreed projects.



## Lego Photo Competition



Congratulations to Kerin Szemes from Rockhampton Regional Council whose photo of the Rocky Lego team working together won our Lego photo competition. *qldwater* members were asked to vote online from 22 entries, with images depicting LP (lego person) doing water testing, hitching a ride on a lizard, playing WSP Wars and enjoying the sunset at a WTP intake.

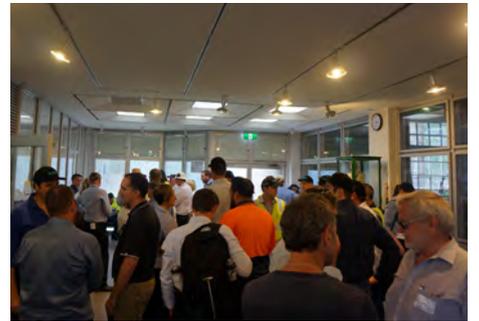
The winner was announced at the *qldwater* Innovation Forum on 15 September 2016. Kerin will receive a \$200 gift voucher from Camera Warehouse.

## 2016 Innovation Forum in pictures

This page: An action packed morning with the inaugural Live Mains Tapping Competition. Congratulations to the 2016 champions Ross and Matt from Gold Coast Water. Bottom row: Taste test winner Toowoomba Regional Council's Kevin Flanagan receiving the coveted award; runner up Segwater's Annalie Roux with Glyn Parry and Dick Went from Gold Coast Water.



This page: Technical tour of Mt Crosby Water Treatment Plant kindly hosted by Seqwater.  
Bottom row: Water tasting in action as part of the 2016 Ixom Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test.



## Skills Update

### What does the Queensland Water Industry Workforce look like in 2016? – Highlights from the Snapshot Report

Data gathering for the fourth Qld Urban Water Industry Workforce Composition Snapshot Report is now complete with responses received from Gold Coast Water, Seqwater, Mackay Regional Council, Unitywater, Toowoomba Regional Council, Logan City Council, Banana Shire Council, North Burnett Regional Council, Central Highlands Regional Council, Boulia Shire Council and Queensland Urban Utilities. *qldwater* would like to thank these organisations for their contributions.

Analysis and collation of the data is currently underway, with the final report to be published early November.

Changes in many job families are evident, possibly as a result of outsourcing trends for operations staff, and gradual changes in the age profile of the workforce (See Figure 1 and 2). These trends will be explored further in the published final Snapshot Report.

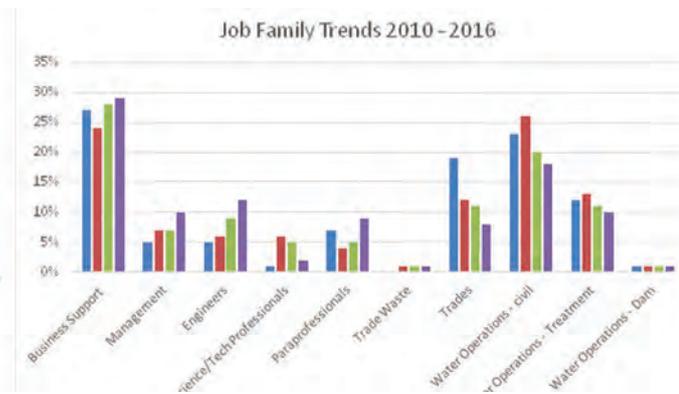


Figure 1 Job Family Trends 2010 - 2016\*

(\*Note that data on the breakdown of water operations job roles (treatment, civil and dam) was not available for 2010. The total water operations job role figure was therefore used and divided among the civil, treatment and dam streams as per the average distribution trend in the following years).

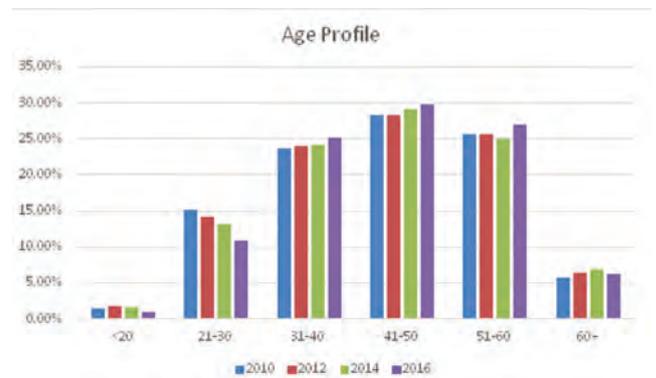


Figure 2 Age Profile Trends 2010 - 2016

The *qldwater* TRG is currently considering options for future data collection, analysis and presentation options for workforce information.

