

qldwater Annual Forum - Register now!



Time is running out to register for the qldwater Annual Forum.

The event, hosted by Logan City Council, is scheduled for 11 and 12 September at the **Logan Metro Indoor Sports & Events Centre**. It offers an opportunity to network with 80-100 water industry professionals, typically including 30+ councils/ utilities.

11 September is devoted to showcasing our hosts and includes a tour of the new **Cedar Grove Environmental Centre** (pictured above). The development will service the Greater Flagstone Priority Development Area and includes a new STP (Biological Treatment Bioreactor), advanced odour control system and constructed wetlands. There will be a range of other Logan Water Infrastructure Alliance talks, the **Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test** and a range of other fun activities and conference dinner.

The second day is devoted to refining the **qldwater industry roadmap**. Throughout the year at each event and our reference group meetings we have been collating feedback from members and stakeholders to inform our work plan, but also focusing on broader collaborative opportunities and developing policy recommendations to drive advocacy. These are based on 10 Key Priorities, including topics like Strategic Sector Investment, Harmonising Water Regulation, and Understanding and Exceeding Customer Expectations.

A full program outline is available at <https://ipweaq.eventsair.com/qwd-annual-forum-2019/agenda>.

Seven steps to water tasting glory

The battle of the taps is on again with the **Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test** locked in at our Annual Forum on 11 September.

For those keen to convince their boss that they should accompany the winning sample on an all expenses paid trip to the International Water Taste Test in the US, we've released a short video outlining the **seven steps to water tasting glory**.

There is no doubt that the breadth of water sources across Queensland, and indeed the world, contribute much to the taste of water, and [another short video](#) captures the magic of some of our sources.

Check them out on our **Smugmug site**, where you can also see lots of great photos of all our events.

Taste test in the Land of the Long White Cloud

In the meantime, WIOA has been very busy spreading the competition across the globe, with the first taste test held in New Zealand in May this year.

Other WIOA taste test winners across Australia include:

- Water of Origin – Shoalhaven Water
- NSW – Shoalhaven Water
- South Australia – Swan Reach
- Tasmania – Mount Leslie WTP, Launceston

CEO Report

Our last major event for 2019, the annual forum on 11/12 September approaches rapidly.

This event started as the Innovation Forum a few years ago and we've tried to make it different from the offerings of other associations including our parent bodies to avoid any competition and be able to focus on strategic drivers. We've never held a call for papers, past presenters and panel sessions have been directly sourced from member suggestions, typically through our Technical Reference Group. That makes it challenging enough – this year (for a year) we have elected to abandon that format and go the workshop-route, getting down and dirty with sessions designed to tackle some of our sector's toughest questions, to build results into our developing "Roadmap".

Thanks to Logan City Council who have come up with an excellent tour program and series of presentations on 11 September. New STP developments are a rare treat and the Cedar Grove Environmental Centre promises a range of innovative technologies, with the whole planning process supported by an extensive public consultation process.

Following our TRG brief to find a dinner speaker from another industry who could talk about safety, training and development, and maintenance innovation we have Chris Bradley from the rail sector presenting, who will give a great perspective on these topics, as well as PPPs including the international perspective, industrial relations, and cool manufacturing and planning advances.

For the 12th, we have a couple of great keynotes in Linda Dobe and David Brooker, and we have some really exciting thought leaders helping us address our roadmap priorities. It will be facilitated by Lara Schlinker who has had a bit to do with the industry and supporting change processes in recent years.

It's your opportunity to help shape the future direction of our sector – if you're passionate about:

- Strategic Sector-Wide Investment and Regional Innovation
- Harmonising/ Improving Water Regulation
- Understanding and Exceeding Customer Expectations
- Building Jobs/ Skills Development in a Changing Industry

- Catchment Resilience in a Changing Environment
- Data Transforming the Water Sector/ Next Generation Water

Please consider coming along (or wish us luck in addressing the real challenge- trying to wrangle all the ideas into something coherent after the event).

Finally, I'd like to formally acknowledge the efforts of our outgoing TRG Chair, Trevor Dean from Fraser Coast Regional Council as his 2 years is up in September.

Trevor (pictured below as host at the Hervey Bay mini conference) has been an exceptional advocate for the Directorate, starting in the gig significantly earlier than originally anticipated, supporting every meeting and event he could in the last couple of years, helping with linkages, and going above and beyond to represent members, attending this year's Water Connections Tour and IPWEAQ board briefings. Regarding the latter, he has recently been elected to that board where I'm sure he'll continue to passionately support **qldwater** members. We're hoping he can stick around on the TRG in spite of this additional commitment.

Troy Pettiford from Whitsunday Regional Council takes over the helm, (and we are in for a ride – he's already been out promoting QWRAP and other activities at Bush Councils today as I write this) with a new Deputy to be elected in September.

We look forward to seeing you at the annual forum or if you can't make it yet feel that you could contribute to the roadmap, give me a call or drop me a line by email.

Till next time,

Dave Cameron



Awards for Excellence

The WIOA Queensland Operations Conference and Exhibition held in Bundaberg from 5-6 June 2019 was the tenth time we've been privileged to present awards for the Civil/ All-Rounder Operator of the Year and Young Operator of the Year.

