



Queensland Water

Issue 40 / December 2025



Message from CEO

by Dr Georgina Davis, Chief Executive Officer



Welcome to the December 2025 edition of the Queensland Water Directorate Newsletter. This is another packed edition, showcasing projects and advocacy across the sector.

Our advocacy efforts have continued across a widening range of issues, from state changes to the Drinking Water Quality Management Plan Guidelines and amendments to the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* to the Australian Government changes to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth). I urge all members to continue to [review our submissions and reports](#), and get involved, share the knowledge and have your voices heard through our Working Groups.

During this last period, activities within the Directorate include how the sector contends with its growing data challenges – from poor historical GIS mapping of our underground assets which leads to reduced opportunities for our network operators to practice the skills associated with plan reading, as well as hindering our ability to maximise the adoption of new technologies; through to improving knowledge management for the secure, efficient retrieval of the data and information held both internally and externally. Certainly, the emerging question is no longer whether to embrace AI but how quickly and effectively WSPs can harness its potential - particularly to manage the data we have into meaningful information, decisions and actions.

We are working on a variety of new projects including a new swimlocal™ offering to record skills and other workforce metrics, and the development of a comprehensive SCADA training course which has stimulated interesting feedback regarding the lack of (technology and systems) consistency across Water Service Providers (WSPs) and even within the same WSPs. Early in 2026, we will be canvassing the sector to determine what a state-wide SCADA system approach could look like and how we maximise the opportunities and manage the risks. I know that some of our Queensland Water Regional Alliances Program (QWRAP) regions are already across this, so their learnings will be invaluable.

We have also developed information sessions on Executive Liability with our first pilot workshop held on 12 June. Recent focus from one of our many, many, regulators has put Executive Liability across the urban water sector in the spotlight.

Growing civil and criminal liabilities across the numerous acts that regulate us and increasing personal penalties are leading many to question their roles and future in the sector. How does it come to this, and how will it impact attracting and retaining the right people going forward?

Already we are into another High-Risk Weather Season and with high sea temperatures, which we know store moisture and energy enhancing the severity of storms, this season may be more exciting than others - but I sincerely hope not. BOM is predicting a drier southwest and central Queensland and a continuation of higher-than-average temperatures across the State. It does not seem long ago that I was writing the last Newsletter (June 2025) foreword noting the 2024–25 disaster season which was one of the most extensive with 17 separate natural disaster events affecting 70 of Queensland's 77 local government areas.

Cascading climate risk is only one of the many threats our sector is managing. The last month has again shown us the risks posed by the interconnected nature of our infrastructure. As climate risks intensify, so do the interdependencies between water, power, telecoms and transport. This liability is only likely to grow as we address the current housing deficits by developing further land that is inherently vulnerable.

Investment in adaptive infrastructure is essential particularly in high-risk areas, but who pays for this, let alone the infrastructure cliff posed by our existing aging infrastructure. Certainly, the current Funding and Affordability project, led by the Queensland Treasury Corporation and commissioned by the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers will make interesting reading in the new year.

It is also worth noting that our November Strategic Priorities Group (SPG) meeting opened with a presentation on the current price monitoring investigations by the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) into Unitywater and Urban Utilities (2027-2030). The last QCA exercise investigating urban water retail pricing was a decade ago, noting that all commercial water businesses are subject to active pricing oversight in the *Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997*.

I have personally never seen a two-stage QCA price monitoring investigation like this – Stage 1 is certainly a departure from the norm, while the accompanying Ministers letter to the Referral Notice emphasizes the

Queensland Government commitment to easing cost of living pressures and initiatives to keep downward pressure on prices. Retail pricing in SEQ has not exceeded CPI and complaints concerning bills and billing to the Energy and Water Ombudsman are low. In fact, retail water prices have increased very minimally raising concerns about infrastructure renewal against the infrastructure cliff against the true and future costs of deferred investment, rising workforce, electricity, insurance, construction, materials and adherence to tightening regulation, amongst other considerations. The business specific final reports are due 30 April 2027, and it will be an interesting ride.

Something to keep our eyes on in the new year is the structural and funding reform discussions in Victoria and New South Wales. The Victorian Government's Independent Review of the Victorian Public Service: Final Report produced by Helen Silver AO suggested further consolidation of the States 18 water authorities. While the NSW Government, in collaboration with the sector is exploring a needs-based Community Service Obligation (CSO) funding model for regional water utilities to ensure affordable, reliable services despite low economies of scale. *qldwater* will be hosting a session in the new year to explore these developments and determine what can be of value (or not) to Queensland.

I again extend my sincere thanks to our SPG for their invaluable guidance in ensuring that mission-critical priorities were thoroughly represented, and for the dedication of the Working Group members and the incredibly talented *qldwater* team.

And finally, a huge thank you to the extraordinary dedication of those working in Queensland's urban water sector who, despite increasing scrutiny, regulation and other challenges, continue to deliver essential services to keep us all safe, and drive forward environmental and operational improvements.

We wish you all a happy festive season and look forward to connecting in 2026.

Until next time,
Georgina



Advocacy Highlights

Advocacy is at the heart of what we do - ensuring that the voices of Queensland's urban water service providers are heard in policy, regulation, and planning decisions that shape our sector. Over the past six months, *qldwater* has been actively championing member interests at state and national levels. Here's a snapshot of our recent efforts:

National Construction Code Amendments

We wrote to the Australian Building Codes Board seeking an extension for Queensland water service providers to comply with new lead-free copper alloy plumbing requirements. Our request aims to provide additional time for utilities to manage existing inventory and source compliant products.

Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act

A letter to the Deputy Director-General called for regulatory clarity and practical amendments, including risk-based exemption criteria, clearer definitions for "Authorised Person" and "Competent Operator," and alignment with Drinking Water Quality Management Plan frameworks.

Reef 2050 Catchment Water Quality Strategy

Our feedback supported the strategy's intent but stressed the need for achievable, financially viable expectations for wastewater treatment, aligned with broader policy instruments such as Reef Credits.

Environmental Protection Efficiency and Streamlining Bill

We urged the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation to engage in broader consultation with water service providers before finalising legislative changes.

NSW EPA Draft Biosolids Order

We raised concerns about proposed thresholds that diverge from national guidance, advocating for a scientifically defensible, nationally consistent framework aligned with NEMP 3.0.

Workforce and Skills Initiatives

Through multiple submissions and letters to Buildskills Australia we called for support for a Water Industry Apprenticeship feasibility study and revisions to the NWP Training Package, and we continue to push for recognition of critical operator roles to address workforce shortages. Our 2024 Workforce Snapshot Report and ISJA Attraction Project provide valuable insights to guide future planning.

Industry Support and Strategic Engagement

We supported IXOM's chlorine liquefaction plant expansion to strengthen national supply resilience and contributed to Eco-Markets Australia's proposed ACWIS standard, advocating for robust governance and practical frameworks for water quality improvements.

These actions reflect our commitment to ensuring that policy, regulation, and workforce development initiatives are informed by the realities of operating in Queensland's urban water sector.

EPBC Act Reforms

We supported reforms to the *EPBC Act* to fast-track approvals for critical water infrastructure and endorsed flexible approvals, bioregional guidance plans, the National Environmental Protection Agency, and inclusion of Indigenous knowledge. However, we raised concerns about unclear definitions, uncertainty around "national interest" criteria, increased penalties and misalignment between Queensland's offsets regime and proposed national standards.

All our submissions and reports are available [on the *qldwater* website](#).



Advocacy: Executive Liability

Executive Liability: A Growing Risk for Water Sector Leaders

In June 2025, the Queensland Water Directorate (*qldwater*) piloted its first Executive Liability Session specifically for water executives at its Eagle Farm office. The session brought together water sector leaders to explore a critical and evolving challenge: the personal (civil and criminal) liability faced by executives under tightening legal frameworks.

With the theme "Water is a Risky Business," the session explored how recent legal developments - both internationally and within Queensland - are increasing scrutiny on decision-makers in the water industry. In the UK, new laws now allow prison sentences for executives who obstruct investigations into environmental breaches. Closer to home, Queensland's legislative landscape is shifting, with strengthened powers under the Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011, Environmental Protection Act 1994, and other key statutes, not perhaps most critically the Public Health Act 2005 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008.

Key Takeaways from the Session

Expert-led discussions focused on:

- Legal responsibilities of water executives under current regulations.
- Practical strategies to mitigate risk in areas such as Workplace Health and Safety, drinking water regulation, and environmental law.
- The role of deeds of indemnity, Directors and Officers (D&O) insurance, and proactive governance in managing personal exposure.

The message was clear: defending against regulatory action can be costly.

Real-World Risks: Naegleria Fowleri Detection Sparks Concern

The urgency of these discussions was underscored by recent events in regional Queensland following a detection (which turned out to be a false positive) of *Naegleria fowleri*, a rare but deadly amoeba, in a drinking water supply.

While the risk of infection is extremely low, occurring only when untreated water enters the nose, the consequences are severe. Primary amoebic meningoencephalitis, the infection caused by *Naegleria fowleri*, is almost always fatal.

Advice from Queensland Health is that the water remains safe to drink, provided precautions are taken to prevent water entering the nasal passages during bathing or swimming.

Since 2000, Australia has recorded five confirmed cases, all fatal, with the most recent Queensland case in 2015. Children and young people are particularly vulnerable.

Further recent detections of other *Naegleria* species have also been identified in regional areas.

The Liability Question

Following this incident, the drinking water regulator wrote to Queensland councils, highlighting the potential liability of CEOs and Mayors should any deaths occur from contaminated drinking water supplies. The challenge is compounded by the fact that several drinking water schemes across Outback Queensland cannot chlorinate their supplies due to high water temperatures from Great Artesian Basin bores.

At a regional conference in Atherton in 2020, Laura Shiels [delivered an excellent presentation](#) on *Naegleria fowleri* following a detection in Townsville's drinking water supplies. Their strategy focused largely on system-wide chlorine monitoring and maintaining chlorine residual in the long, some above ground, supply pipelines, and reservoirs on exposed hills.

With councils already under financial strain and limited funding from Queensland and Federal Governments, local government executives face immense pressure to maintain service delivery. This challenge is compounded by ageing infrastructure nearing the end of its life and growing demand from population increases and other pressures on water supplies.

Navigating the Future

As Queensland's water sector faces increasingly complex regulatory waters, *qldwater* remains committed to equipping its members with the knowledge and tools to lead responsibly and confidently.

For more information on the Executive Liability Sessions for water executives which cover WHS, Environment, Drinking Water Supply, Dam Safety, HBTs, Insurance, and Dealing with the Regulator, please contact Dr Georgina Davis at gdavis@qldwater.com.au.

Advocacy Highlights

When Pools Become Problematic

In 2023 market research company, Roy Morgan estimated that over 3.1 million Australians lived in a house with a swimming pool or spa, equivalent to one-in-seven Australians (14%).

Regional Queensland, which includes the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, and a string of regional cities up the coast such as Bundaberg, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns, leads the nation. Nearly one-in-four regional Queenslanders (24%) live in a house with a swimming pool or spa.

Queensland's climate and lifestyle have led to widespread swimming pool ownership and with Queensland's population projected to grow from 5.24 million persons up to 8.27 million persons by 2046; and a South East Queensland Regional Plan for almost 900,000 new homes by 2046 to accommodate 2.2 million new residents – residential pool ownership is rising as is the provision of public and commercial pools and aquatic centres. How the urban water sector then deals with pool backwash and other discharges from pools is therefore becoming an important question, as is the question about their impact on local water security.