## Certification Framework for Recycled Water Operators

The Australian Water Recycling Centre of Excellence has engaged *qldwater* to coordinate development of a Certification Framework for Recycled Water Operators, including managing industry consultation.

This complements our existing work refining the Certification Framework for Operators of Drinking Water Systems on behalf of the national Water Industry Skills Taskforce, and the Queensland Sewage Treatment Plant Operator Certification Framework. It provides another opportunity to collaborate with the Water Industry Operators Association (George Wall) and David Sheehan (Coliban Water) who will undertake much of the development work.

## Quick highlights section:

### Welcome to five new Qld Water Skills Partnership Subscribers

We would like to welcome Boulia Shire Council, Mareeba Shire Council, Southern Downs Regional Council, Blackall Tambo Regional Council and Paroo Shire Council as new subscribers to the Queensland Water Skills Partnership. These Councils join with approximately 40 other current subscribers to the Partnership.

The Skills Partnership Industry Leaders' Group will meet on the 25th October to discuss priorities and activities.

To raise an issue or project idea for the ILG consideration, please contact Michelle Hill on [mhill@qldwater.com.au](mailto:mhill@qldwater.com.au).

### QLD Training Awards

Congratulations to QUU Water Operations trainee Maddison McCarthy who has landed a finalist's spot in the Qld Training Awards for Bob Marshman Trainee of the Year.

Awarded for outstanding achievement by a trainee who has recently completed or is due to complete a traineeship in Queensland, Maddison received recognition for her valuable contribution to her workplace as part of completing her Certificate III in Water Operations.

### National Water Training Package Four Year Plan

Australian Industry Standards (AIS - the Skills Service Organisation for the water Industry) will develop a four year plan for ongoing development of the National Water Training package by the end of September.

A workshop to provide input into the plan was convened by *qldwater* and attended by Queensland Urban Utilities, Gold Coast Water, Logan City Council, and Redland City Council representatives.

Feedback from the group was provided to the Water Industry Reference Committee and AIS. An industry issues discussion paper to inform the training package plan is currently available on the Australian Industry Standards (AIS) website for comment.

To receive updates on the Water Industry Reference Committee activities and other training package work, subscribe for updates on the AIS website - [www.australianindustrystandards.org.au/committee/water-industry-reference-committee](http://www.australianindustrystandards.org.au/committee/water-industry-reference-committee).

### Water Operations Training Funding

The 2016/17 Qld VET Investment Plan was released late July. Funding arrangements for water industry qualifications (National Water Training Package) under the following programs have changed minimally (minor increases/decreases to funding levels):

- User Choice - Certificate II and Certificate III level NWP qualifications continue to be funded as Priority 1
- Certificate 3 Guarantee - Certificate III level NWP qualifications funded.
- Higher Level Skills - Certificate IV and Diploma level NWP qualifications funded.

There will be a strengthened program for Pre-Qualified Suppliers (RTOs approved to deliver funded training) including key changes such as:

- no automatic rollover of contracts (this may impact planned enrolments if RTOs have not yet signed new contracts)
- strengthened pre-qualified supplier entry requirements, including a one-year minimum trading history in Queensland
- enhanced pre-qualified supplier risk profiling to identify investment risks, and inform pre-qualified supplier management and risk mitigation strategies.

Further details are available on the [Department of Education and Training website](#).

## SWIM Update

### DEWS KPIs

As we enter the second year of reporting on Queensland Government's Key Performance Indicators (KPI), *qldwater* has been working with industry reps and DEWS to review the DEWS KPIs for the 2016/17 reporting year. DEWS plans to hold workshops in October.

*qldwater* is continually holding discussion with DEWS, ABS, BoM and NPR regarding indicator rationalisation and definition improvement for future reporting.

### SWIMLocal

*SWIMLocal* has released an updated (version 2) of its annual data tool along with a tablet / phone / Android / windows compatible data entry module that will simplify data entry for Service Provider's annual water and sewerage data. New indicator alerting functionality for the *SWIMLocal* software has also been developed and is undergoing final testing.

Approximately 85% of Service Providers have historically reported their data through SWIM, which provides valuable information to the State and Federal Governments and allows *qldwater* to keep track of industry trends through its annual Benchmarking report.

## Events Calendar

### October

9-13 World Water Congress, Brisbane

18-20 LGAQ State Conference

### November

8-10 IPWEAQ State Conference

## Member Spotlight

*Outgoing TRG Chair takes the cake*



*WIOA MD celebrates new granddaughter by attempting look-alike*



*WIOA, AWA and qldwater reach common ground*