Civil / All Rounder Award

Being an operator can be a pretty thankless job, but not so for **Spencer Stacey** from City of Gold Coast who often receives letters of thanks and gratitude from ratepayers for his customer service and professionalism.

Spencer (pictured bottom left) took out the **Civil/ All-Rounder award** for being a great team player, respected by colleagues and customers alike. His award nomination listed a string of achievements, including setting the bar for the rest of the team when it comes to workplace health and safety, continually updating his skills through training in confined space, first aid, risk assessment and work method statements. He is touted as having good vision, doesn't take shortcuts and will no doubt be a future leader in the water industry.

Spencer, who is known as one half of the recently retired "Tapping Tubbies" mains tapping champions, received a trophy and funding towards professional development.

Young Operator of the Year

Best known for his performances as the country music singer Ali S where he performs across Queensland at numerous musical

festivals, community events, races, rodeos and pubs, **Ali Sacipovic** from Fraser Coast regional council was crowned the **2019 Young Operator of the Year**. Responsible for the Aubinville STP in Maryborough, Ali has demonstrated great initiative, a commitment to process improvement, teamwork and customer service.

Ali commenced with Fraser Coast Regional Council in 2015, enthusiastically taking on roles with greater responsibilities during this time. Following completion of a traineeship, Ali was retained by Council as an Assistant Wastewater Treatment Operator and has recently been successful in becoming the Wastewater Treatment Operator at the Aubinville STP in Maryborough.

In Ali's short time as the Aubinville STP Operator, he has implemented a number of initiatives which have improved operational tasks and treatment processes which resulted in greater efficiencies.

Ali has retained strong connections with his home town of Boulia, where his ongoing community work with the youth and general community have been recognised by the Boulia Shire Council, who appointed Ali (pictured below) as their Official Ambassador for 2019.



Highly Commended Award

A highly commended award was made to **Daniel Hales** from Mareeba Shire Council. Daniel's award nomination provided a glowing reference from Mareeba Shire Council's Water and Wastewater Treatment Team, describing him as "an essential part of our team, bringing pragmatism, a strong work ethic and youth to our otherwise ageing industry".

Currently enrolled in a Certificate III Water Industry Treatment while he completes his traineeship, Daniel has learned how to operate a Sequential Bioreactor and a Biological Nutrient Removal wastewater treatment plant as well as four different water treatment plants. In addition, his IT skills have really helped older members of the team and he is now learning specialist SCADA and telemetry skills that are an integral part of managing a geographically dispersed network of treatment plants.

Daniel's previous practical work experience and long-standing community involvement in the Mareeba Gladiators as a player, coach and captain has made a profound contribution to the team.



A young Aussie's experience of the NZ water industry

Andrew Hanifin is a Water Industry Worker with Unitywater and recipient of *qldwater's* Young Operator of the Year Award in 2018. His award provided him with the opportunity to participate in the WIOA facilities tour of New Zealand and attend the Water industry Operations Group NZ Conference. He has recently returned from his tour and spoke to *qldwater's* Carlie Sargent about his experience.

Q: Your prize included a tour of NZ water facilities and attendance at the WIOG NZ Conference. Could you provide a summary of your trip please?

A: The tour started in Christchurch with 15 of us from a number of different water utilities from across Australia. We headed south and visited Franz Josef which had been hit hard with floods and earthquakes, to the point that they had considered relocating the town. We visited a number of other towns and toured drinking water and wastewater treatment plants, including the lovely town of Hanmer Springs. After 6 days of travelling we headed back to Christchurch to attend the conference.

Q: Did you observe any particular differences in the way New Zealand and Australian utilities operate?

A: New Zealand utilities have to deal with a lot more infrastructure issues as a result of natural disasters but locals are very accepting of being without services for a number of days following disasters. In the case of major disasters that lead to breaks, communities can be without water for up to 5 days without any issues. Their level of acceptance seems to be much higher than

that in Australia where we get the problems fixed very quickly. It was also clear that water utilities in NZ have a preference for repairing their infrastructure rather than replacing it to extend its useful life and save money. They definitely work to the conditions and expect to be hit with some form of disaster about every two years. In Queensland, we're pretty spoilt with the conditions we operate in.

Q: Was there anything else that surprised you on the trip?

A: New Zealand's source water quality is very good and pure and their treatment processes are very thorough like they are in Queensland. However, there is a current push in some areas to remove chlorine from the NZ water network which was pretty surprising to the Australians on the tour. Luckily their source water is very potable but, in any case, most providers want to keep chlorinating their water. Also, we learned that the water charges in NZ are much cheaper on average than in Queensland at about ¼ of the price charged in Queensland and it's hard to understand how utilities can afford to run at that rate.



Hamner Springs, New Zealand



Franz Josef Treatment Plant Pond, New Zealand

Q: Did you learn about any innovative technologies/processes that could be applied here in Australia?

A: There's always amazing new technology in the water industry so it was great to see some of this on display at the conference. I felt though that the NZ utilities are probably in a particular stage of development and are where we were a couple of years ago. Our processes are pretty advanced at Unitywater and across Australia. We've worked through a lot of our challenges and have evolved and changed a lot. This gave me a bit of a perspective change and appreciation for my role and my employer. And we're paid better here in Australia too!