The most recent reliable information (ABS 2009) showed that multiple water sources are used to fill or top up nearly 300,000 residential swimming pools in Queensland, including by primarily town water (47%), dam or rainwater tank (42%) and just rainwater tank (23%). The total volume of these swimming pools (based on an average capacity of 60 kL per pool) is estimated to be in excess of 15 gigalitres (not including public pools) and not considering increasing evaporation rates associated with climate.

Changes to pool technologies and an emerging preference for saltwater pools (which are more likely to experience chlorine lock) are also impacting the chemical composition and volumes of backwash. All these factors illustrate the importance of properly managing the potential impact of the activity.

The management of wastewater from pools is currently inconsistent, creating confusion for owners and installers, as well as Water Service Providers (WSPs), noting that in Queensland, WSPs are a mix of councils (large to very small) and water utilities.

To provide clarity, *qldwater* has released a report by a leading expert which reviews current practices and proposes a risk-based policy setting to manage residential swimming pool discharges. The report balances stakeholders' responsibilities to protect the environment, comply with regulations and to implement cost effective solutions, while ensuring risks are managed by those best placed to do so.

The report focusses on the question of managing residential swimming pool waters, noting that commercial pool discharges are satisfactorily managed under the trade waste provisions of Queensland's *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*. The Act enables WSPs to condition commercial swimming pool discharges in accordance with their Trade Waste Management Plan to protect the environment, utility workers, sewerage system assets and the value of downstream products for reuse and recycling.

Further considerations in the report include the periodic requirement for residential pool owners to partially or completely empty their pool.



Under the National Construction Code “pools must be capable of being completely emptied and backwash and overflow discharges must connect to sewer systems where applicable.” Controlling these discharges at times of significant rain events, and at a flow rate that will not overwhelm the receiving infrastructure is essential.

In line with other jurisdictions, Queensland also has strict regulations prohibiting the release of prescribed water contaminants into the environment as well as a General Environmental Duty on all Queenslanders under the Environmental Protection Act 1994. The regulation of prescribed discharges to water in Queensland are devolved to local councils, many of which are also the WSP.

Interestingly, the report reviews the policy and practices from other Australian jurisdictions, including references and statements about pool water management. The review reveals a level of inconsistency that suggests not every jurisdiction’s approach to pool water management can be correct.

The report recommends a risk-based, approval-driven approach to pool wastewater management, tailored to climate and infrastructure, and in consideration of current regulatory requirements.

In summary, the report recommends that Queensland’s WSPs should:

- Accept residential pool backwash water discharge to sewer, subject to approval conditions that control risks associated with excessive flow rates and potential contaminants.

- Prohibit discharge of swimming pool overflow water to sewer.
- Ensure swimming pool overflow water is connected to stormwater drainage in accordance with Australian Standard AS/NZS 3500 (Plumbing Code of Australia).
- Ensure roof water to swimming pool top-up systems are installed in accordance with AS/NZS 3500 (Plumbing Code of Australia) – in particular prohibiting direct or uncontrolled connection.
- Accept swimming pool emptying water discharge to sewer, subject to approval conditions that control risks associated with excessive flow rates to sewerage networks and potential contaminants.

By adopting these recommendations, WSPs can protect the environment, ensure public health, and provide clear, consistent guidance to pool owners. A copy of the report and associated policy position is available on the *qldwater* website.

On a final note, the Queensland Government is developing a new state-wide Water Security Plan to strengthen water security measures and support economic growth. The question for Government is whether the impacts from swimming pools are material and thus should be included or excluded from their thinking.

qldwater members can [download the report here](#).



Award Winners 2025

Young Operator of the Year: Matt Gosper

Each year, the Queensland Water Directorate proudly sponsors the Operator of the Year Awards at the Water Industry Operations Association Australia (WIOA) Queensland Conference to recognise emerging talent in our industry - those who bring technical excellence, innovation, leadership, and community-mindedness to their work. This year, we were thrilled to announce **Matt Gosper** from **Mackay Regional Council** as the **2025 Young Operator of the Year!**

Matt's journey into the water industry began after his first job doing pool chemistry at a local swimming pool led to a Council role in plumbing and water mains. From there, he completed a Certificate II in Water Industry Operations and eventually found his passion in wastewater. *"People don't really think about these kinds of jobs when they're at school,"* Matt reflects. *"All you hear about is being a lawyer or a doctor, but you never think about water and wastewater jobs. I absolutely love it."*

Today, Matt works as a Water Treatment Operator in Mackay Regional Council's Wastewater team, primarily based at the Sarina Water Recycling Facility, a highly advanced, automated plant with stringent discharge requirements due to its proximity to the Great Barrier Reef. His contributions include plant optimisation, SCADA system integration, and alarm rationalisation, and he regularly steps up to backfill the Team Leader role and take on-call responsibilities.

Matt's commitment to safety and compliance is evident in his involvement with dam inspections at Middle Creek Dam, safety audits, and performance-focused team meetings. His efforts have helped maintain a 10-year LTI-free record for the Water Treatment Program. He also played a key role during the transition of operations at council's aquatic facilities, ensuring minimal disruption and maximum safety, even volunteering his time after hours.

Outside of work, Matt is equally dedicated to his community. He volunteers with the local Rangers soccer club as both a player and coach's assistant and is currently pursuing a dual diploma in Business and Leadership Management, underscoring his passion for continuous learning.

When asked how he felt about winning the award, Matt said:

"I was very surprised to be nominated in the first stage and just so grateful for the experience to go to the WIOA Conference."

His advice for anyone considering a career in the water industry?

"Never say no to any opportunities. If you get asked to do anything, just do it - you can pick up bits and pieces along the way and apply them to your overall skill set."

As part of his award, Matt receives \$1,500 toward professional development and an all-expenses-paid opportunity to join the WIOA delegation on the New Zealand tour in May next year.

Congratulations Matt, your professionalism, initiative, and collaborative spirit make you a standout in our industry!



Operator of the Year (Civil / Allrounder): Wayne Siganto

The Operator of the Year (Civil / Allrounder) Award recognises individuals who embody dedication, innovation, and community service in the water industry - those who consistently go above and beyond to deliver safe, reliable, and high-quality services to their communities. We are proud to announce **Wayne Siganto** from **Mareeba Shire Council** as the 2025 recipient of this prestigious award!

With over 30 years of service, Wayne has been a cornerstone of Mareeba Shire Council's water and wastewater operations. Starting his career as a labourer with the Water Board in 1995, Wayne transitioned into operations around 2000 and has never looked back. Today, as Treatment Plant Supervisor, he leads a small but dedicated team responsible for six treatment plants across the region.

Reflecting on his win, Wayne admits he was stunned:

"I was in shock to win it. You just go about your day thinking you don't get recognised, so I was really honoured. We've got a great team here and a great manager who guides me all the time. Between us, there's a lot of talking and communicating to get the job done."

Wayne's love for the water industry is clear:

"It's a really good job. There's so much to learn and so much we do. I've got a really good team, and that's why I'm still here today. I love what I do."

Over the years, Wayne has mentored several trainees, focusing on instilling the importance of safety, compliance, and environmental responsibility:

"We're supplying good, safe drinking water and managing wastewater properly. There's a lot to learn - new technology, SCADA systems, environmental procedures. I just want to make sure the next generation is ready to take over."

His efforts include practical steps like labelling valves and pipes to make plants easier to navigate for new operators.

Wayne's leadership shines brightest during emergencies. When Cyclone Jasper washed away the Kuranda Water Treatment Plant intake, Wayne and his team implemented an emergency pumping solution that kept water flowing to residents:

"Being on the job for a while, you just have an idea in your head on how to do things. We've got experienced operators and a good manager, so we put our heads together and sorted it out. We're still using backup pumps today while repairs are underway."

Beyond his technical expertise, Wayne is deeply committed to his culture and community:

"I'm an Indigenous person from Inala, and I'm right into my culture. My grandsons dance at NAIDOC Week events, and I always support them. I'd love to see more Indigenous people in the water industry and help communities get reliable drinking water."

Wayne encourages newcomers to see the water industry as a career for life:

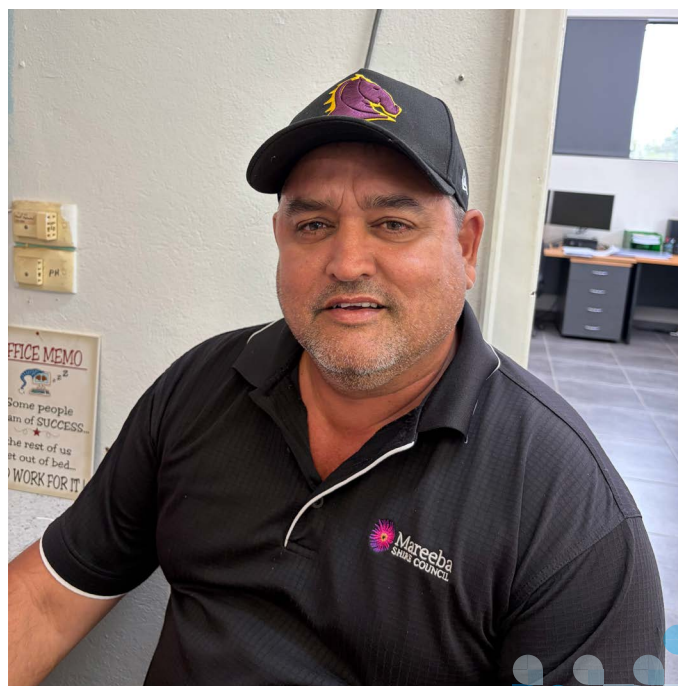
"Water's never going to go away—it's valuable. There are so many opportunities: civil works, engineering, environmental roles, labs. If you're willing to learn, there's a big future in this industry."

Why Recognition Matters

Winning the award has given Wayne a renewed sense of motivation:

"I didn't think I'd ever get nominated. We work hard, sometimes 15-hour days in the wet season, and no one realises what you do. Managers should nominate people who put in the effort. This award has given me a boost and reminded me people are watching."

Congratulations, Wayne! Your dedication, leadership, and passion for both your work and your culture shines through in everything you do.



Past Events - Annual Forum

Events 2025

Since our last newsletter we've had the pleasure of hosting a number of successful industry events. Here's a lowdown on the highlights, kicking off the Annual Forum which took place on 20-21 August at the *qldwater* offices in Eagle Farm followed by an Awards Dinner at Water's Edge and ending with 3 technical tours to a variety of sites.

Annual Forum Day 1

The event kicked off with an opening address by **Deputy Director General, Water Resource Management Jarrod Cowley-Grimmond** from the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers. Jarrod provided an overview of the Department and the roles and responsibilities of his team.

Matt Bradbury, Director at Clear Ridge Consulting started his presentation titled "Water economics at a crossroads: Bridging the price-cost divide" with a history of the Romans who did a wonderful job in getting the price of water down, but ultimately their civilisation fell when they started to build monuments rather than looking after their assets – a great lesson for our "Curator Aqueous" and his team. Matt's presentation focused on efficiency and pricing reform, highlighting the continued decrease in the price of water aligning with a decline in the regions where assets are depreciating faster than they are being replaced. We are relying on the investments of the past to see us into the future. Matt also compared funding approaches, from the uncertain, uneven and admin heavy competitive grant processes to the certainty, equitable and long-term commitment of stable funding / co-funding, suggesting that the role of government is to provide clarity, confidence and certainty through partnerships, not competition.

