

# COLLABORATIVE TRAINING OPTIONS FOR REGIONAL WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICE PROVIDERS



The Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP) through *qldwater*, supports water service providers to establish regional cohorts to ensure water industry personnel receive the necessary training and skills to provide quality drinking water and manage sewerage systems to protect public and environmental health.

The remote nature of many service providers and limited number of operational job roles makes face to face training in accredited qualifications expensive despite generous User Choice subsidies and location allowances provided by the State.

*qldwater*, through the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP) helps facilitate training cohorts of operators from a range of councils within a region and this has been successful on a number of occasions in reducing training costs. Regional training cohorts also provide operators from neighboring councils the opportunity to experience alternative treatment and work processes and build regional networks.

Regional training hubs have been delivered with support from QWRAP in most regions across Queensland, with the most common qualification being the Certificate III in Water Industry Operations. The qualification can be delivered with specialisations in Water Treatment, Wastewater Treatment, Water and Wastewater Treatment and Network Operations (for Water Industry Workers).

QWRAP consists of five current regional groups and two emerging regions across Queensland. Collaboration for training is achievable because service providers are not in competition with each other due to the specific, set local government area boundaries that they serve. QWRAP further supports regional training by subsidising the cost of travel and accommodation for learners to attend face to face training, on a co-investment basis with the councils involved.



*This experience has provided insight into what is possible and how I can collaborate with the Far North Queensland Region of Councils (FNQROC) to get opportunities off the ground for other industry training we are currently struggling to get delivered. We have built on the award-winning training for the Water Industry Worker program in north Queensland and the hub-training model championed by the Queensland Water Skills Partnership and proven the scalability of such an approach”.*

Erin Burns  
Team Leader HR  
Services, Cairns Regional  
Council



Queensland  
Water Regional Alliance Program

## The Pathway to Regional Collaboration:

Water Business Manager (Manager) in conjunction with Council Human Resources Representative (HR) identifies training needs for their staff

1

QWRAP Coordinator captures training needs for councils within the region - engages with *qldwater* for advice on qualifications where required

2

QWRAP Coordinator invites quotes/tenders from RTOs

3

RTO provides training plans and quotes for review by Managers and HR

4

Manager/HR accept quotes, progress enrolments, confirm funding with AASNs

5

Coordinator submits QWRAP application for funding to support travel and accommodation costs (with support from *qldwater* as required)

6

Training occurs, report back to QWRAP

7

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*Our aim is to increase training opportunities for all operators across Queensland. This is facilitated through hub-training but is only possible through regional collaboration among councils and local coordination by HR professionals. This format provides additional value because it gives operators exposure to other plants, processes, and procedures in the region.”*

Carlie Sargent  
Skills Manager, *qldwater*



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*Water and Wastewater operators are the gatekeepers to public and environmental health, investing in their personal development is an investment directly to the health and safety of our community. As rural water service providers we often question ourselves on the cost of the training, and not overall value add to our employees. Collaborating with our neighbouring councils has assisted us to make this a far more cost viable option. But what is immeasurable on a spreadsheet is the value of the operators networking. It was a great opportunity for SBRC to contribute.”*

Adam Branch, Program Coordinator, Water and Wastewater, South Burnett Regional Council

For advice on regional training opportunities please contact

**Carlie Sargent**  
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