Q: Were there any speakers or topics that stood out for you at the conference?

A: One Operator shared his experience of their safety journey and that it had previously been quite relaxed. He had experienced issues with infections from working in sewers as he didn't have sufficient PPE, and the steel in his boots were exposed which led to infection. Our safety standards appear more thorough. Some over there didn't wear hard hats or high vis, which is not what it's like here. More casual and relaxed.

Q: What was the most valuable part of the trip?

A: Discovering the differences between utilities but also the similarities, both with the NZ operators who hosted us but also from the Australians who were part of the tour. Everyone on the trip had slightly different roles and there was a great mix of ages, genders and locations. I learnt a lot about the challenges in Victoria and Tasmania particularly, with issues like frozen water meters and bushfires and the impacts of those on water infrastructure.

Q: What would you say to other young operators considering applying for a qldwater award?

A: I was totally surprised that I won this award but it made me feel very proud to have been nominated by my employer and recognized with the award. I would absolutely encourage people to nominate for the **qldwater** operator awards. The experience was a great opportunity to see how other water utilities operate and I learnt a lot from other operators' knowledge of their infrastructure and the way they've approached their challenges. WIOA treated us really well, we had a really good group on tour. Water industry people are a great bunch and it was really motivating to be around people with a similar passion for the water industry.



Andrew at Franz Josef Reservoir, New Zealand

Knowledge sharing brings best practice to Solomon Water

Water treatment processes in the Solomon Islands are about to benefit from a special Seqwater experience.

Seqwater hosted a group of staff from Solomon Water on a tour of Capalaba Water Treatment Plant (WTP) on 12 June 2019. The visit was arranged to take advantage of an additional day in Brisbane with the staff attending the **qldwater** Asset Management workshop on 13 June.

Ian Gooden, General Manager of Solomon Water said their organisation expected to have two or maybe three small water treatment plants to operate over the next two years and had a lot of experience to gain to be confident in managing the systems.

"We currently have one small set of sand filters and then chlorinate water at about 14 locations across the Solomon Islands; mainly in Honiara," he said.

The Solomon Water contingent, including COO Scravin Tongi, visited the Capalaba WTP where Seqwater staff showed them the water treatment process from catchment to tap as well as laboratory testing, SCADA control and water distribution.

The Capalaba Water Treatment Plant is one of 36 in the Southeast Queensland Water Grid, a network of pipes, dams, treatment plants and reservoirs allowing Seqwater to move treated water around the region and supplement local supply. It uses conventional treatment with gas disinfection with raw water sourced from the Leslie Harrison Dam. The plant services the northern part of the Redland City Council region with a population of around 100,000.

Seqwater Coordinator Supply Operations Southern Region, Ian Cuthbertson, said the group showed a



keen interest in chlorine gas disinfection, catchment management and HACCP policy and procedures around water quality control.

"We spoke at length about water catchment management because it is something they have been experiencing difficulties with at home and wanted to learn more about," Mr Cuthbertson said.

While the Capalaba WTP was larger and more complex than plants planned for the Islands, the fundamental processes are the same and the group appreciated learning about the checks and balances that had been set up.

"The guys kept saying how sophisticated our processes were compared to where they were at, and we had to remind them that we also started out at that level years ago, and that anything was possible given time and commitment."

One of the key learnings by the Solomon Water team is that proper thought and due diligence around catchment area management can lower the cost of treatment. The Solomon Water Team conveys its heartfelt thank you to Ian and his team at Capalaba and to **qldwater** for this critical learning opportunity.

Mr Cuthbertson also highlighted how important it was for the operators to be involved in the design stage to ensure they ended up with a fit for purpose plant.

"There is no point getting a Rolls Royce when what you need is a Mini Minor. The guys were really surprised when we talked about the importance of them being consulted right from the start as they were the ones who would have to run the plant," Mr Cuthbertson said.



"One of the guys said the first thing he was going to talk about when he got home was about how they could get involved in the design process."

Mr Cuthbertson said the benefit of the visit flowed both ways, with his staff gaining a better understanding of the limited treatment options in remote locations.

"It was good for my blokes to realise that not all treatment plants are like ours, so if they ever needed

to support regional and remote operations, they would have a better understanding of limited budgets and more basic treatment processes."

Seqwater put on a BBQ lunch with the group where they got to mingle and share experiences. Thanks again to Ian and his team from **qldwater** for being so willing to assist.



Emerging Contaminants Workshop

Initiated by the **qldwater** Sewage and Water Environment Advisory Panel (SWEAP) and TRG, the Emerging Contaminants Workshop on 2 May 2019 allowed water and sewerage service providers to compare the ways they are dealing with contaminants of emerging concern.

The event aimed to provide opportunities for greater information sharing to save costs and help with messaging when new contaminants emerge in the future.

Presentations included case studies from Queensland utilities, national

research agencies and regulators, followed by discussions to address the question – How can the sector be better prepared to manage emerging contaminants?

Below: A full house for the Emerging Contaminants Workshop showed a keen interest in the topic.



2019 Water Connections Tour

Councils in the South West corner of Queensland played host to the fourteenth annual Queensland Water Directorate Water Connections Tour when representatives from the water industry and state government visit remote communities to foster a better understanding of challenges and opportunities in providing water and sewerage services.

