**Queensland Water Skills e-Flash #31**

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

**(Issue #31 – 18 June 2014)**

**1.        *qldwater* NWDF Application Approved**

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**1.      *qldwater* NWDF Application Approved**

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In late 2013 ***qldwater*** submitted a second National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF) Application on behalf of the Queensland Water Industry. After extensive delays due to the Commission of Audit and Federal Budget announcements, we are pleased to advise that the NWDF application has recently been signed off by the Minister and approved as a high priority funding opportunity. In a very tight funding market, the success of the ***qldwater*** Federal and other State funding submissions reflects the value of a coordinated effort through the Queensland Water Skills Partnership as well as an acknowledgement of the importance of up-skilling in the water industry.

The ***qldwater*** application included funding for 6 water organisations and 63 learners at a total cost of $331,886of which the Australian Government will fund $114,398. The funding amount for participating organisations varies depending on organisation size: Small Organisations (under 100 employees)  receive 67% funding per qualification, Medium Organisations (100 -199 employees) – 50% funding and Large Organisations (> 200 employees) - 34% funding. The application targeted qualifications at Certificate IV level and above in water operations and project management.

As per the Federal Budget announcements in May, the NWDF will cease as of 1st July and no further funding is available through the program. A new *Industry Skills Fund* which will commence on 1 January 2015 has been announced.  The fund will target small to medium businesses with further details not yet available.

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**2.      New Pre-Qualified Supplier for User Choice Training (Water) - Enviro-Check Enterprises**

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Enviro-Check Enterprises has recently received approval from the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) to deliver Certificate II and III Water Operations qualifications under the User Choice Program.  Part of the approval process requires a letter of support from ***qldwater*** on behalf of the Queensland industry, which is provided to RTOs who can demonstrate appropriate skills, experience and potential to appropriately service the Queensland market.

The User Choice program provides public funding for the delivery of accredited, entry level training to apprentices and trainees. The program works in conjunction with the Commonwealth Australian Apprenticeships System, under which apprentices and trainees enter into legally binding training contracts with their employers and receive structured training to achieve a nationally recognised qualification.

The Queensland User Choice program enables apprentices, trainees and their employers to select a preferred Registered Training Organisation (RTO) from a list of Pre-qualified Suppliers for the delivery of accredited training to meet their specific needs.

Both Certificate II Water Operations and Certificate III Water Operations are currently priority 1 under User Choice, attracting up to 100% funding for the qualification. Further details on funding can be obtained from the DETE website - <http://www.training.qld.gov.au/training-organisations/user-choice/pricing.html>.

A guide to accessing User Choice funding is available on the ***qldwater*** website -<http://www.qldwater.com.au/Skills_Funding>.

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**3.       Griffith Smart Water Research Centre Training Surveys**

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Griffith University is currently developing a series of training courses designed to meet the changing needs of the water industry. These courses aim to assist operators, technicians, laboratory scientists and managers to adapt and up-skill for new technology, new guidelines and new legislative requirements. They will be designed to build pathways from vocational training through to degree qualifications. Initially a program of short courses will be offered that will provide up-to-date knowledge and skills that may count as credit towards accredited programs. In order to ensure these courses best suit industry needs, your assistance is requested by completing this short questionnaire (please click on link) - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MBTKY39>.

**Short Courses for Remote and Regional Water Security**

As mentioned above, a series of three short courses are under preparation and planned for delivery in late 2014 and early 2015. In order to ensure these courses best suit industry needs, your assistance is requested by completing another very short questionnaire after reading the brief course descriptions. Click here to complete the survey - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MPLVHJY>.

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**4.    New State Funding Opportunities – Water Qualifications**

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The State Government has released their 2014-15 Annual VET Investment Plan which  details the Government's planned $615 million investment in vocational education and training (VET) over the coming year.

The new funding model delivers targeted training based on industry advice and will provide Queenslanders with the right skills at the right time to enable them to gain meaningful and sustainable employment through the provider of their choice.

The plan outlines VET investment through the following programs and strategic interventions:

        Certificate 3 Guarantee

        User Choice (apprenticeships and traineeships)

        Higher Level Skills

        Community Learning

        Industry Partnerships Strategy

        Indigenous Training Strategy

The list of qualifications that will attract a government subsidy from 1 July 2014 under the 2014-15 Annual VET Investment Plan are detailed in the *Queensland Training Subsidies List*. Certificate II Water Operations, Certificate III Water Operations and also Certificate IV Water Operations qualifications are all listed on the Training Subsidies List. The Certificate IV In Water Operations will attract funding of between $2954 and $3587 for existing workers in the industry who do not already hold a Certificate IV or higher-level qualification (not including qualifications completed at school and foundation skills training). For further information visit the website - <http://training.qld.gov.au/information/vet-investment-plan/subsidies-list.html>.

As mentioned above, both Certificate II Water Operations and Certificate III Water Operations also remain generously funded for new and existing workers through the User Choice Program.

***qldwater*** (through the Queensland Water Skills Partnership) will investigate water industry opportunities through the *Industry Partnerships Strategy* when further details and calls for submissions are announced.

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**5.    Australian Water Occupations Framework Released**

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The Australian Water Occupations Framework developed by Government Skills Australia (GSA) is now live and can be accessed via [www.govskills.com.au/awof](http://www.govskills.com.au/awof) or via the GSA website, Water Sector Resources.

The framework defines 28 occupations linked to vocational qualifications in the water industry and details alternative titles, ANZSCO code, their core function, tasks, skills and knowledge. The framework was developed from the need for national consensus on common roles and provide a guide for their training in nationally endorsed qualifications.

Focus is now on the development of the national water training package (NWP) to compliment the occupations and streams developed in the framework. A number of Technical Reference Groups (TRGs) have been convened to review and develop the NWP materials. Once the TRGs have completed this first round, NWP material will be posted on the GSA website for everyone to have the opportunity to comment.

To read the project update, please go to the [GSA website.](http://www.governmentskills.com.au/water/25-water/105-water-competency-framework)

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