In an engaging session on managing psychosocial risks for a risky sector, **Naomi Kemp** GAICD from fr&nk and **Cameron Dean** from McCullough Robertson explored the true costs of poor psychosocial safety, including real cases of prosecution.

Cameron kicked off the session with examples of legal (claims, penalties, investigations) vs non-legal (productivity, disruption, turnover) impacts of mental health issues at work. The worker insights session involved ten-minute discussions around two questions: Is there a difference between plans and procedures and the way things really get done in your workplace; and when and where do you have to be extra vigilant?

We learned about the Big 6 psychosocial hazards: Low co-worker support, low job control, role ambiguity, emotional demands, role conflict and poor organisational justice. The main hazards in the water sector are high job demands, remote or isolated work, fatigue related to work demands and unsafe or unpleasant physical working environments.

Session two looked into risk-proportionate regulation, an approach that's reshaping how we think about compliance and innovation.

The session kicked off with our very own Lead Scientist **Dr Louise Reeves** discussing the effectiveness of source control and its timeframes. We know that regulation of contaminants of concern is straining the sector, causing business uncertainty and decision risk. In her presentation Louise discussed research findings on contaminant sources and the effectiveness of source control following bans on AFFFs in 2003. She acknowledged the difficulty in playing regulatory wack-a-mole with 1616 PFAS registered and called for shared responsibility and evidence-based pathways to address regulatory pressures beyond end-of-pipe solutions.

Next up **Duncan Middleton**, Manager Technical Support and Improvement at Seqwater shared lessons learnt from flood response and future planning for Brisbane 2032.



Extreme weather events are part of life in Queensland leading to dirty water events that challenge our water treatment plants. Population growth has made maintaining supply even more challenging. Duncan's presentation explored the planning and approaches taken by Seqwater and its water supply partners to manage water supply during extreme events. Duncan also discussed the increased risks (including cyber security) in the lead up to the 2032 Olympic games.

Could Eco-Markets unlock water quality and nature credits towards diversified investment strategies? In his presentation **Dr Goslik Schepers**, CEO of Eco-Markets Australia explained the why and how of nature credits as a diversified funding strategy using the example of Pacific Bio's RegenAqua project as an innovative wastewater application. Goslik highlighted the importance of additionality to show that a project has gone above and beyond what it was stated to do to be able to claim credits, and the opportunities for the sector from the Australasian Catchment Water Improvement Standard.

The session closed with **Katrina Donaghy**, Regional CEO at APAC - Water Ledger discussing smart markets for smart water. Local governments and utilities often carry the burden of environmental regulation without the financial tools to share that responsibility. The SWaN Exchange enables the creation of local markets for verified environmental services empowering councils to issue credits for outcomes like flood mitigation, soil carbon storage, or riparian habitat restoration. These can be traded with developers seeking offset compliance or investors funding measurable ESG impacts.

The final session of the day focused on supporting initiatives and tools with **Chris Blake**, Team Leader Environmental Health (WaSH) at Queensland Health's Tropical Health Services in Cairns sharing his experiences and the supporting structures provided through the Safe and Healthy Drinking Water in Indigenous Local Government Areas Program. This program is going from strength to strength as evidenced by the huge turnout to and engagement at the 2025 Indigenous Councils Drinking Water Symposium in June. The program shifted from top-down regulatory enforcement to collaborative capacity building. The program methodology includes consultation and partnerships, intensive monitoring and support for a minimum of six months with a week on, week off roster, and tailored ongoing support to maintain and improve and relationships.

The final speaker of the day was **Dr John Vitkovsky**, Principal Project Officer - Queensland Hydrology at the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation. John's presentation explored climate risks for the water sector and what it means for making decisions.



Past Events - Annual Forum

Awards Dinner

The Forum Day ended on a high note with an Awards Dinner and the TracWater Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test at Waters Edge. We also proudly recognised two outstanding individuals whose contributions continue to shape and strengthen Queensland's urban water and sewerage sector.

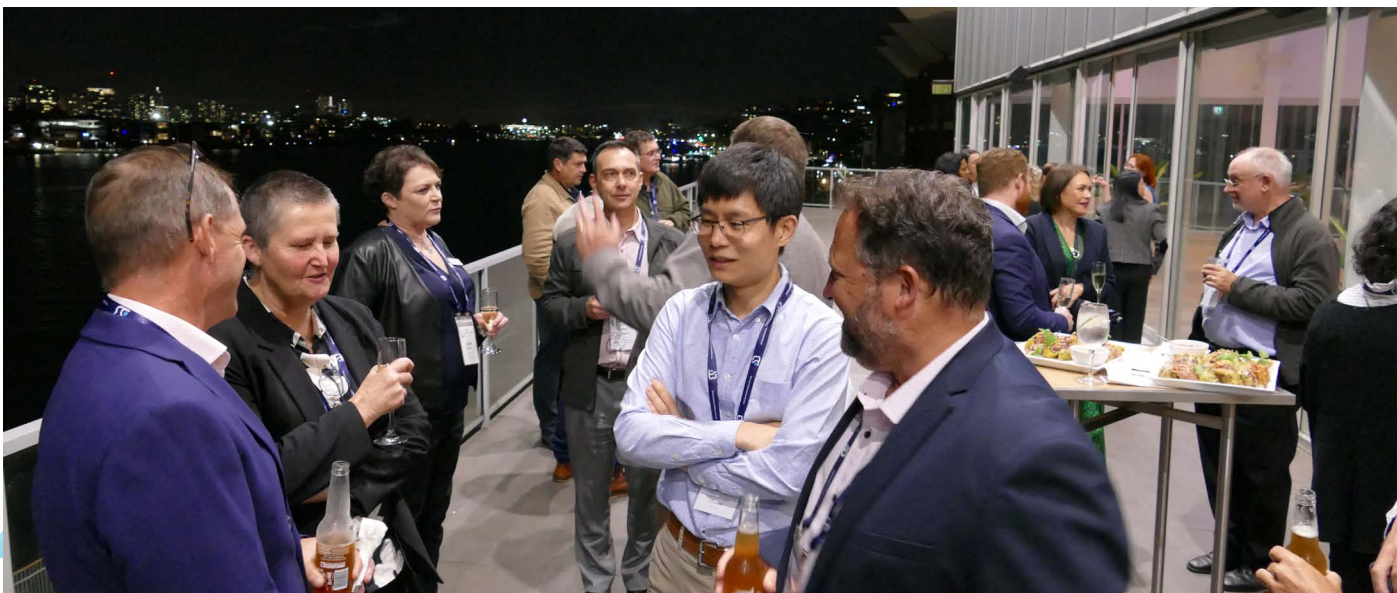
Congratulations to **Gympie Regional Council** whose Cooloola/ Tin Can Bay scheme emerged as the winner of the Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test, impressing judges with its exceptional clarity, freshness, and overall taste.

The award-winning water is sourced from Teewah Creek nestled within the Great Sandy National Park and undergoes treatment with pH adjustments, coagulation, filtration, and disinfection.

Well done to the Gympie water team for their ongoing efforts to provide great quality water to their local community.

The Government Stakeholder Contribution Award was awarded to **Chris Blake** from Queensland Health. Chris has led the transformative Safe and Healthy Drinking Water Program, a sector-leading initiative ensuring Queensland's First Nations Communities have access to safe drinking water. His culturally respectful partnerships with Operators and community leaders have delivered hands-on technical support, training, and guidance to 17 First Nations communities. Chris's work exemplifies the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and deep commitment to public health and equity.

The Industry Recognition Award was awarded to Trevor Seth from TJS Consulting. With over 46 years in the water and wastewater industry, Trevor's journey from tradesman to senior leadership across multiple councils is a testament to his dedication and expertise. After serving as Manager, Water and Sewerage at Goondiwindi Regional Council until 2024, Trevor now supports regional, remote, and rural councils through TJS Consulting. His legacy is one of mentorship, operational excellence, and unwavering service to the sector.



Site Tours

The Forum included three tour options:

Tour 1

Logan Water Biosolids Gasification Facility

Logan Water has pioneered Australia's first biosolids gasification facility at the Loganholme WWTP which handles over 90% of Logan City's wastewater and turns human waste into heat energy, reducing the amount of biosolids by 90%.

Biosolids gasification involves dewatering, drying, and heating biosolids at very high temperatures with limited oxygen. The facility captures and reuses its own heat energy to dry the biosolids, while a 1.1MW solar farm with 3,000 panels offsets the facility's electrical energy needs. This process turns biosolids into renewable energy and biochar.

Eurofins Environment Testing Australia

Eurofins has been at the forefront of PFAS analysis for years, offering ultra-trace detection methods that meet and exceed both local and international guidance. The laboratory tour of our Brisbane operation focused on how a laboratory manages routine, reliable, high-quality extraction and quantification of such a challenging assay like PFAS. The Do's and Don'ts of sampling, handling, submission to a laboratory and a behind the scenes walk through of how this all plays a role in PFAS characterisation.

Tour 2

Oleology

This site visit looked at advanced water treatment technology provided by Oleology using their MyCelx technology. This innovative system removes contaminants such as oils, hydrocarbons, PFAS, mercury, and organics to below detectable levels. With a compact design and no water loss, OLEOLOGY's system has benefits including ultra-low contaminant levels (below 1ppm), no recontamination even when filters are saturated, flexibility for various flow rates, easy installation and low maintenance.

Rino Recycling

At this multi-waste stream recycling facility, visitors saw a state-of-the-art operation designed to recover and repurpose a wide range of materials. The tour showcased advanced machinery that sorts and processes construction and demolition waste, metals, timber, concrete, and general waste – turning what would have gone to landfill into reusable resources. Guests witnessed the parts of the recycling process in action, from material drop-off to clean product output, while learning about the environmental impact and innovation driving Rino's commitment to sustainable waste management.

Tour 3

BOC Gases

BOC's Bulwer Island renewable hydrogen production is Queensland's only operational green hydrogen facility. Participants learned more about the process and how water is used.

The hydrogen is transported in hydrogen tube trailers to the Linde hydrogen refuelling station located at the bp Port of Brisbane Truckstop. Queensland Government's QFleet uses the facility to refill its current fleet of five-hydrogen powered Hyundai Nexos in approximately 3-5 minutes. Any member of the public with a hydrogen car can also register with bp to refill their passenger vehicle.

Thanks to our sponsors!



Webinars

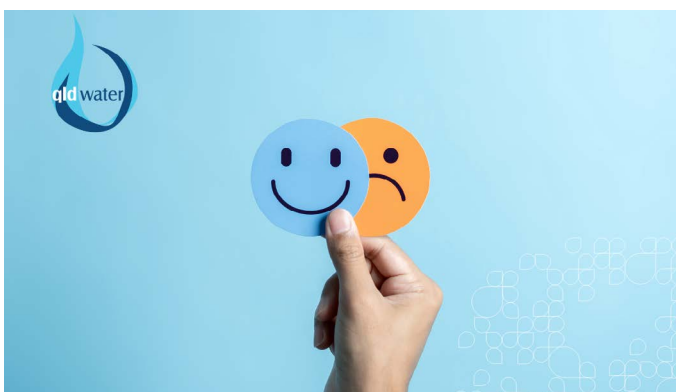
Since our last newsletter, *qldwater* has delivered a number of Essentials and Fundamentals Webinars to ensure our members remain up to date on issues affecting the water sector including cybersecurity, PFAS and other contaminants of concern, mental health, asset criticality and renewable energy in water operations.