Starting in Cunnamulla on 13 May, the group of 15 criss-crossed the South West Queensland shires of Murweh, Paroo, Bulloo and Quilpie before finishing with a joint forum in Charleville on Friday, 17 May.

The **Water Connections Tour** plays a crucial part in promoting sector collaboration, showing key decision-makers in government the issues our members are faced with on a daily basis – particularly in remote locations.

Regional providers are often fiscally and operationally challenged and any steps we can take to help government understand community drivers and capacity to pay for services help lead to a smarter regulatory and policy environment.

The tour provided valuable technical information and knowledge exchange as well as a chance to raise issues face to face

with representatives from the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Department of Environment and Science, Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs, Local Government Association of Queensland and *qldwater*.

We are very happy that the State continues to participate, and as costs increase, organisations like Dial Before You Dig have been able to support this initiative through sponsorship. It is the ninth year DBYD has invested in the Tour and our broader Water Connections Events program.



Asset Management in the Qld Water Sector

The Asset Management workshop held on 13 June 2019 was attended by more than 60 delegates, with representatives from regional councils, SEQ water utilities and state agencies, including a delegation from the Solomon Islands.

A theme of the meeting was the trend among councils and utilities to develop their AM systems in line with the ISO 55000 series of standards for asset management, which was launched in 2014. The standard replaced the PAS 55 which had been in use since 2004.

The attractiveness of the ISO 55000 is that it is essentially a business plan, many aspects of which councils as businesses are already following. The ISO 55000 also recognises that people and culture are an important component of an AM strategy.

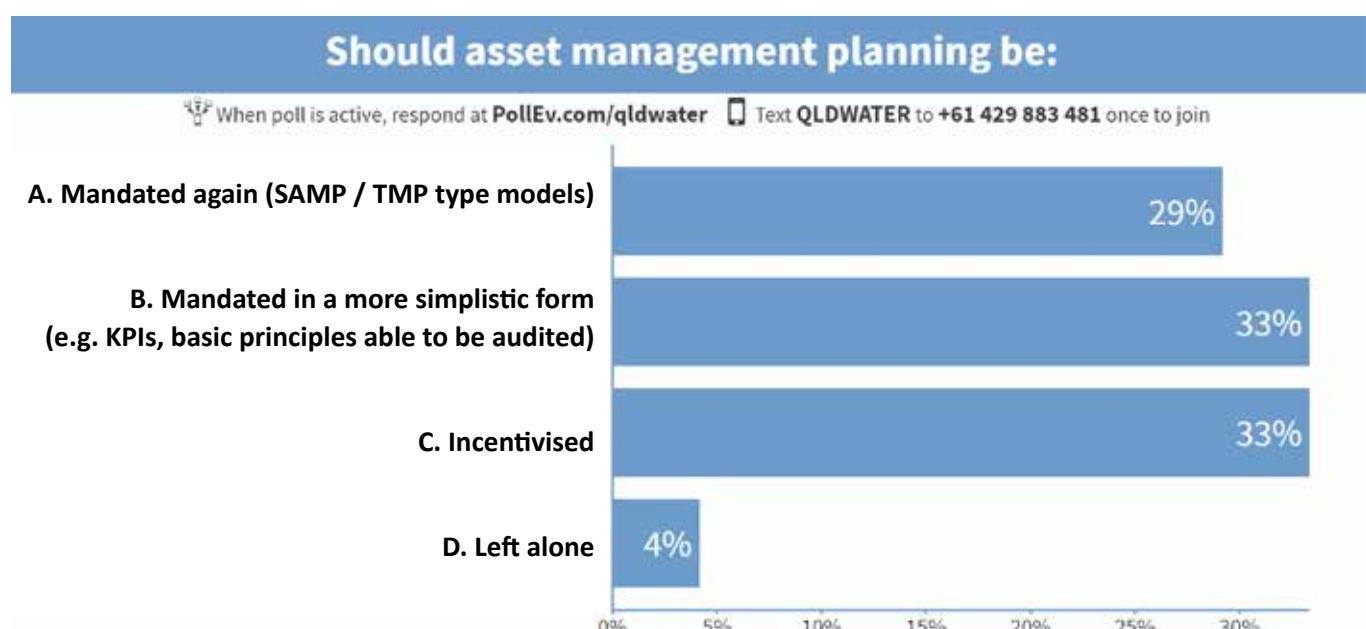
The presentations included a range of case studies and two panel sessions during the day allowed participants to ask questions. From the questions and responses, the following key points were apparent:

- For smaller councils the journey to an AM system is challenging due to a limited revenue base and a tendency to focus on the visible assets.
- ISO 55000 provides a framework that is appropriate and very similar to AM frameworks in other states.
- Sharing risk models for assets would be beneficial for those councils on the start of their AM journey to make the most of the learnings from those with more mature AM strategies.
- Investment in renewals will require increases in prices, and the advice from WSAA is that if prices need to rise then the sector needs to talk to customers early, clearly and transparently to avoid a price spikes and the resulting negative reaction from customers.

