



## 2026 ANNUAL WATER SKILLS FORUM

*Training today. Sustaining tomorrow.*

19 March 2026

*qldwater* Headquarters | Brisbane

# PROGRAM



# ABOUT THE FORUM

The Queensland Water Directorate (*qldwater*) Water Skills Partnership hosts an annual forum that brings together local and state government staff, registered training organisations, industry experts, and key stakeholders to address one of the most pressing priorities for our sector: building and sustaining a skilled water workforce for Queensland.

Now in its ninth year, the **Annual Water Skills Forum on 19 March 2026** arrives at a critical moment for the industry. Workforce capability challenges, highlighted again in the latest Workforce Snapshot Survey, show growing skills shortages, an ageing workforce, and an urgent need for contemporary training that genuinely reflects the work being done on the ground.

This year's theme, ***Training today, Sustaining tomorrow***, reflects the momentum gathering across councils, RTOs, regulators and industry to strengthen the training pipeline. From expanding unit availability in the NWP and civil packages, to developing new micro-credentials and revising qualifications to better match operational reality, the sector is aligning behind a shared goal: **ensuring water operators have the skills and recognition to safely and effectively deliver essential services to all Queensland communities.**

The 2026 Forum provides a unique platform for collaboration, problem-solving and forward planning, connecting decision-makers who are collectively shaping the future capability of Queensland's urban water sector.

## HOST ORGANISATION

As the central advisory and advocacy body within Queensland's urban water industry, *qldwater* is a collaborative hub, working with its members to provide safe, secure and sustainable urban water services to Queensland communities.

It achieves this goal through a variety of programs, most notably:

- The **Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program** – a partnership between the Queensland Government, *qldwater*, LGAQ and local councils to deliver sustainable, safe, secure and reliable urban water and sewerage services to regional and remote communities;
- The **Statewide Water Information Management (SWIM) Program** – advocacy and continuous improvement supported by a sophisticated regulatory and business reporting and benchmarking tool;
- The **Queensland Water Skills Partnership** – a collaboration among utilities to identify skills needs and solutions and encourage appropriate investment;
- Other **Industry Advocacy Services** – focused on sustainable investment and planning, and fit for purpose regulation;
- Industry communication, innovation and marketing initiatives – creating a distinct profile for urban water and sewerage services and celebrating its achievements with often limited resources, to make the industry an attractive place to work and exploit its competitive advantages and collaborative culture.

*qldwater* members are all registered urban water service providers in Queensland including local government service providers, local government-owned statutory authorities, and state government owned corporations. *qldwater* also offers Affiliate Memberships to other industry partners, consultants and service providers located in and outside Queensland.



# KEY LOCATIONS & ACCOMODATION

## Portside Wharf

Popular commercial hub near the water, offering shops, dining, entertaining and a supermarket.

## Airport International Hotel Brisbane

A 4-star hotel with simple, streamlined rooms and suites. Parking is free and there's an informal restaurant with a bar/lounge, as well as an outdoor pool.

Address: 528 Kingsford Smith Dr (entry via Seymour Road) Hamilton QLD 4007

## The Kingsford Brisbane Airport Hotel

A 4.5-star boutique hotel near the airport, noted for friendly service and modern design.

Address: 510 Kingsford Smith Dr, Hamilton QLD 4007.

## Alcyone Hotel Residences

A 4-star hotel that offers contemporary apartments with river views, a gym, and an outdoor pool.

Address: 35 Hercules St, Hamilton QLD 4007.

## Kingsford Riverside Inn

A 3-star, pet-friendly motel offering simple rooms and free breakfast.

Address: 114 Kingsford Smith Dr, Hamilton QLD 4007.