Essentials Webinar: Cyber Security for Water Businesses

Sean Murdoch from Secolve explored the critical importance of OT cybersecurity for water businesses, outlining common threats, sector-specific risks, and the impact of the Security of Critical Infrastructure (SOCI) Act. The session emphasised awareness, risk management, and secure system design, offering valuable insights for utilities navigating today's evolving cybersecurity landscape.

[Watch the recording and download the presentation here.](#)



Essentials Webinar: Mental Health

In this webinar, Belinda Chapman explained the power of the mind-body connection and provided techniques for self-regulation including the circle of control and influence; increasing your emotional vocabulary; and mimicking nature by pulsing throughout the day. She also explored in the moment techniques like a 6 second mindfulness pause, breathing exercises and the ability to manage thoughts through segmentation, reframing and perspective.

[Watch the recording and download the presentation here.](#)



Essentials Webinar: ADWG for PFAS

Jarrold Cowley-Grimmond, DDG at the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers, outlined updates to the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines for PFAS. New, lower limits now apply to four compounds—PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, and PFBS—replacing previous combined metrics. Water providers should assess risks, consider testing, and update DWMPs. While testing isn't mandatory, transparency and proactive risk management are encouraged.

[Watch the recording and download the presentation here.](#)



Carol Walczyk Talks PFAS

Carol Walczyk, Director of the Municipal Water at Veolia provided an overview of PFAS legislation in the US and the lessons learnt from 100 new water treatment plants in 10 years. Carol leads a team of senior technical experts supporting operations, driving innovation and spearheading growth initiatives for global activities in drinking water, wastewater and reuse.

[Watch the recording here.](#)



Fundamentals Webinar: Reducing Energy Costs in Water Operations

In this practical and insightful Fundamentals Webinar, regional energy specialist Andrew Chamberlin explained how water operators can reduce energy costs and improve pump performance including understanding electricity tariffs and how to make them work for you, adjusting operations to align with tariff structures and reduce peak charges, and improving motor and pump efficiency with simple checks and tweaks.

[Watch the recording and download the presentation here.](#)



Fundamentals Webinar: Incorporating Renewables into Urban Water Operations

In part 2 of our Fundamentals Webinars on navigating the integration of renewable energy into water infrastructure, Andrew Chamberlin explored how to incorporate renewables into your site, understanding thresholds for feed-in tariffs, maximising the use of generated energy and when and how battery storage can add value.

[Watch the recording and download the presentation here.](#)



Essentials Webinar: Asset Criticality Tools

In 2020, *qldwater* partnered with Mackay, Whitsunday and Fraser Coast Regional Councils to develop clear guidance for identifying critical assets and improving risk management. The collaboration produced a Statewide Network Asset Criticality Guideline, enabling WSPs to apply a consistent, risk-based approach aligned to organisational size and risk appetite. In this webinar, Moira Zeilinga from Clear Idea shared practical tools and key learnings from implementing the framework.

[Watch the recording and download the presentation here.](#)



Past Events

qldwater at IPWEA-QNT Annual Conference

The *qldwater* team was well represented at the Institute of Public Works Engineering (Queensland and Northern Territory) Annual Conference, held at the Royal International Convention Centre in Brisbane from 8–10 October.

Our stall became a popular spot thanks to having the most comfortable chairs in the venue! Many delegates stopped by for a rest and stayed to learn more about our projects and initiatives.

We also led a site tour of the Virginia Branch Sewer Augmentation (Cannery Creek) Project, an innovative nature-based solution addressing wet weather overflows in northern Brisbane. Historically, the Virginia Branch Sewer experienced an average of 22 spills per year, impacting local properties and Cannery Creek.

The project's design diverts excess wet weather flows to newly constructed wetlands and bioretention basins before discharging into Kedron Brook, improving water quality, protecting public health, and enhancing aquatic ecosystems.

A special thank you to Nathan Lavender and Paul Dubowski for guiding the tour and sharing the rich history of Cannery Creek, named after the Golden Circle Cannery established in 1947. The project's co-design process with local residents exemplifies best-practice community engagement.

We also congratulate Cook Shire Council, recognised at the Gala Awards Dinner on 9 October for their Water & Sewer Assets Project, delivered in partnership with Mangoesmapping.

Faced with outdated and fragmented asset data, Cook Shire implemented an open-source geospatial enterprise mapping solution, enabling staff to access asset data anytime, anywhere. This transformation has:

- Reduced response times and improved decision-making
- Enabled independent data maintenance and growth
- Mitigated corporate risks around knowledge retention
- Delivered cost savings and productivity gains
- Supported a shift to preventative asset maintenance

This project is a shining example of innovation and collaboration delivering sustainable solutions for regional councils.

End of Year Celebrations at Parliament House

qldwater staff, members and partners enjoyed a wonderful afternoon at Parliament House celebrating another big year for Queensland's urban water sector.

It was great to see so many professionals from water service providers, sector suppliers and government agencies - a true reflection of collaboration across our industry.

Events like this are a reminder of how dedicated and passionate our water community is. Thank you to all attendees - your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Images below: qldwater supporters enjoy the city views from Parliament House.



Celebrating Excellence in Queensland's Water Sector

qldwater members performed well at the Australian Water Association QLD Gala Awards this year in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the industry.

Special acknowledgement goes to **Trevor Dean** from **Fraser Coast Regional Council**, Chair of our Strategic Priorities Group, who received the Regional Service Award for his leadership through the LGAQ Water and Wastewater Advisory Group and his pivotal roles in Queensland Water Industry Reference Group (QWIRG) and the Wide Bay Burnett Urban Water Alliance (WBBUWA).

Congratulations also to **Burdekin Shire Council** for winning the Infrastructure Project Innovation Award for their Macro-Algal Bioremediation Facility, and to **Unitywater** for taking out the Infrastructure Project Innovation Award (Metro) with the Wamuran Irrigation Scheme.

These achievements showcase the innovation, collaboration, and dedication driving Queensland's water industry forward. Well done to all involved!

Image: Julian Tickle accepted the Project Innovation Award for Burdekin Shire Council's Macro-Algal Bioremediation Facility at the Gala Awards Dinner. Credit: AWA



qldwater Welcomes South Korean Delegation for Knowledge Exchange

On 17 October 2025, *qldwater* had the privilege of hosting a delegation from the Local Administration Training Institute (LATI) of the Republic of Korea at its Eagle Farm offices. The visit marked an important opportunity for international collaboration and knowledge sharing in the water sector.

The purpose of the delegation's visit was threefold:

- To understand *qldwater's* role in coordinating across Queensland councils for water and sewerage services.
- To learn about capacity building programs, technical support, and policy guidance provided to member councils.
- To explore policy advocacy initiatives and climate resilience strategies championed by *qldwater*.



The day's agenda featured insightful sessions, including an overview of the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP), a government-funded initiative supporting sustainable water and sewerage service delivery in regional Queensland. Delegates engaged in discussions on water policy and advocacy, emerging contaminants, and trade waste challenges.

Feedback from the LATI delegation was overwhelmingly positive, with participants noting they "had a great time and learned lots of things" from the *qldwater* team. The exchange highlighted the value of global partnerships in addressing shared challenges such as water security, workforce sustainability, and climate resilience.

Program Update: Skills & Training

Sarah Henry, Water Skills Partnership Manager



Water Skills Partnership Update

The Water Skills Partnership (WSP), led by Sarah Henry, continues to deliver initiatives that strengthen workforce capability and address critical skills gaps across Queensland's urban water sector. Here are the latest highlights:

Industry Engagement and Recognition

Sarah has been actively representing the sector at the WIOA Conference and QWater on the Gold Coast, continuing the conversation on workforce development and capability.

Feedback from operators, WIOA, and AWA confirms the impact of this messaging, with Sarah receiving the Best Paper Award at the recent AWA QWater'25 conference.

Image below: Sarah presenting at QWater. Credit AWA.



Addressing Trainer Shortages – TAE for WIO Supervisors

One of our latest projects focuses on delivering the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) to Water Industry Operator Supervisors (WIOS). With a shortage of trainers and limited availability from RTOs until mid-2026, *qldwater* is seeking funding for an accelerated TAE program targeted at experienced supervisors.

A full cohort has now been identified, and an RTO secured. Funding is the next step...

Careers Promotion

Sarah has developed targeted promotional flyers and supported careers days to raise awareness of water industry roles among school leavers. The resources are available to download from our [Water Workforce Toolbox](#). Recent participation in Year 11 and 12 careers events with councils has been highly successful.

Want *qldwater* at your careers day? Contact Sarah to arrange support.

National Workforce Planning

Through *qldwater's* role on the BuildSkills Australia Water Industry Advisory Group, Sarah continues to advocate for:

- A nationally recognised textbook for water operators.
- Consistent recognition of water sector competence across states.
- A coordinated national strategy to address the shortage of qualified trainers.

Clarifying Authorised Person Training

Recent confusion around Authorised Person training under the Drinking Water (Safety and Supply) Regulation has prompted *qldwater* to write to the Department seeking amendments. This training does not replace or indemnify WSPs from having appropriately qualified NWP and/or plumbing personnel.

Technology Spotlight – FieldApp Demonstration

At the WSP meeting on 13 November, Gregg Edwards (Mid Coast Council, NSW) introduced FieldApp, a companion tool to TechOne designed to help outdoor staff manage day-to-day tasks in the field, even without network connectivity. Key benefits include the ability for field staff to log jobs on the go and improved efficiency and visibility of work scheduling.

Gregg shared Mid Coast Council's experience implementing this technology, sparking interest in its potential for Queensland utilities.

The Water Skills Partnership remains focused on practical solutions to workforce challenges, helping our sector build capability for the future. For more information or to get involved, contact Sarah at shenry@qldwater.com.au.

Breaking Down Barriers: Training, Trades and the Future of Water Operators

At the recent WIOA and QWater Conferences, Water Skills Partnership Manager Sarah Henry delivered a clear message: the future of Queensland's water workforce depends on bold changes in training, trade recognition, and career pathways.

Half of Queensland's water operators are over 50, and vacancies, especially in regional councils, are rising. Operators today juggle compliance, customer service, and technical tasks with ageing infrastructure and limited resources. Yet, training and recognition haven't kept pace with these evolving demands. Here are the key advocacy items, and how you can help.

1. Modernise the NWP Training Package

The current NWP qualification framework is outdated and misaligned with real-world operator tasks:

- Only 11 units (2 core) – too few and too generic.
- Units are process-based, not competency-based.
- Supervisors lack clarity on what "competent" looks like.
- RTOs struggle to deliver practical, relevant training.

Sarah called for modern, competency-based training that reflects what operators actually do on the ground.

Call to Action:

Scan the QR code to email BuildSkills and support a review of the NWP training package for relevance and practicality.



2. Create a Water Industry Trade Apprenticeship

Unlike plumbing and civil trades with 3 to 4-year apprenticeships and full funding, water operators have short traineeships with patchy support. Sarah advocated for:

- A regulated trade apprenticeship for Water Industry Operators (~21 units).
- Clear progression from trainee - apprentice - journeyman - mentor - supervisor.
- Funded pathways to grow local talent and strengthen regional communities.