- Data is the key to development of any AM plan, and for even the larger WSPs the quality of the data has been difficult to manage.
- Several of the larger WSPs were happy to share their data with the industry at large to improve AM practises.
- Regulatory depreciation masks the cost of renewals in the current environment of low interest rates and along with the historic pattern of capital investment may mask the true cost of renewals that will be borne by the WSPs and their customers.
- Cultural change and continuous improvement are both required for AM to move forwards.
- Cultural change takes years and needs teamwork and staff to see the new systems being implemented as 'different' not 'worse'.

The final session of the day was led by Dave Cameron from **qldwater**, with a focus on developing the industry roadmap, specifically "Opportunities" - for future collaboration and "Policy Recommendations". The discussion included two anonymous polls. The first clearly showed that there was a high level of support for change to current AM approaches for the sector, and strong support for models which mandate AM in some way. The results are shown below.

The second poll invited comments on a question, with responses being scaled based on the number of identical responses. The two clear messages from this suggest that a risk-based grant funding approach is necessary, as is the funding of totex instead of just capex.



Mini-Conferences

Townsville

Starting with a bus tour of the Haughton Pipeline, the North Queensland mini conference took place at the Riverway Stadium in Townsville on 4 and 5 July.

Project Manager Blair Middleton showed off the Haughton Pipeline Duplication Project (HPDP) which involves the duplication of a 36.5km pipeline from the Haughton Pump Station to the Ross River Dam. The HPDP will provide a bulk raw water supply link to the Burdekin Haughton Water Supply Scheme to augment or “top up” water levels during periods of very low rainfall. The technical tour concluded with dinner and drinks at Cactus Jacks.

The mini conference on 5 July provided an opportunity to network with peers and hear a range of technical presentations from across the region. The conference was hosted by Townsville City Council. Thanks to Gold Sponsors Royce Water Technologies, Aquatec Maxcon, Innovative Water Care, Silver Sponsor Taggle Systems Pty Ltd and Water Connections sponsor Dial Before You Dig for helping make this event possible.



Hervey Bay

The Central Queensland mini conference was held in Hervey Bay on 25-26 July starting with a tour of some Maryborough and Hervey Bay sites. The group visited the Two Mile Water Reservoir, Teddington Water Treatment Plant, the Filter Plant House on Aberdeen Ave and the new sports facilities with the adjoining pump station as part of the Nikenbah Water and Sewerage Infrastructure Project. Day one finished off with dinner, kindly sponsored by Cardno.

A raft of great presentations followed on 26 July at the Beach House Hotel, an excellent venue to enjoy the view over the bay while soaking in the lessons learned from various projects around the region.

The event was hosted by Fraser Coast Regional Council and kindly sponsored by Gold Sponsors Royce Water Technologies, Aquatec Maxcon, Innovative Water Care, Dinner Sponsor Cardno and Silver Sponsor Water One Laboratory Services.

Skills & Training

Workforce Snapshot Report

qldwater through the Water Skills Partnership recently released the Queensland Urban Water Industry Workforce Snapshot Report 2018 which provides an overview of key workforce indicators from a representative sample of Queensland urban water and sewerage providers. The report confirms a number of continuing trends and challenges facing the industry, including an ageing workforce, declining participation of employees under the age of 30 and a growing shortage of qualified operators. More positively, the proportion of women employed in the industry is growing, albeit slowly.

Key indicators from the report are highlighted in a one-page summary (next page) along with the key workforce challenges identified in the report and from our Water Skills Partnership. A copy of the full report and previous biennial reports is [available on the qldwater website](#).

Water Industry Qualifications

Following a final round of public consultation, the Technical Advisory Committee has finalised its review of the Certificate II and Certificate III Water Industry qualifications and will soon be referring the revised qualifications to the Water Industry Reference Committee for approval and publication. The revised qualifications have been deemed equivalent to existing qualifications and RTOs will have twelve months to transition to the revised qualifications. A number of key changes have been made to provide greater flexibility for industry:

- All units of competency have been reviewed and some updated with several units being retitled to more accurately represent the content of the units;
- Specialisations have been removed from the Certificate II in Water Industry Operations; and

- The three existing Certificate III qualifications have been merged into one qualification with seven specialist elective groups.

A review of the Certificate IV in Water Industry Operations and Certificate IV in Water Industry Treatment was recently announced and a review committee is being formed. **qldwater** will hold a position on the committee and a number of other Queensland members have been nominated. **qldwater** will provide regular updates as the review progresses.

WIOA Conference

qldwater continues its strong partnership with the Water Industry Operators Association of Australia (WIOA) and congratulates them on their recent annual Queensland conference held in Bundaberg.

As part of our exhibition booth (pictured below left), we hosted a Lego Masters competition, which was won by Anthony Lipsys, Banana Shire Council, for his creation of the water recycling plant of the future, closely followed by an interpretation of a wastewater inlet by Gary Fenwick, QUU.

qldwater was privileged to present awards for the tenth time for the Civil/All-Rounder Operator of the Year and Young Operator of the Year at the recent WIOA Conference in Bundaberg. You can read more about the award winners on Page 3 of this newsletter.