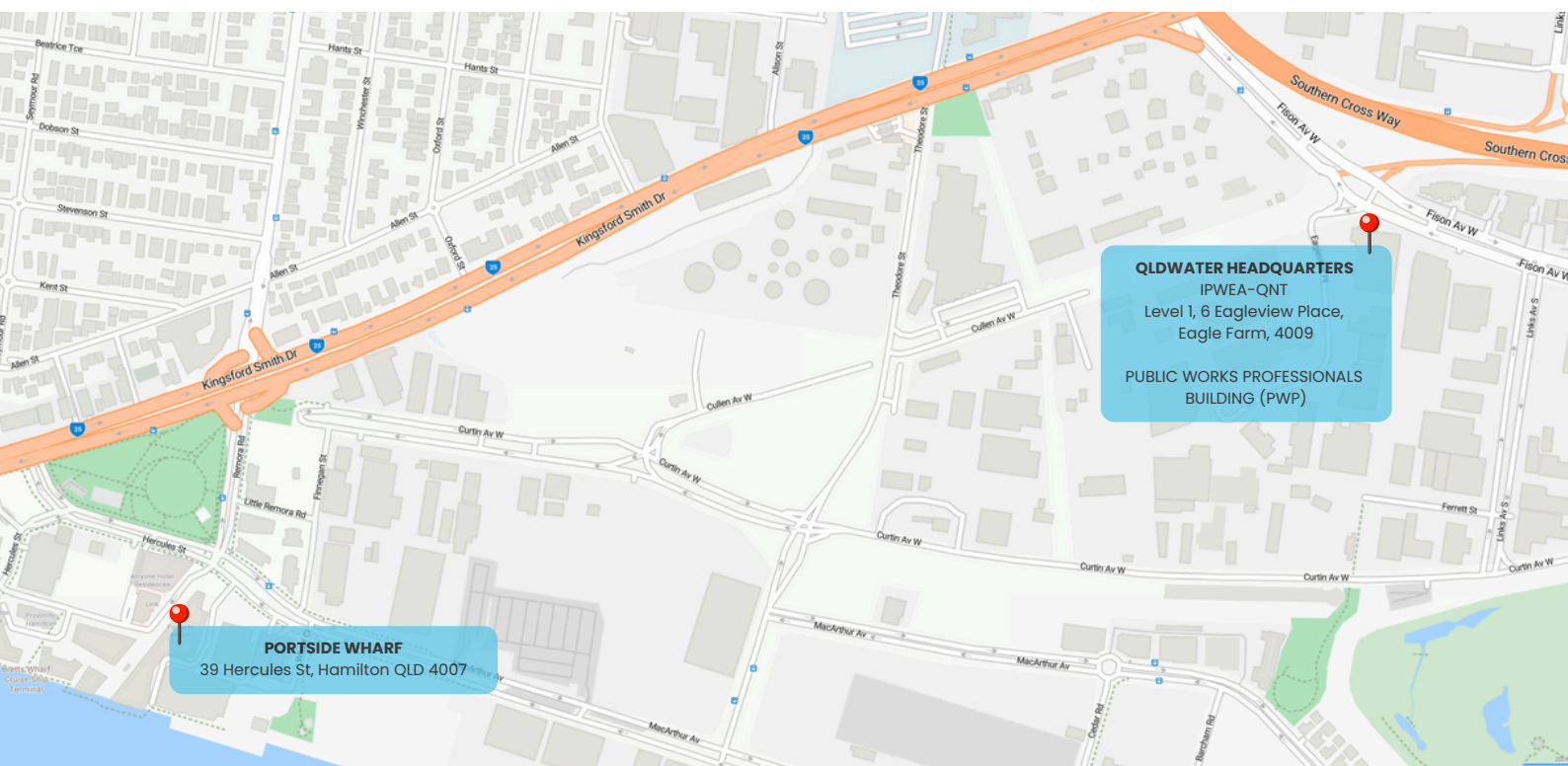
# VENUE

The **qldwater** Annual Water Skills Forum will take place at our head office.

## IPWEA-QNT

Level 1, 6 Eagleview Place,  
Eagle Farm, 4009

## PUBLIC WORKS PROFESSIONALS BUILDING (PWP)



## OUR SPONSORS



Engenera are a team of experienced and dedicated engineers specialising in Civil Engineering, Water Infrastructure, and Structural Engineering. They provide innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective solutions to clients across a variety of industries. Their mission is to design and deliver infrastructure that shapes the cities, communities, and industries of tomorrow.