Call to Action:

Scan the QR code to email the Minister for Training and Skills and advocate for a Feasibility Study into a Water Industry Operator apprenticeship.

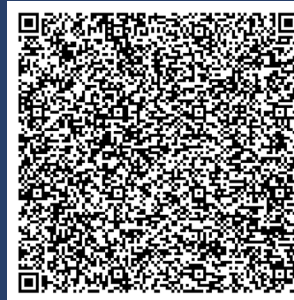


3. Introduce Option 5 for Plumbing Pathways

Overlap between plumbing and water operations creates tension. *qldwater* has proposed Option 5 - replacing roofing and gas units with water sector units like treatment and filtration - ensuring both trades remain strong while meeting councils' needs.

Call to Action:

Scan the QR code to email the Plumbers Union and BuildSkills to endorse Option 5 for a stronger, smarter water sector.



Add Your Voice

This isn't about policy - it's about people. The message only matters if it comes from YOU.

If you agree with our proposals, scan the QR codes to email the relevant decision-makers to ensure water operators get the recognition and investment that they deserve.

Program Update: Skills & Training

High Pressure Water Jetting Exemption Compliance Training

Following successful advocacy by *qldwater*, the Office of Industrial Relations (OIR) granted an Exemption with Conditions on 12 February 2025 for Queensland water service providers using High Pressure Water Jetting (HPWJ) for sewer cleaning on asbestos cement pipes. This exemption ensures essential maintenance can continue while prioritising worker safety and compliance.

To meet the obligations under this exemption, Sarah has been leading the rollout of targeted training across Queensland. The program includes:

- One-day practical training and assessment, supported by online prior learning.
- Guidance on completing specific Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS).
- A strong focus on compliance and operator capability.

Councils across the state have embraced this training, recognising its value in building workforce skills and meeting regulatory requirements.

Early sessions have highlighted important learnings, including non-compliance in equipment and PPE, prompting *qldwater* to work closely with OIR on potential amendments to the exemption.

Initial controlled testing revealed performance challenges under current conditions, particularly for low-flow jetters commonly used by local government utilities. Two of the four nozzles trialled (Gator and Viper front rotating turbo cutting nozzle) showed reduced effectiveness at 1,740 psi (120 bar), while bomb nozzles performed adequately.

OIR supports continued trials, with further investigative work underway - special thanks to South Burnett Regional Council for leading this effort.

qldwater has also developed the Grey Card, available free to members via watertraining.com.au, to support compliance and awareness.

Training sessions are ongoing. To schedule training for your team or learn more, email skills@qldwater.com.au.

FREE INDUSTRY TRAINING GET YOUR CARDS!

Step up. Skill up. Strengthen the sector.

Operators across Queensland are lifting their game — don't get left behind.

Industry cards are now available as free, fully supported online training, designed specifically for water and wastewater operators. Each card helps build the knowledge and awareness needed to work safely and meet council expectations.

waterskills
PARTNERSHIP



Which Cards Can You Get?

-  **Brown Card – Sewer Awareness**
Know your role and responsibilities in wastewater or recycled water infrastructure.
-  **Aqua Card – Drinking Water Infrastructure Awareness**
Learn about your role and responsibilities when working on or near water infrastructure.
-  **Green Card – WHS & Hazard Awareness**
Minimize environmental harm when working with water, sewerage, and recycled water assets.
-  **Grey Card – Asbestos Cement Pipes & HPWJ Awareness**
Understanding AC pipe risks, safe jetting procedures, and regulatory requirements.
-  **Teal Card – Sampling and Testing Procedures**
Additional training focused on sampling accuracy, contamination control and compliance.

Why Get Your Cards?

- ✓ Zero cost — funded for councils and operators
- ✓ Short, practical modules you can complete at work
- ✓ Industry recognised across Queensland
- ✓ Supports council compliance with WHS, public health and regulatory expectations
- ✓ Created by industry, for industry
- ✓ Builds evidence for career progression and operator capability

INDUSTRY RECOGNISED
ACCREDITATION
ACROSS QUEENSLAND!



Ready to Begin?

Scan the QR Code →
Complete the online modules →
Get your cards →
Strengthen the water sector



\$0 ZERO COSTS



FUNDED FOR MEMBER COUNCILS AND OPERATORS



Driving Workforce Solutions for Queensland's Water Sector

The Industry Skills and Jobs Advisor (ISJA) role, led by Cass Cowley, continues to deliver against the endorsed Action Plan, driving change across four key focus areas: Cross-sector collaboration, Skilling, Attraction, and Retention. Here's a snapshot of recent progress:

Attraction & Skilling

Data Integrity and Skills Shortage Lists

Following analysis of ANZSIC and OSCA data in August, Cass is addressing root-cause issues in skill level classifications, shortage lists, and data gaps. Through engaging with DTET, Migration Queensland, BuildSkills Australia, Jobs Queensland, Jobs and Skills Australia, and the ABS, the overarching goal is to improve local attraction and enable national and international talent migration.

Mapping Skills Pathways

Cass has mapped existing pathways, identified gaps, and presented opportunities to better connect and promote entry-level and upskilling options to Queensland Water Industry Reference Group (QWIRG) members. Work is also underway with AWA on an AWA x *qldwater* Education Pathways document, designed for job seekers, school leavers, and existing workers to clearly outline entry points and career progression opportunities.

Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Cass is working with the NSW Jobs and Skills Advisor to establish a national Water ISJA network, strengthening collaboration across jurisdictions.
- Promoting attendance and engagement of non-council Water Service Providers at workshops, webinars and workforce projects.
- Ongoing engagement with BuildSkills Australia to ensure Queensland's water sector priorities are represented in national workforce planning.

Queensland Water Industry Reference Group (QWIRG)

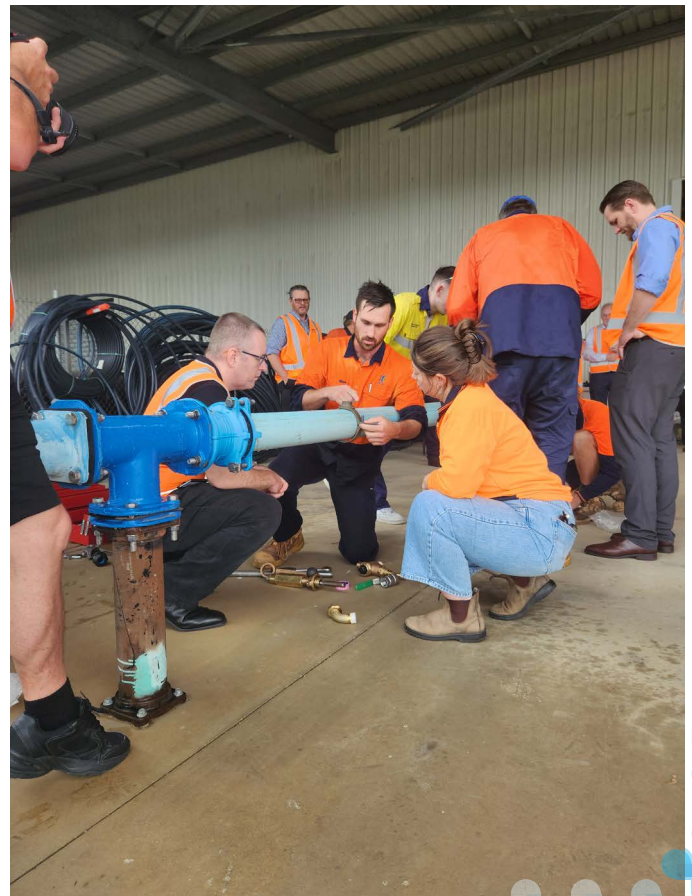
In December, Cass coordinated the fourth QWIRG meeting for 2025, where members discussed:

- Achievement of milestones against the ISJA Action Plan.
- Skills pathways, with a focus on entry pathways and upskilling operators into supervisory roles as the retirement cliff approaches.
- Updates on BuildSkills Australia's 10-Year Water Workforce Roadmap project.

The ISJA role is critical in tackling workforce challenges head-on, ensuring Queensland's water sector has the skills, talent, and pathways needed for a sustainable future.

For more information or to get involved, contact Cass at ccowley@qldwater.com.au.

Image right: Cass participating in the Misfits on the Mains tapping competition at the Whitsunday Isaac Mackay Annual Forum in Mackay.



Program Update: SWIM / swimlocal

David Scheltinga, SWIM Manager &



Jess Dean, Program Manager Data and Environment



Smarter Data Management for Queensland's Water Sector

The Statewide Water Information Management (SWIM™) and swimlocal™ programs, led by David Scheltinga and Jess Dean, continue to evolve to make reporting easier and more efficient for water service providers across Queensland.



For swimlocal, the big news is that the DWQMP Annual Report Data Summary downloads are now available via the swimlocal Web Reports Tool, just in time for December reporting. While we couldn't automate comparisons against ADWG health values this year due to inconsistent naming conventions, we know what needs to change and are working towards making that possible next year.

Work is also continuing on the WaTERS-swimlocal linkage. We are meeting regularly with DETSI, and although progress has been slower than expected due to staffing changes at WaTERS, momentum is building. Several councils are now testing the data transfer, helping us identify and resolve issues as we work toward a fully functioning integration.

On a brighter note, the new fully web-based swimlocal Admin Tool is almost complete and should be available in December, offering a much smoother experience for users. We've also started early conversations with Queensland Health Forensic and Scientific Services (QHFSS) about the possibility of importing lab results directly into swimlocal - a big step toward greater automation.



On the SWIM side, the 2024/25 annual water and sewerage data reporting cycle is complete, with 75 Queensland WSPs and 68 South Australian WSPs entering their data this year. Jess is now working her magic on the data to produce the Queensland Water and Sewerage Benchmarking Report.

Final KPI/NPR/ABS/BoM data was submitted on 14 November, and we've learned a lot from integrating South Australian utilities, especially around their unique systems, which will lead to some minor tweaks to the SWIM Annual Data Tool for next year. Planning has already started with BoM to improve SEQ National Water Account and NPR data uploads for 2025/26.

Both SWIM and swimlocal remain focused on delivering smarter, more integrated solutions to help utilities meet compliance and reporting obligations with confidence.

For more information or support, visit the [SWIM Help page](#) or contact David (dscheltinga@qldwater.com.au) or Jess (jdean@qldwater.com.au).



Program Update: Trade Waste Uplift Project

Col Hester, Applied Scientist



Working Together To Tackle Trade Waste

The *qldwater* Trade Waste Uplift Project is a statewide initiative aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of trade waste management through collaboration.

A key success of the project has been the establishment of a regional Trade Waste Interest Group (TWIG) – a regional network working together to deliver common management system elements.

So far, the TWIG has developed:

- A draft model trade waste management plan
- Smart application forms
- Approval templates

These resources align with the best practice guidance from the WSAA Australian Wastewater Quality Guideline and several leading USEPA references. The final version of these deliverables will be available on the *qldwater* website from February 2026, designed to reduce utility costs through cost-effective risk management practices.

Upcoming TWIG deliverables include:

- A model trade waste loading report (meeting WSAA guidance).
- An AS5215 compliant grease arrestor sizing calculator.
- A *qldwater* trade waste training card.

- Trade waste management practice documentation.
- A guideline for effective electronic waste tracking (such as WasteID).

The popularity of the project continues to grow, with 22 councils now participating. The most recent hybrid meeting, hosted by Charters Towers Regional Council, was strongly supported.