Another regular feature of the WIOA conferences is the Mains Tapping Competition and a City of Gold Coast team did it again, with Dan Lee and Gavin Stacey (Kool Tapping) taking out the competition with a time of 1 minute and 52 seconds. QUU's Daniel Marshall and Tom Pilcher finished second with 2:24, ahead of a Cairns team, two from Fraser Coast and 3 from Bundaberg. The champions (pictured below) have donated the \$1,000 prize, sponsored by Reece Plumbing, to "Buy a Bale."

(Skills continues on Page 13...)





SNAPSHOT OF THE QUEENSLAND URBAN WATER INDUSTRY 2018

75

water service providers
in Queensland*

Industry Profile

- 66 local councils outside of SEQ
- 3 local councils in SEQ
- 2 statutory authorities managing water and sewerage for 8 SEQ local councils
- 2 state owned bulk water suppliers
- 2 state owned statutory authorities

370

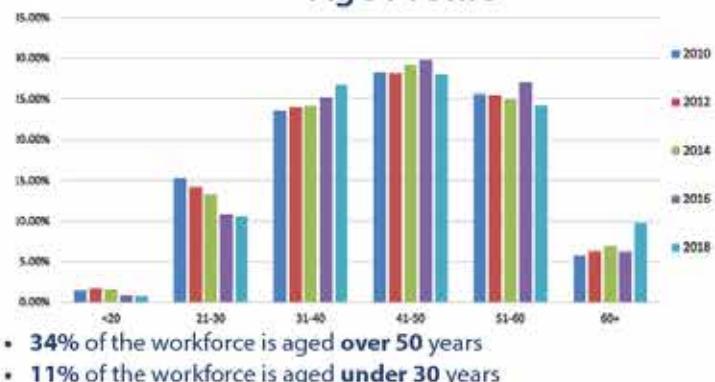
water supply
schemes

265

sewerage
schemes

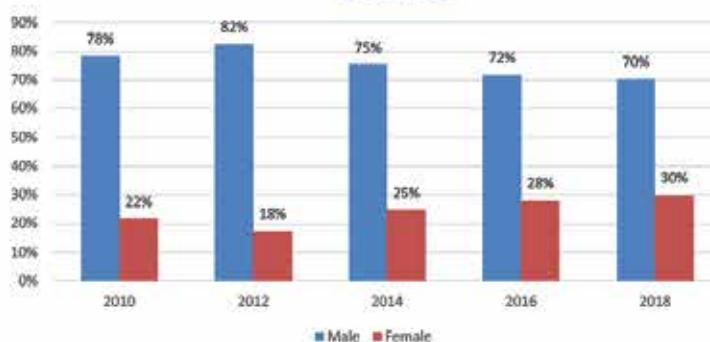
*75 suppliers supporting drinking water, sewerage and recycled water services for Queensland communities, 180 total registered suppliers.

Age Profile



- 34% of the workforce is aged over 50 years
- 11% of the workforce is aged under 30 years

Gender



30% of the workforce are women, up from 28% in 2016 and 18% in 2012. Whilst the numbers are still very small, the proportion of women in operations and trade roles has increased from 4% in 2016 to 7% in 2018.

Job Roles

6153

people employed in the
Queensland water industry

28%

employed in **water operations**
roles (civil, treatment, dams)

11%

of the workforce are
professional engineers

6%

employed in **trades** roles
(electrical, mechanical and
plumbing)

Key Workforce Challenges

- A growing shortage of qualified Water and Wastewater Operators, particularly in regional areas
- Difficulty capturing knowledge from an ageing workforce with fewer young people joining the industry
- Providing the right financial and non-financial incentives to attract and retain qualified water industry employees
- Implementation of Skill Sets in the National Water Training Package to provide opportunities for career advancement including Certification
- Building public recognition of the essential public and environmental health roles performed by those working in the urban water industry

Download the full report at www.qldwater.com.au/Skills_Workforce_Resources_and_Publications

Also at the event, Bill Collie from QUU was inducted as the latest member of the WIOA “IDIOTS” or “Inducted as Delegates of the Inextricably Obstructed Tap Society”, and Brad Milfull from Logan City Council chose to use his prize as Civil Operator of the Year 2018 to attend this year’s conference and was made a paper judge for his trouble.



WBBROC Traineeship Collaboration

In an attempt to help address the ageing workforce, councils in the Wide Bay Burnett region have identified the need to recruit and train new trainees to the water industry. Three councils have recruited trainees and are looking to collaborate for their formal training and provide them with joint networking and mentoring opportunities.

As part of this program, **qldwater** sponsored three trainees to attend the recent WIOA conference in Bundaberg and meet each other and talk to **qldwater**

staff about opportunities for regional collaboration during their traineeship.

Skills Resources

Following the positive take-up of **qldwater**'s **Aqua Card online training course** since its release earlier this year, the Water Skills Partnership is considering other water industry topics that could be developed into online training courses such as wastewater network maintenance and safety induction and will explore these further in the coming months.

qldwater recently provided input to the development of a **Technical Competency Handbook** to assist water utilities develop processes and practices to deliver a technically competent operational workforce.

The handbook explores options for the planning and delivery of learning and development programs and includes a number of case studies, including two Queensland examples of best practice with the Water Industry Worker Program and Seqwater's Site-based Operator Competency Assessment and also provides information about implementing Operator Certification.