[www.engenera.com.au](http://www.engenera.com.au)



Simmonds & Bristow are integrated water specialists helping regional, remote and small communities across Australia and the South Pacific make good clean water.

[www.simmondsbristow.com.au](http://www.simmondsbristow.com.au)



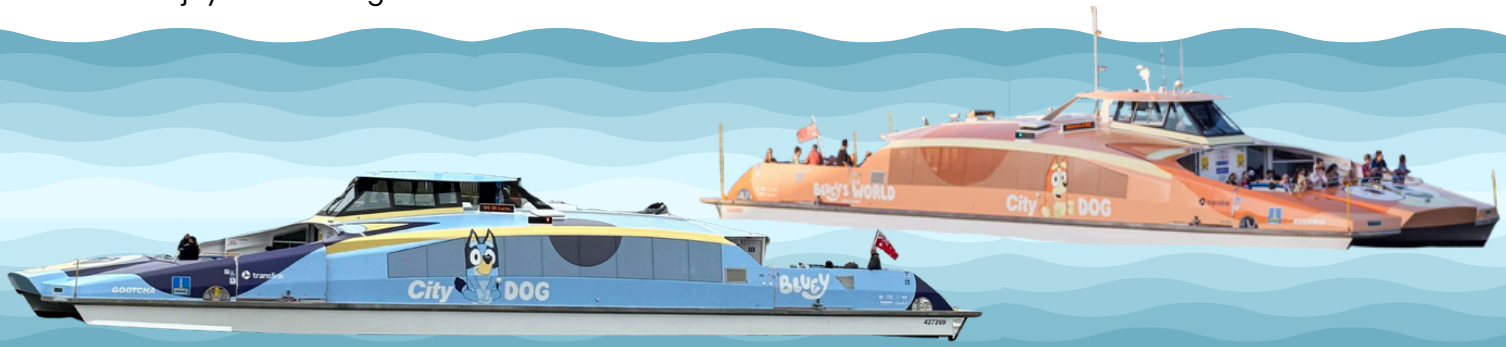
TRILITY is an established industry leader, dedicated in the delivery of water, wastewater, reuse and biosolids solutions across Australia and New Zealand's municipal and industrial sectors.

[www.trility.com.au](http://www.trility.com.au)

# PRE-CONFERENCE WELCOME FUNCTION

## BLACKBIRD

**Mission:** Travel from Hamilton Northshore Ferry Terminal to Blackbird by CityCat (or maybe CityDog), and enjoy the evening at Blackbird.



### Departure Option 1

Leave Hamilton Northshore at 5:15 pm

5:15 pm ○ Northshore Hamilton ferry terminal, Hamilton



F1 CityCat Northshore Hamilton-UQ St Lucia ferry

Towards UQ St Lucia

Travel time is about 45 mins

### Departure Option 2

Leave Bretts Warf at 5:21 pm

5:21 pm ○ Bretts Wharf ferry terminal, Hamilton



F1 CityCat Northshore Hamilton-UQ St Lucia ferry

Towards UQ St Lucia

Travel time is about 39 mins

**Downstream Views:** Pass by the leafy suburbs of Bulimba and Hawthorne.



*Oxford Street - Bulimba*

### Downstream Views

**Newstead & Teneriffe:** View the historic Newstead House (Brisbane's oldest surviving home) and the iconic brick woolstores of Teneriffe.