Councils with an interest in trade waste can join easily by emailing *qldwater* project facilitator Col Hester at chester@qldwater.com.au. Col will then include you in all correspondence, including consultation draft of documents, beta tests of model forms and electronic meeting appointments.

The next hybrid meeting of the regional TWIG is expected to be held in Townsville in February or March 2026.

qldwater thanks all trade waste uplift participants for their generous collaboration this year and wishes everyone all the best for the Christmas season.



Program Update: SWEAP & qCRAC

by Louise Reeves, Lead Scientist



The Sewerage and Water Environmental Advisory Panel (SWEAP) and its research-focused offshoot, the *qldwater* Consortium for Research and Advocacy on Contaminants (qCRAC), continue to deliver significant outcomes for the sector under the leadership of Dr Louise Reeves.

SWEAP Update - Strong Leadership and Sector Wins

At the 27 November meeting, SWEAP farewelled **Chair Monique Gastaldin** and **Deputy Chair Anna Whelan** following the completion of their three-year terms. We thank them for their outstanding contribution and welcome **Andrew Stevenson (City of Gold Coast)** as incoming Chair, supported by **Andrew Murray (Toowoomba Regional Council)** as Deputy Chair.

qldwater Future of Biosolids Reuse Roundtable

The roundtable held on 27 June, in Toowoomba brought together utilities, government, and agricultural stakeholders to examine practical experiences, regulatory settings, and market barriers. Discussions reinforced that land application remains the cornerstone of biosolids reuse, delivering nutrient, carbon, and soil health benefits, while also highlighting constraints such as odour, logistics, seasonal application windows, and growing regulatory uncertainty. The key areas of consensus from the discussions were:

- **Land application is essential:** There was agreement that safe land application remains the most viable and sustainable biosolids management pathway for the foreseeable future.
- **Agricultural benefits are significant:** Participants recognised the economic and agronomic value of biosolids, particularly in improving soil health, increasing crop yields, and reducing reliance on imported fertilisers.
- **Risk-based, proportionate regulation is needed:** There was shared support for moving towards a more holistic and balanced regulatory framework that allows for both protection of human/ environmental health and continued beneficial reuse.
- **Proactive industry leadership is important:** Many agreed that industry must lead on quality management, risk transparency, and stakeholder education to maintain social license and regulatory flexibility.
- **A market mindset for biosolids is required:** A shift in focus is required for sustainable reuse from a waste disposal approach to one where water utilities are manufacturing an agricultural product that is tailored to the needs of end users.

- **A change in approach for the sector is required:** A move from reactive capital investment to investment that makes the most of the economic opportunity presented by the product.
- **We need to reframe the language of biosolids reuse:** Biosolids are essential to productivity in agriculture, providing co-benefits in waste reduction, sustainability and carbon sequestration.

qldwater is now moving to use the outcomes from the roundtable to further advocate for a future that includes agricultural beneficial reuse of biosolids.

Biosolids Data Collection Project

As an outcome of the Future of Biosolids Reuse Roundtable held in Toowoomba in July, *qldwater* is pursuing funding to support studies on:

- Environmental and productivity benefits of biosolids in agriculture.
- Economic value and opportunity costs of biosolids use.
- Effectiveness and proportionality of PFAS monitoring requirements.

The first task, PFAS data consolidation, is underway with Louise Reeves planning to work with Queensland's largest biosolids organics recycler in January 2026 to gain access to the dataset of PFAS analyses obtained under the End of Waste Code for Biosolids. This will enable expert assessment and inform future policy.

Regulatory Engagement for Compliance & Policy (RECaP)

A new group, RECaP, will be established to provide strategic direction for advocacy on environmental regulatory and policy issues for the sector in Queensland and support *qldwater* in its advocacy with the department.

The first item on RECaP agenda is to address forthcoming changes to the EP Act, under the Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) Bill currently before parliament, including the shift of regulation of “low-risk activities” from Environmental Authorities (EAs) into mandatory codes (ERA Codes). RECaP will play a key role in consultation on new ERA Code conditions.

Research & Advocacy Highlights

Louise Reeves recently presented at the Water Research Australia Conference in Melbourne (pictured here in full flight!) Her presentation focused on “The real cost of managing risks posed by contaminants of emerging concern to Queensland’s water sector”.

We are looking forward to shining a spotlight on Queensland with the Australian Water Association’s Ozwater’26 taking place in Brisbane in May next year. Two papers were accepted relating to SWEAP:

- **PFAS Source Control: Essential to Facilitating a Circular Economy for the Urban Water Sector** – Oral presentation by Louise Reeves and Georgina Davis.
- **Adapting to a Holistic Vision for Biosolids Management** – Poster presentation by Louise Reeves, Georgina Davis and Jason Mingo (WSAA)

Save the date!

Following the success of the Emerging Contaminants Workshop in Townsville in November 2024, planning is underway for our next event around the theme: **Wastewater Quality and Trade Waste: Out of Sight, Top of Mind.**

The provisional date is set for **22–23 July 2026** with topics including trade waste management approaches, emerging contaminants, and future directions for utilities.



qCRAC – Advancing Research on Contaminants of Concern

The *qldwater* Consortium for Research and Advocacy on Contaminants (qCRAC) continues to strengthen partnerships and drive research that addresses emerging contaminant challenges for Queensland’s urban water sector. Here’s an overview of current activity:

Projects Underway

- **ARC Linkage Project: Identifying sources of contaminants of concern entering Australian sewers**
Led by UQ’s Queensland Alliance for Environmental Health Sciences, this project aims to pinpoint contaminant pathways and inform strategies for source control.
- **ARC Industry Fellowship – Dr Cheng Zhang: Developing Integrated “Capture and Destruction” Strategies for Perfluorinated Chemicals Remediation**
This collaboration with UQ’s Centre for Advanced Imaging and Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology focuses on innovative PFAS remediation technologies.

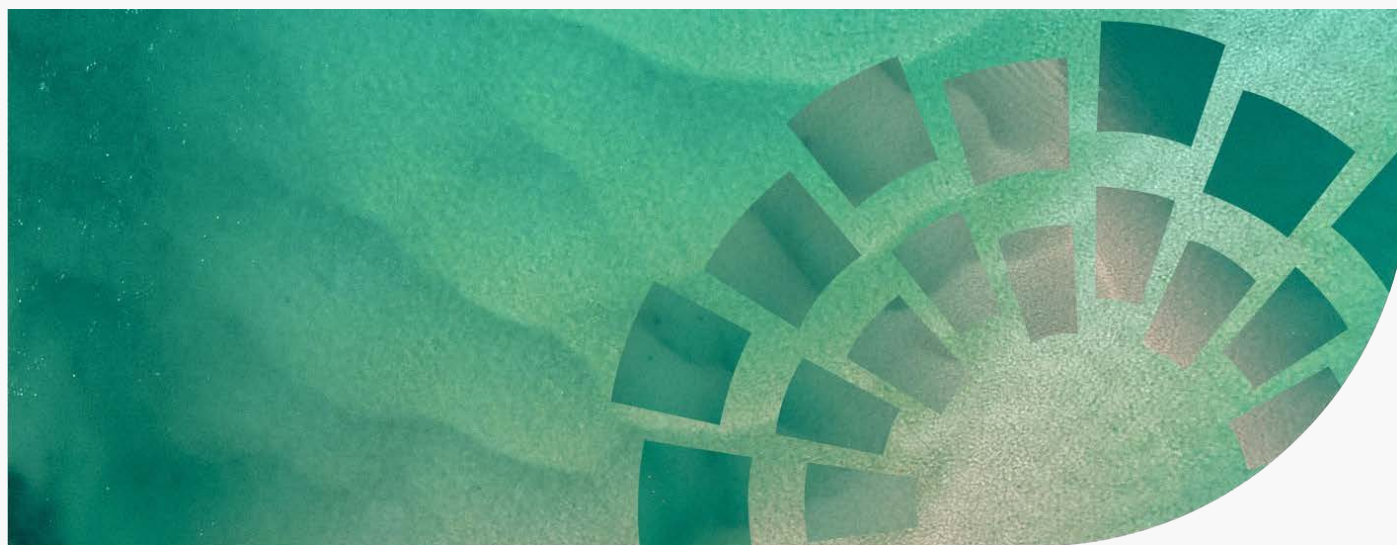
In Application / Planning

- **Granular Sludge Reactor for Ammonia + PFAS Removal**
New ARC Ignite Grant proposal with QUT exploring advanced treatment technologies.
- **ARC Hub RENEW Organics**
Redesign and resubmission of the Transforming Municipal Organics proposal to build on previous biosolids research.
- **Uncovering Hidden Contaminants in Personal Care Products and Cosmetics**
Planned collaboration with UQ QAEHS to investigate emerging contaminants from consumer products.

[SWEAP](#) and [qCRAC](#) remain committed to advancing science-led, practical solutions for environmental challenges facing our sector. For more information or to get involved, contact Louise at lreeves@qldwater.com.au.

Program Update: QWRAP

Neil Holmes, QWRAP Program Director



Collaboration in Action Across Queensland

The Queensland Water Regional Alliances Program (QWRAP) has had a big year, and the past few months have been no exception. In August, we said a fond farewell to **David Wiskar**, who has taken on the role of CEO at Barcoo Shire Council. David's leadership and strategic insight have been instrumental in shaping QWRAP, and we wish him every success in his new role.

At the same time, we were thrilled to welcome **Neil Holmes** back to the *qldwater* team as the new QWRAP Program Director. Neil brings a wealth of experience and a strong connection to the sector, and we're excited about the energy and ideas he'll bring to the program.

In other staff movements, our program partners at LGAQ welcomed back **Jennifer Hartwig** after her maternity leave, and we would like to acknowledge the great work done by **Gary Fenwick** during his time caretaking the role.

QWRAP continues to deliver impressive results. There are currently **35 projects under the Deed**, with **14 completed** and **21 active**, and more than **\$1.8 million in funding committed**. Round 2 of the new bid pool recently closed, attracting seven applications worth around \$230,000, and all nine regional alliances now have coordinators in place, strengthening collaboration across the state.

QWRAP has released updated templates and guidelines for alliances and regional coordinators. Funding Round 3 is now open from **9 December 2025 to 30 January 2026**, with **\$938,532 available** for short-term or staged water and wastewater QWRAP projects. Weekly online drop-in sessions will run every Thursday afternoon, to help with applications and answer questions. Feedback on the new funding round approach will be collected at the end of June next year.

The **QWRAP 2025 Annual Report** has been finalised and [published on the QWRAP website](#), and in August we hosted the [Chairs and Coordinators Forum](#) in Brisbane. This event brought together regional leaders, government representatives, and industry experts to review the program's strategic direction, share successes and challenges, and explore new funding arrangements and research opportunities.

Finally, the QWRAP Evaluation Project, led by **Dan Field** from LGAQ, is now underway. The Project seeks to evaluate how QWRAP has been implemented, with a view to identifying what is working well as well as opportunities for improvement, and to describe and quantify the benefits the Program is delivering. A key part of the Project involves seeking the views, perspectives and experiences of the Program's key stakeholders involved to help ensure the Program continues to deliver for Queensland's regional councils and their communities.

QWRAP was born out of collaboration between the founding partners of LGAQ, *qldwater* and with the support of the state government. Collaboration remains at the heart of its future. We encourage alliances to keep thinking strategically and bring forward ideas that solve local challenges and create opportunities for others. Together, we can continue to build a stronger, more connected water sector for Queensland.