The guide has been written by WIOA to have relevance nationally and is intended to be used by HR, L&D practitioners and direct line managers tasked with the creation and implementation of L&D programs for water industry operations staff. You can download the handbook on the **WIOA website**.

SWIM Update

Mandatory Reporting Time

It is reporting time again when Council's annual water and sewerage data is due to be reported to DNRME, ABS, BoM and NPR. Reporting is mandatory under current legislation and failure to do so by 1 October can result in Council receiving a fine.

It is also legislated that this data is made freely available and publicly reported via benchmarking and comparative reports.

39 Service Providers are currently using the full licenced version of **swimlocal**, and all **qldwater** members are using SWIM this year to report their annual water and sewerage data.

Web Portal now Live

The new 'data entry Web Portal' for SWIM annual water and sewerage data is now available for use. The portal is a duplication of the Annual Data Tool functionality, allowing service providers to use the Web

Portal and/or the **swimlocal** software to enter your mandatory water and sewerage data.

The Web Portal allows other council staff or departments (e.g. finance) to enter data directly into SWIM without having to install the **swimlocal** software onto their computers. It should greatly improve the annual data, as the data managers themselves will be able to directly access the full functionality of the SWIM system, including built in QA/QC, indicator definitions, add comments, manage notes, see previous data, see invalid and error cells, etc.

WaTERS Functionality

Work towards automating lab data uploads into **swimlocal** and STP data exporting from **swimlocal** to the WaTERS database are continuing and progressing. Those Councils using the fully licenced version of **swimlocal** and getting their samples analysed by Cairns Lab can now get their result automatically uploaded into **swimlocal**.

QWRAP Update

Many of the current QWRAP groups have commenced new projects in the past months and information sharing among groups has also received increased attention.

The **RAPAD Water Alliance** (western Qld) completed its telemetry and SCADA review and is considering its next steps. This work aligned well with the strategic SCADA planning recently completed by the **DASB group** (southern Qld) and the coordinators have been sharing information.

At their last meeting, the **WBBROC Water Alliance** agreed to revisit the significant reviews they undertook in SCADA and telemetry a couple of years ago and re-invigorate discussions about regional alignment.

Another project common to several groups has been joint sewer relining with the **WBBROC Alliance** leading the way with their award-winning program which is well into its second round. The **RAPAD group** have also collaborated in joint relining while the **DASB region** is developing their joint program, currently focusing on pulling their contracting arrangements together based on learnings from the other regions.

The **NQROC region** which is not a formal participant in QWRAP (and thus unfunded) has been meeting at a technical level for two years and two of its members are also cooperating in sewer relining with savings for both councils.

Training is an area common to all QWRAP groups. A large program developed by the **WIM Water Alliance** (comprising Whitsunday, Isaac and Mackay) has developed an existing water industry worker skills development framework into a regional project that also included councils outside their region (Cairns, Burdekin and Townsville). This work has been so successful that demand has exceeded available spaces in some councils meaning the program may be extended in the future.



Training is also proceeding in the FNQROC Region and the DASB group has recently committed to undertaking a skills-needs analysis for operators across their region.

The **FNQROC region** has recently elected to change its status as a QWRAP region. The group will still be able to access bid-pool funding for joint projects but will not have a funded regional coordinator. This move reflects the strategic direction and priorities of the Regional Organisation of Councils and still provides for information sharing through regular technical meetings across the numerous councils in this large region. This change may provide opportunities for other regions that are not currently QWRAP participants.

There is continuing interest in collaboration within regions that are not currently funded through QWRAP. The **North Queensland** group holds regular technical meetings and the NQROC was briefed on QWRAP earlier in the year. The **Central Queensland** region also has a technical group and there have been similar meetings in NW Queensland and SW Queensland in the last three months.

Information sharing is the key driver for these meetings followed by planning for potential joint activities. The emerging regions will be invited to send representatives to future Chairs and Coordinators meetings held regularly by the five funded regions.

Reef Councils MIP

Earlier this year the LGAQ secured funding from the Office of the Great Barrier Reef (OGBR) for the Stage 1 Strategic Assessment (WWSSA) component of Initiative 1 Wastewater Stewardship in the Reef Councils Major Integrated Project (MIP) proposal. **qldwater** is partnering with the LGAQ to deliver the project.

The Wastewater Stewardship Initiative was developed by councils in GBR catchments as part of the development of the Reef Councils MIP in 2018.

Council-owned STPs have been calculated to contribute less than 5% of the total land-sourced nutrients flowing to the GBR but can still have significant local impacts if they discharge to waterways.

Reef Councils are investing in continuous improvement in local assets and activities to reduce total discharges to the Reef, improve water quality and respond to increasing community expectations and regulations. However, investment in high-tech treatment plants is expensive with diminishing returns for small towns and councils are increasingly seeking innovative options to improve management of sewerage systems aligned with local and GBR-scale catchment stewardship. The WWSSA will benefit all councils through cataloguing alternative solutions and supporting participating councils and key stakeholders to transition to a trial-readiness stage for improved sewage stewardship projects.

The first of two stakeholder workshops was held in June. Eighteen councils attended with a further four unable to attend but asking to be kept informed of progress and future directions. Additional attendees were from LGAQ, DES including the OGBR and **qldwater**.