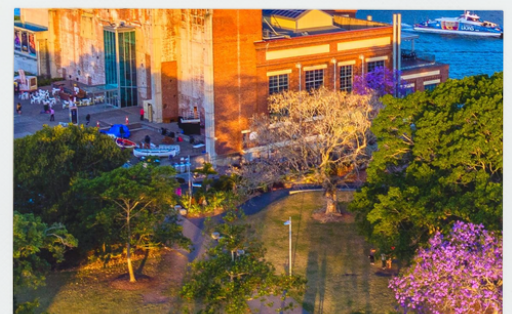
*Newstead House*



*Woolstore - Teneriffe*

### Downstream Views

**Brisbane Powerhouse:** A cultural hub in New Farm Park.



*Power House in New Farm Park*





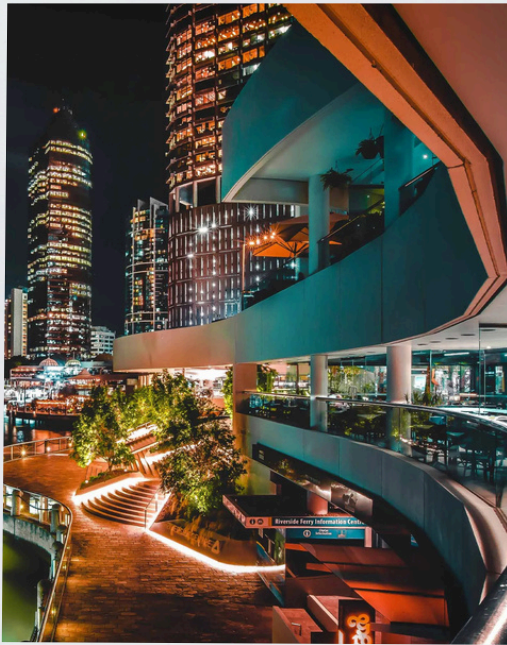
*Story Bridge & Howard Smith Wharves*

## Downstream Views

**Howard Smith Wharves:** A stunning view from the water as the CityCat passes under the Story Bridge, with the precinct's cliffs and restaurants on the right.

**Arrival at Riverside:** The terminal is directly in front of the CBD, near Eagle Street Pier and the City Botanic Gardens.

6:00 pm  [Riverside ferry terminal, Brisbane City](#)



*Blackbird + Ferry Terminal*



*City Botanic Gardens @ night*

**Paying for Ferry Tickets:** You can pay for tickets (50c fares) using contactless credit cards (Visa, Mastercard etc)

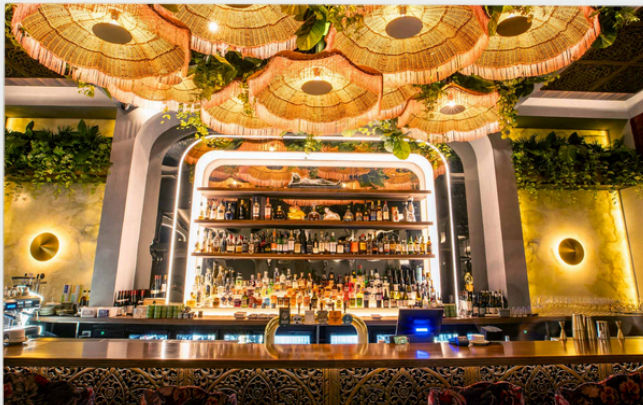
### How to Pay with Your Visa Card

#### 1. Tap On:

At the beginning of your journey, hold your contactless Visa credit card or your digital wallet (linked to your Visa) against the ticketing validator until you hear a beep. 

#### 2. Tap Off:

At the end of your journey, tap the same card or device on the validator again to complete your fare. 



*Blackbird*



*Blackbird*

# PROGRAM

- 8:45 Welcome by *qldwater* CEO, Dr Georgina Davis  
Why this forum exists now — and why workforce conversations can't be deferred any longer.
- 8:50 Official opening Department of Trade, Employment and Training  
The policy and funding context shaping workforce decisions across Queensland.
- 9:00 The importance of the Water Skills Partnership by WSP Chair, Kielly Glanville.  
Why collaboration — not competition — is the only way small and large utilities survive future skills gaps.