For more information, visit the [QWRAP website](#) or contact Neil at nholmes@qldwater.com.au.



Queensland
Water Regional
Alliance Program



Queensland
Water Regional
Alliance Program

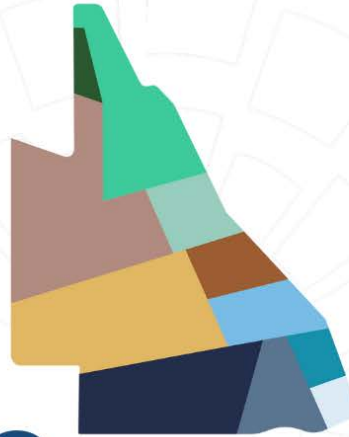
2024/25

\$1,310,000

Invested in QWRAP by
Department of Regional Development
Manufacturing and Water

\$1,648,350

Council cash and in-kind
contributions



Estimate of money
saved through joint
procurement



\$2.3M

9

QWRAP regions work
together to identify and
initiate projects to overcome
or address service challenges



Technical
Collaborative
Meetings **56**

17 CEO and mayor
water meetings



57

QWRAP councils provide



safe drinking water to **1,388,712** Queenslanders



\$910K

Bidpool funds
committed to support
QWRAP Programs



6%

increase in trained
Water Treatment Plant Operators

18%

increase in trained
Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators



35

Employees enrolled in training
(35 in Treatment, Networks specialisation commenced)

QWRAP is a partnership between the Queensland Government, Queensland Water Directorate, LGAQ and local councils to deliver sustainable, safe, secure and reliable urban water and sewerage services to regional and remote communities.



Queensland
Government

QWRAP Stories

QWRAP at LGAQ 2025: Strengthening Water Sector Collaboration for Liveable Communities

The Queensland Water Regional Alliances Program (QWRAP) was proud to host a booth at the 129th Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Annual Conference, held from 20–22 October on the Gold Coast.

Throughout the three-day event, the booth acted as a central hub for delegates from *qldwater*, LGAQ and the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (DLGWV) to promote the program, foster meaningful conversations with councils and strengthen sector-wide connections. A highlight was the visit from the Hon Ann Leahy MP, Minister for Local Government and Water, who engaged with the team and discussed QWRAP's role in supporting regional collaboration and innovation.

With over 800 delegates in attendance - including mayors, councillors, CEOs and industry leaders - the conference focused on "Pathways to Liveability", highlighting the critical role of infrastructure and services in building resilient communities.

A major theme throughout the conference was the urgent need to address ageing water and wastewater infrastructure. Delegates voiced strong concerns about the looming infrastructure cliff facing councils and highlighting that long-term funding certainty is essential to safeguard water services and support sustainable growth.

The conference also saw the passing of key motions supporting improved urban water management and endorsing the Reef Councils Rescue Plan 2024–2030. These actions reflect a growing recognition of the importance of protecting water quality and environmental assets, including the Great Barrier Reef, through coordinated policy and investment.

Water sector sessions aligned closely with themes from QWater 2025, emphasising resilience, emerging technologies and community water literacy. Presenters encouraged partnerships and innovation to address climate pressures, ageing assets and population growth - challenges that QWRAP continues to tackle through regional collaboration and strategic planning.

The LGAQ 2025 Annual Conference reinforced the importance of collective action and long-term thinking in the water sector. QWRAP remains committed to supporting councils and communities across Queensland as we navigate the path to liveability together.

Image below: Dan Field, Jen Hartwig, Neil Holmes and Michelle Bordignon at the QWRAP booth.



The Queensland Water Regional Alliances Program (QWRAP) is a government funded program to drive collaboration on water and sewerage services in regional Queensland.

The program is a collaboration between the Queensland Water Directorate (*qldwater*), Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) and the Queensland Government, through the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (DLGWV) and over 60 participating regional councils.

The Queensland Government is the main sponsor of the program providing \$2 million funding each year.

Chairs and Coordinators Forum

On 19 August, QWRAP hosted the annual Chairs and Coordinators Forum in Brisbane, bringing together regional leaders, government representatives, and industry experts to shape the future of urban water management in Queensland.

The forum featured updates on QWRAP's strategic direction and statewide products, insights from the Queensland Government on urban water initiatives and regional collaboration workshops and project showcases.

Key highlights included:

- A session on funding rounds and program protocols presented by Jenifer Hartwig, LGAQ.
- An update on statewide training and skills initiatives by WBBUWA Coordinator Col Hester and Water Industry Skills and Jobs Advisor, Cass Cowley.
- An overview of the research and program evaluation being undertaken by Daniel Field at LGAQ.
- A showcase of communications resources available to QWRAP regions by Desiré Gralton from *qldwater*.
- A review of Government election commitments presented by Steph Hogan from the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers.

Project Spotlights:

The day concluded with a showcase of three standout projects including:

- Smart Metering Playbook – Whitsunday Isaac Mackay Water Alliance.
- Drinking Water Audits Project – South West Queensland Water and Sewerage Alliance.
- Financial, Asset and Skills Risk Project – Central Queensland Water and Sewerage Alliance.

The forum reinforced the value of regional partnerships in delivering safe, secure, and sustainable water and sewerage services across Queensland.

Image below: QWRAP Chairs and Coordinators and program partners at the C&C Forum in Brisbane.



Coordinator Spotlight: Jeff Ballard

With over 30 years of experience in infrastructure planning, design, and delivery, Jeff Ballard brings a wealth of expertise and passion to his role as the North Queensland Coordinator for the Queensland Water Regional Alliances Program (QWRAP). Since stepping into the role in March 2024, Jeff has been a driving force behind regional collaboration, strategic planning, and practical implementation across five councils in North Queensland.

Jeff's journey in the water sector began with a childhood fascination for hydraulics and a deep-rooted connection to water. After completing his civil engineering degree at James Cook University and a rigorous master's in environmental engineering science at UNSW, Jeff built a career that spans local government, consultancy, and the construction industry. His consultancy, Northern Water Management, has been helping clients deliver high-value infrastructure projects since 2011.

As QWRAP Coordinator, Jeff is spearheading the Asset Management Assessment & Infrastructure Upgrade Program, a transformative initiative aimed at standardising asset management systems across the region. By aligning data, modelling tools, and technical standards, Jeff envisions a future where councils speak the same language - streamlining upgrades, improving service delivery, and reducing risk.

Jeff's leadership style is collaborative and strategic. He believes in starting with a shared vision and fostering trust among stakeholders. "We're not competing—we're partnering," he says. His focus for the coming year is to move from passive agreement to active engagement, empowering council representatives to drive change.

A long-time member of the Australian Water Association and former Chair of the North Queensland conference organising committee, Jeff has been instrumental in shaping water conversations in the region. His work on the North Queensland Water and Sewerage Code is a testament to his commitment to protecting regional infrastructure through enhanced technical standards.



Jeff's approach to water management is grounded in service and connection. "Water is life," he says. "It's a highly responsible career, and if you come in with the mindset to help people and communities, you'll do well." His belief in regional collaboration is deeply personal, rooted in a connection to place and a desire to leave a legacy of meaningful change.

Through QWRAP, Jeff is not just coordinating projects - he's building a toolkit for the future, fostering regional resilience, and ensuring that North Queensland's water sector is equipped to meet tomorrow's challenges.



WIMWA Annual Forum – Collaboration and Competition in Mackay

The Whitsunday Isaac Mackay Water Alliance (WIMWA) brought members together for its Annual Forum on Friday, 14 November, at the impressive Resources Centre of Excellence in Paget, Mackay. The day was a perfect mix of friendly competition, collaboration, and strategic planning for the year ahead.

Things kicked off with a crowd-pleasing Mains Tapping competition between Mackay Regional Council (MRC) and Isaac Regional Council (IRC). After a fast-paced contest, Isaac Regional Council claimed victory with an impressive time of 3 minutes and 52 seconds.

Adding to the fun was the inaugural “Misfits on the Main” challenge, where four brave novices stepped up to the tapping rig:

- Chris Kelly, Director Corporate Services, Mackay Regional Council
- Cass Cowley, Industry Skills and Jobs Advisor, *qldwater*
- Matt Ruygrok, Senior Regulatory Officer, Water Supply Regulation
- Ryan Nugent, Regulatory Officer, Water Supply Regulation

Guided by experienced supervisors from each council, the newcomers gave it their all - proving that collaboration and learning can be just as entertaining as it is valuable.

The forum also featured a collaboration session, where members shared insights and tackled challenges around safety management, environmental issues, IT and security concerns, and diversity initiatives. These discussions continue to strengthen the Alliance’s ability to work together on complex issues.

The day concluded with the formal opening of nominations for Chair and Deputy Chair for the 2025–26 term. Congratulations to Kylie Rogers, endorsed as Chair, and Stephen Wagner, endorsed as Deputy Chair. The group also extended heartfelt thanks to outgoing Chair Michael Gallagher for his outstanding leadership and commitment during his term.

With a renewed leadership team and a strong spirit of collaboration, WIMWA is well-positioned to keep driving innovation and best practice across the region.

Image below: Misfits on the Main stepping up to the challenge at the WIMWA Annual Forum.



Watering the Outback – Alliances Working Together for Safer, Smarter Water Services

Delivering safe, secure, and sustainable water services in outback Queensland is no small feat. Vast distances, harsh conditions, and limited resources make collaboration essential - and that's exactly what three QWRAP alliances are doing.

The Remote Area Planning and Development Water and Sewerage Alliance (RAPADWSA), South West Queensland Water and Sewerage Alliance (SWQWSA), and North West Queensland Regional Water Alliance (NWQRWA) face similar challenges across an enormous stretch of Queensland - over 1 million square kilometres, or 59% of the state. To put it in perspective, that's nearly 15 times the size of Tasmania. Despite the vast distances, their infrastructure must meet the same rigorous standards as urban areas.

With Matt Brennan as the coordinator for these three alliances, the team at GBA Engineers are always busy, on the road or in the air coordinating the work so vital to these communities and councils.

As the first QWRAP alliance to form, RAPAD has paved the way for regional collaboration. Its maturity and experience in joint procurement and resource sharing have become a model for others, with routine tasks now handled collectively. That knowledge is proving invaluable as SWQWSA and NWQRWA roll out joint activities across their regions.

One standout initiative is the **Bore and Borehead Inspection and Assessment Project**, which is assessing the condition of critical groundwater infrastructure in remote communities. This work supports long-term asset management and water security planning. From securing permits and coordinating with councils to conducting visual inspections and advanced borehole logging, the project demonstrates how collaboration can deliver practical, cost-effective solutions.

Building on RAPAD's successful **Annual Sewer Rehabilitation Program**, SWQWSA has signed a two-year contract to identify future problems and rehabilitate sewer networks where needed. This proactive approach will help councils better understand asset failure, confirm inground assets against current data models, and adopt predictive failure models to guide future investment - critical steps in securing funding for sustainable services.

The SWQWSA is leading the way through innovation with the completion

of the **SWQWSA Infrastructure Strategy** in late 2024. The Alliance, together with the Regional Coordinator, is now progressing the development of a detailed delivery plan to implement the Strategy and advocate for support and funding. The strategy quantifying the infrastructure cliff requirements and investment needs across the south west region. Since its completion, the Alliance has received several enquiries from other regional alliances seeking information and guidance on the process, demonstrating the Strategy's value as a reference for best practice in infrastructure planning and delivery. The Alliance continues to refine its approach to ensure the Strategy is practical, actionable, and aligned with the needs of member councils, while providing a framework that can support other alliances in undertaking similar initiatives.