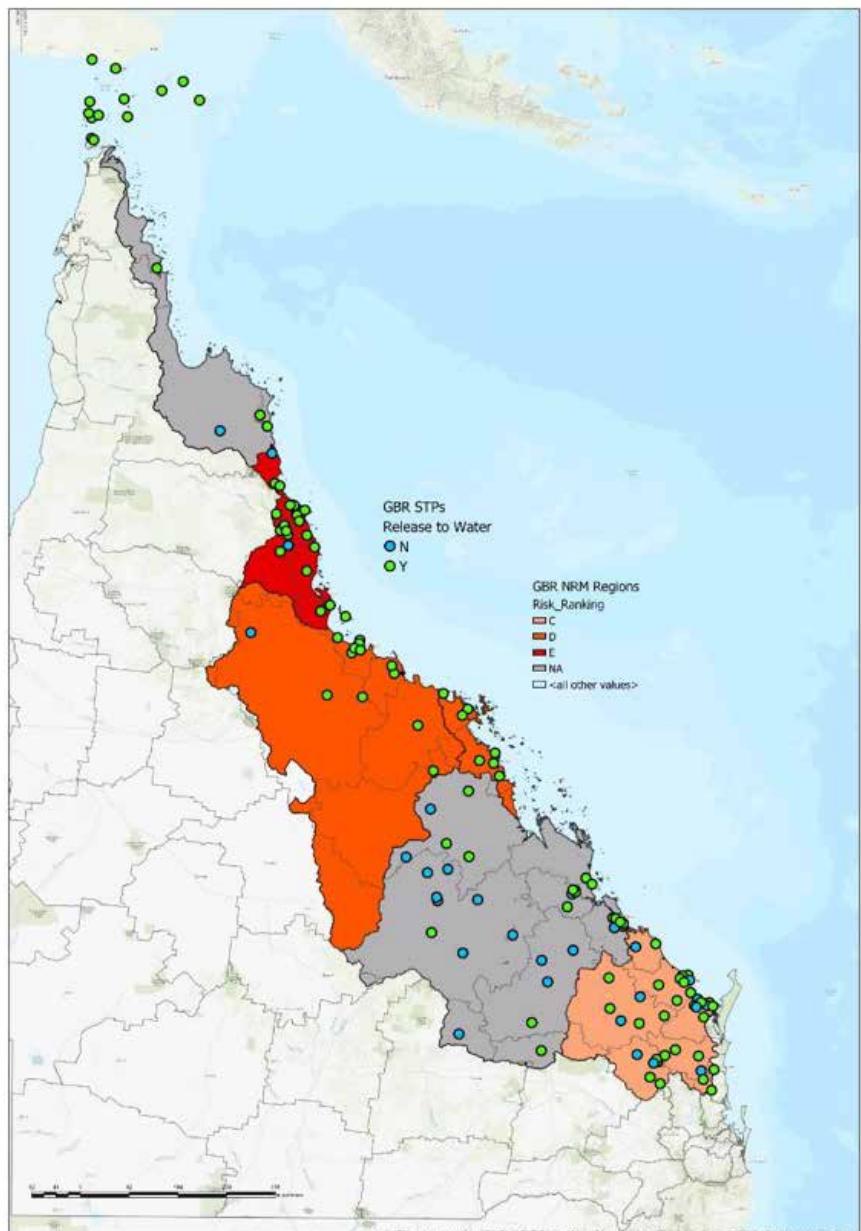
Overall the workshop received strong positive feedback with industry and DES representatives commending the high-level of engagement. The majority of attendees were positive about the process and opportunities to have input into the project.

Several participants were supportive of their councils becoming a participant in the trials recommended an outcome of the project.

Work underway for the WWSSA includes developing a matrix of improved stewardship options and beginning the process of identifying 'trial sites' for the future consideration.

The second workshop will be held on 5 November in Brisbane and all Reef Councils will be invited to participate.

For further details please contact **Ryan Cosgrove** or **Rob Fearon**.



2019 Events Calendar

Aside from a range of excellent presentations, workshops and networking opportunities, 2019 continues to focus on industry opportunities and gathering feedback to develop policy recommendations to help members reduce costs and improve services offered to their customers.

September

- 11-12 **qldwater** Annual Forum, Logan Metro Sports and Events Centre
Hosted by Logan City Council, the program will again include a range of lighter activities on 11th including a tour showcasing some of the activities of the Logan Water Infrastructure Alliance and dinner, and a workshop on the 12th.
- 13 AWA Queensland Gala Dinner and Water Awards Night, Grand Ballroom, Hilton Hotel, Brisbane

October

- 11 WIOA FNQ Interest Day, Cairns
14-16 LGAQ Annual Conference, Cairns Convention Centre
22-24 IPWEAQ Annual Conference, Brisbane Convention Centre
31 AWA Qld Women of Water Networking Event, Pig & Whistle, King George Square, Brisbane

November

- 20-21 AWA QWater'19 Conference, Sofitel Brisbane

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There are still sponsorship opportunities available for the **qldwater** Annual Forum and taste test. Sponsorships help to support these cost-effective events for the benefit of Queensland's water and sewerage service providers. Please contact dgralton@qldwater.com.au if you are interested.



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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."