## Session 1: Why Change Is Unavoidable

- 9:05 Belinda Cridge | Water New Zealand Organisation | NZ Skills review  
Why New Zealand restructured water training & what happens when yesterday's assumptions no longer fit tomorrow's systems.
- 9:35 Dane Ivcevic | UQ Skills | Ag Sector RTO experience  
What breaks when training systems focus on compliance alone — and how RTOs adapt to remain sustainable.
- 10:00 Cass Cowley | Industry Skills and Jobs Advisor | Apprentice insight  
Training only sustains the workforce if people actually stay — understanding attrition from the apprentice's seat.
- 10:10 Morning Tea

## Session 2: Designing Training That Works

- 10.4 TBA Agri-Sector Apprenticeship Review | New Apprenticeship Model  
What forced change, what survived implementation, and what the water sector can learn from it.
- 11.05 Liz Hestor | Seqwater  
What "training today" actually feels like to the workforce we're trying to retain in South East Queensland.
- 11:30 TBA Workplace initiatives (Diversity and inclusion)  
Evidence from other industries on attracting, supporting, and retaining a more diverse workforce.
- 12:00 Lunch

## Session 3: Making Apprenticeships Work on the Ground

- 12:40 Ethan Leeds | TrainRight | HPWJ (High-Risk Work)  
When training fails, people get seriously injured or killed — and regional services lose capability overnight.
- 1:10 TBA Workforce initiatives for apprentices in regional and remote communities  
How other sectors are managing apprenticeships in small, dispersed communities — and what actually translates to water.
- 1:40 Matt Gosper | Young Operator of the Year | Mackay Regional Council  
Same system. Same training. Same experience?
- 2:10 Afternoon Tea

## Session 4: Learning, Design, and What We Can Change

- 2.30 Kim Kerby (Trility) and Sarah Henry (*qldwater*) | Interactive session: From house to treatment plant  
Testing whether we share the same understanding of risk, roles, and skills.
- 3.00 Paul Callaghan | Oleology | Designing Systems for Consistent, Reliable Operation  
How system design can support people to do the right thing, every time.
- 3.30 Sarah Henry | *qldwater* | Training Today, Sustaining Tomorrow  
A year on from the Snapshot Report — what's changed, what hasn't, and what still needs courage.
- 3.55 Round up and close

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## REGISTRATION

When you first arrive at the IPWEA-QNT Training Rooms, please visit the Registration Desk to collect your lanyard and program. The registration desk will be open from 8:00am.

## INTERNET ACCESS

Complimentary WiFi access is available within the IPWEA-QNT Training Rooms. Login details are posted at the entrance to each room.

## NEED ASSISTANCE DURING THE FORUM?

Please visit the registration desk for assistance during the Forum. If the registration desk is not open, please phone 1300 421 065.

## PARKING

There is limited complimentary parking available at the *qldwater* offices. Please observe parking bay signage - failing to do so may result in your vehicle being towed your own expense.

## DRESS CODE

The dress standard for the event is business/smart casual.

## DIETARY AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Any delegate who has advised they have special dietary requirements should identify themselves to the *qldwater* team and will be advised of ingredients in the lunch items suitable to your diet.

## DISCLAIMER

Every effort has been made to present the information contained in this brochure as accurately as possible. The organisers reserve the right to change, without notice, any or all of these details.

## PRIVACY

In registering for this event, relevant details may be incorporated into a delegate list for the benefit of all delegates (name, organisation and title) and may be made available to parties directly related to the event including *qldwater* and sponsors (subject to conditions). If you do not wish to be included in the delegate list please email: [enquiry@qldwater.com.au](mailto:enquiry@qldwater.com.au).

## PHOTOGRAPHY/ RECORDING

By registering for the *qldwater* 2026 Annual Water Skills Forum, you consent and grant permission to the Queensland Water Directorate, its agents and others working under its authority, to take and to have full and free use of video/ photographs containing your image/likeness. These images and recordings may be used for promotional, news, online/ multimedia, research and/ or educational purposes by and for *qldwater*. Copies of the event photographs will be made available to the attendees after the event.

## CONTACT

If you have any questions about the Forum or *qldwater* please contact us using the details below:

T: 07 3632 6850

E: [enquiry@qldwater.com.au](mailto:enquiry@qldwater.com.au)

W: [qldwater.com.au](http://qldwater.com.au)





07 3632 6850

[enquiry@qldwater.com.au](mailto:enquiry@qldwater.com.au)

[www.qldwater.com.au](http://www.qldwater.com.au)