The alliances have also aligned their **Drinking Water Quality Management audits and reviews** dates, allowing for joint procurement projects to be undertaken, creating consistency and efficiency across regions.

These projects highlight the power of QWRAP partnerships. By working together, councils are improving reliability, reducing costs, and building resilience in some of Queensland's most remote communities. It's collaboration in action, and it's making a real difference.

Photo Credit: GBA Consulting Engineers



Downs Urban Water Technical Group – Collaboration Back on Track

The Downs Urban Water Technical Group (DUTWG) is back in action following the appointment of Regional Coordinator Pippa Sullivan, bringing fresh energy and focus to regional collaboration. This revitalisation has set the stage for stronger partnerships and strategic planning among member councils.

One of the group's first priorities was to reflect on past projects and lessons learned. This review helped identify key priorities and shape a clear list of potential initiatives for the future. That forward-thinking approach is already paying off, with two QWRAP bid pool applications approved in the latest funding round - a big step toward delivering impactful projects.

Joint Procurement for Sewer Relining

Member councils have agreed that a collaborative approach to sewer relining will deliver significant benefits. The plan is to establish a five-year contract for these services, starting with an MOU between councils, contract preparation, and the first round of procurement. This initiative will streamline processes, reduce costs, and improve asset management across the region.

Reservoir Inspection and Cleaning

Reservoir inspection and cleaning is a critical but highly specialised task for water service providers. Rather than waiting another year to assess the success of the sewer relining project, DUTWG decided to move ahead with a joint procurement program for reservoir cleaning and inspection in the 2026/27 financial year. Pooling resources for project management and procurement will help councils optimise schedules and manage rising operational costs.

While DUTWG's regional maturity is still developing, the foundations laid this year signal exciting growth ahead. With a clear strategic direction, renewed momentum, and a commitment to collaboration, the group is well-positioned to deliver projects that strengthen water and sewerage services across the Downs region.

Image below: The DUWTG Group at a site tour of Warwick STP last month. Photo credit: Pippa Sullivan.



Wide Bay Burnett Councils Join Forces for \$5.2M Sewer Renewal Program

Fraser Coast Regional Council will lead a major \$5.2 million initiative to renew ageing sewer infrastructure across the Wide Bay Burnett region, helping prevent leaks, blockages and costly breakdowns.

At its 10 December meeting, Fraser Coast Regional Council approved a two-year contract for the Wide Bay Burnett Urban Water Alliance (WBBUWA) Sewer Relining Program, covering 2025/26 and 2026/27. The work has been awarded to Interflow Pty Ltd, a specialist in trenchless pipe rehabilitation.

The program will upgrade deteriorating sewer pipes in six council areas: Bundaberg, Cherbourg, Fraser Coast, Gympie, North Burnett and South Burnett.

Many of the sewer pipes in the region were installed decades ago and are starting to show signs of wear. Rather than digging up every old pipe, contractors install a new lining inside the existing pipe – like putting a sleeve inside an old jacket. It strengthens the pipe, reduces leaks and blockages, and minimises disruption to streets and backyards.

The collaborative approach through WBBUWA delivers significant cost savings for participating councils. By joining forces, councils can secure bulk contracts and achieve better value for money than working alone. Since 2016, this alliance has delivered more than \$22 million worth of sewer relining across the region.

As lead council, Fraser Coast will manage the contract on behalf of the alliance, while each council funds work within its own area. The program includes:

- Cleaning and inspecting sewer pipes with CCTV
- Installing new linings inside old pipes
- Reconnecting properties to renewed pipes
- Managing traffic changes and notifying residents
- Certifying completed works

Proactive maintenance like this prevents major bursts, sewer overflows and emergency repairs, which are far more disruptive and expensive. It also reduces groundwater and stormwater entering the sewer system, saving on treatment and pumping costs.

State government funding, through QWRAP, initially helped the alliance establish sewer relining processes across the region, transforming one-off projects into a rolling business-as-usual program that has been delivering a region wide solution for almost a decade. This approach also allows WBBUWA to share its expertise with other alliances across Queensland.



Photo credit: Interflow.

Upcoming Events



qldwater Environment Forum

Back by popular demand, the **qldwater** Environment Forum returns on 26 February at the Indigiscapes Centre, Capalaba. This event brings together councils, SEQ service providers, State Government, universities, and catchment groups to explore what offsets look like in practice and how water service providers can deliver measurable environmental outcomes.

Aligned with our 2026 theme, “Offsets and Outcomes: Delivering Environmental Value Through Water Services,” the forum will showcase practical examples, emerging approaches, and opportunities for collaboration. Building on the success of our inaugural Gympie Forum, we’re excited to continue the conversation in Redlands, who have generously offered to host.

Contact Jess Dean for more information.

[Register Now!](#)



Water Skills Forum

The Water Skills Partnership will host its ninth Annual Water Skills Forum on 19 March 2026, bringing together councils, state agencies, training providers, and industry leaders to tackle one of the sector’s biggest challenges: building and sustaining a skilled water workforce.

The theme, “Training today, Sustaining tomorrow,” reflects the sector’s commitment to strengthening the training pipeline and addressing critical issues highlighted in the latest Workforce Snapshot Survey—skills shortages, an ageing workforce, and the need for contemporary, fit-for-purpose training.

The forum provides a unique platform for collaboration and forward planning, connecting decision-makers who are shaping the future capability of Queensland’s urban water sector.

Contact Sarah Henry for more information.

qldwater at Ozwater’26 – See Us on Stage!

qldwater will have a strong presence at the AWA Ozwater’26 Conference in Brisbane. Several of our submissions have been accepted for presentations and workshops. Here’s where you can catch us:

Day 1 – Tuesday, 26 May

- Dr Louise Reeves: PFAS Source Control: Essential to Facilitating a Circular Economy for the Urban Water Sector
- Dr David Scheltinga: Without Data It’s Just Your Opinion – swimlocal, a Tool for All!

Day 2 – Wednesday, 27 May

- Dr Louise Reeves: Adopting a Holistic Vision for Biosolids Management
- Des Gralton and teams from the Water Literacy and Education and Regional, Rural and Remote Water

Specialist Networks present: Ready for Floods? A Game of Community Resilience

- Panel session with Dr Georgina Davis, Promethean Projects, McCullough Robertson Lawyers and EnviroSense: What questions should I be asking – Governance and assurance for circular economy projects

TBC: Dr Georgina Davis with WSAA and AURECON on AI in regional AI Workshop.

The preliminary program is now [available here](#). Make sure to mark your calendars and join us for these sessions!

Events Calendar 2026

Save the dates! We have an exciting line up events schedules for the new year, and we look forward to connecting with many of our members in person and online.

February

- 17 [AWA QLD Industry Breakfast, Sofitel Brisbane](#)
- 26 [qldwater Environment Forum](#), Redland - IndigiScapes Centre, Capalaba
- 27 SPG Meeting

March

- 19 [Water Skills Forum](#), *qldwater* office: Training today, sustaining tomorrow
- 27 [AWA National Policy Forum 2026](#), Canberra

April

- (TBC) SWIM Squad with David

May

- 11-14 Water Connections Tour, Mackay - Townsville
- 26-28 AWA Ozwater'26, Brisbane Convention Centre

June

- 24-25 WIOA Conference, Gold Coast

July

- 21 SWEAP / qCRAC Site tour of leachate / landfill
- 22-23 Wastewater Quality & Trade Waste: Out of sight, top of mind, Eagle Farm

August

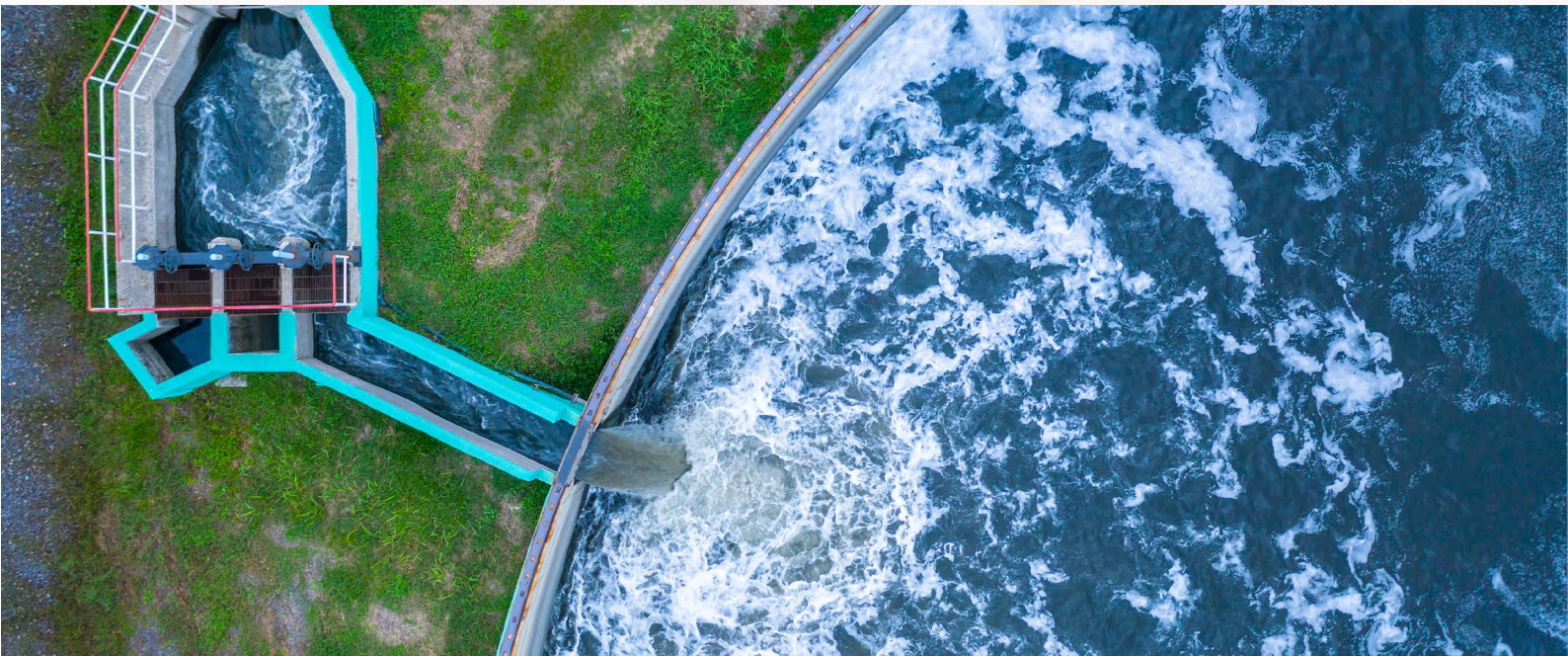
- 18 QWRAP Chairs & Coordinators Forum
- 19-20 Annual Forum
- 21 SPG Meeting

September

- 30 - 2 Oct IPWEA-QNT Conference, Sunshine Coast

October

- 13-14 AWA NQ Conference Townsville
- 19-21 LGAQ Conference, Cairns



**Happy Holidays from
the *qldwater* team**

Our offices will be closed from Wednesday 24
December 2025 to Monday 5 January 2026



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