**Queensland Water Directorate (*qldwater*)** ***e-*flash**

**Information for Water Industry Managers and Practitioners in the Queensland Water Industry**

**(Issue #328 – 25 July 2017)**

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**1.   QWRCIP Scholarships closing soon**

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Are you an employee of a ***qldwater*** member organisation with fewer than 10,000 connections looking for a fantastic professional development opportunity?  You have until 31 July to apply….

In 2017, an opportunity arose to establish a charitable venture aimed at helping address urban water and sewerage challenges facing small and remote communities.  The Queensland Water Regional Communities Innovations Program (QWRCIP) is administered under the auspices of ***qldwater*** with a steering committee made up of members of its Technical Reference Group.

QWRCIP seeks investment from corporate and other sources and the proceeds from the “vendor pitch” session on 6 September go directly to this initiative.  The first activity to be funded under the Program are these scholarships, with up to 5 available for 2017.

*What the scholarships cover*

Attendance in Brisbane for the week of 4 – 8 September to include:

* 1-2 days with an SEQ utility, spending time with a technical specialist, learning about specific equipment or implementation of programs of interest.
* 2 days at the ***qldwater*** Innovation Forum (6/7 September) comprising tours, presentations and regulator-targeted sessions.
* Participation in the ***qldwater*** Technical Reference Group (8 September).

There are plenty of willing hosts with our SEQ members strongly supporting this initiative.  Applications for the scholarships close on 31 July.  The process is very simple – further details are available [here](http://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=229962&A=SearchResult&SearchID=103142254&ObjectID=229962&ObjectType=6).

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**2.   2015/16 DEWS Comparative Report now available**

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The Department of Energy and Water Supply has released its annual comparative report for water and sewerage providers for the 2015-16 financial year.  The report is available [here](https://www.dews.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/389448/service-provider-comparative-report-2015-16.pdf).

Water security has been a key focus for the narrative for this report.

The key findings include the significant improvement in the accuracy and completeness of data submitted (while noting deficiencies still to be addressed).   Given that this represents only the second year for capturing data against mandatory key performance indicators, the continuous improvement among our members is to be commended.  We’d particularly like to acknowledge the efforts of our SWIM Steering Committee and SWIM Manager Dave Scheltinga, and all those SWIM users currently immersed in 2016-17 reporting.

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**3.   DEWS Queensland Bulk Water Opportunities Statement released**

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The [QBWOS](https://www.dews.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/1260521/bulk-water-opportunities-statement.pdf) is the future strategy for bulk water security in Queensland. The aim is to get the right balance between better using the bulk water infrastructure we already have and committing to new projects for the future.

The Statement was launched last week during the Australian Water Association’s NQ Conference.  It includes a series of objectives and principles to guide decision making if government investment in infrastructure is being considered, as well as:

* provides details of existing bulk water infrastructure in Queensland
* provides details of water infrastructure projects that are currently, or have recently been, the subject of feasibility or environmental assessments
* outlines water availability from existing infrastructure
* clarifies the roles and responsibilities of government agencies, bulk water entities and water service providers in the provision of bulk water across the state
* describes policy initiatives and opportunities under development, to support achievement of the objectives.

The [QBWOS story map](https://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/QBWOS/index.html) has also been developed to provide a spatial representation of existing (and potential) infrastructure, water entitlements, and climate related data with layers for the Queensland Globe planned for release later in 2017.

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**4.   Productivity Commission National Water Reform update**

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The Commission is currently compiling their draft report the [current Inquiry](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/water-reform#draft) on National Water Reform. Details of [***qldwater’s*** submission](http://www.qldwater.com.au/ReviewDocuments) on the Commission’s [initial issues paper](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/water-reform/issues/water-reform-issues.pdf) were included in eflash #317 and can be read [here](http://www.qldwater.com.au/ReviewDocuments).

Responses to the initial issues paper have led the Commission to seek further information on the specific needs of water service providers in regional and remote areas and convened a workshop on 11 July. The workshop was attended by two Commissioners and Tasmania, Victorian and NSW industry representatives. Queensland was represented by Trevor Harvey (North Burnett), Graham O’Byrne (Cairns), Rob Fearon (***qldwater***), and Arron Hieatt (LGAQ).

The workshop covered the different institutional models for water and sewerage services in each State and focussed on programs like QWRAP in Queensland and the regional alliances among councils in NSW. Queensland representatives made the case for the needs of Queensland’s numerous diverse (including many small and remote) communities and the negative outcomes from rapid water reform. The importance of appropriate infrastructure investment shared with State government and appropriate consideration of staff and skills were also discussed at length. The summary of the meeting by the Commissioners demonstrated they had a strong understanding of the issues put forward.

The Commission has advised that the draft report is expected to be released by the end of September.  Feedback on the draft will be sought prior to the publication of the Final Report in December 2017. ***qldwater*** encourages Queensland Service Providers and Regional Water Alliances to respond directly to the Commission on the Draft Report when it emerges or via the joint response that will be compiled by ***qldwater***.

We would particularly like to thank Trevor Harvey and North Burnett Regional Council for providing his time to travel to Sydney to participate in the workshop and provide practical insights and represent the issues facing small regional and remote Queensland service providers.

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**5.   SWIM 2016/17 annual water and sewerage data due date**

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All Water Service Providers in Queensland have been asked to collated and submit their annual 2016/17 water and sewerage data.  SWIM is the most efficient method for Queensland Water Service Providers to submit their annual water data to the Queensland Government (DEWS KPIs), ABS, BoM and NPR.  Approximately 85% of Service Providers report their data through SWIM, which is not only providing information to the State and Federal Governments, but also valuable comparative data back to you in the form of the ***qldwater*** Benchmarking report.

**Important dates**:

* All data, for all service providers, is required by: **1st October**

PINs may be issued for late submissions.

Please contact David Scheltinga if you have any queries regarding your SWIM reporting – we appreciate reporting can be a complicated task and are happy to assist you in any way we can (dscheltinga@qldwater.com.au or 0415 881 195).

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**6.   Mackay conference presentations available**

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Thanks to all who attended the ***qldwater*** event in Mackay on 19 July.

PDF versions of each presentation are available in the members only section of the web site [here](http://www.qldwater.com.au/nq-2017-conference-presentations).

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