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

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

**(Issue #344 – 23 February 2018)**

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**1.   End of Waste Framework**

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The new End of Waste Framework under development by the Department of Environment and Science will change how biosolids are reused in Queensland after December this year. The new framework and conditions placed on generators and users of biosolids will be reflected in a new “End of Waste Code”. The Department is currently in the process of creating an advisory panel to form this Code but such panels can have only a handful of members and only one is likely to be from a service provider. We will be continuing to work with the Department to provide input from a broad range of perspectives around the state.

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**2.   Renewed Offsets Policy**

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In September last year, ***qldwater*** collated input from across the sector to provide a collated response on the updated Water Quality Offsets Policy ([see e-Flash #335](http://www.qldwater.com.au/e-Flashes)). The [submission](http://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=234017) on 10th October expressed strong support from sewerage service providers for a practical policy that will increase options for environmental protection. It recommended that:

* a working group is established, with industry representation, to rewrite the Policy and prepare a supporting guideline,
* the revised draft Policy and guideline is made available for wider consultation,
* the working group consider submissions from the wider consultation and finalise the Policy and supporting guideline, and
* the State Government/DEHP collaborate with industry and co-fund a range of water quality offset projects to show case working examples of how the Policy can be implemented.

The Department of Environment and Science (DES) have advised that an updated draft of the Offsets Policy will be released for consultation sometime in March. A workshop with DES will be held to discuss the new draft and ***qldwater*** will also convene a teleconference for service providers to discuss feedback prior to the workshop. To express interest in the teleconference or to attend the workshop (Brisbane, **9:30-12:30, Wednesday 28 March)**, please contact [rfearon@qldwater.com.au](mailto:rfearon@qldwater.com.au).

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**3.   Proposed New Great Barrier Reef Regulatory Framework**

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As reported in [e-Flash # 338](Due%20to%20the%20Queensland%20state%20election,%20consultation%20on%20the%20Regulatory%20Impact%20Statement%20(RIS)%20for%20the%20proposal%20to%20broaden%20and%20enhance%20existing%20reef%20protection%20regulations%20was%20put%20on%20hold.%20Consultation%20has%20now%20re-opened%20on%20the%20RIS.%20The%20RIS%20assesses%20the%20costs%20and%20benefits%20for%20implementing%20the%20regulatory%20proposals%20to%20reduce%20land-based%20pollutants%20from%20key%20industries%20across%20all%20Great%20Barrier%20Reef%20catchments%20flowing%20into%20waterways%20and%20the%20reef.) a collated industry response on the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for the proposal to broaden and enhance existing reef protection regulations was submitted in response to a call for public input. Due to the State election the consultation process was put on hold prior to its completion in December and re-opened until 19th February. ***qldwater*** used this period to further discuss the joint response with members. Subsequently the response was modified with minor corrections and to reiterate that the sector could not support the RIS because it did not adequately assess the costs and benefits for implementing the regulatory proposals (with respect to sewage services) and underestimated the real impacts on regional communities. This position has also been supported by the LGAQ. The final submission is available [here](http://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=238253).

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**4.   Mineral, Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018**

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Earlier this month the Mineral, Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 was introduced into the Queensland Parliament, following legislation proposed before the State election.

Key points are:

The explanatory notes state that the primary water-related policy objectives of the Bill are to:

* ensure the consideration of the water-related effects of **climate change** on water resources is explicit in the water planning framework;
* provide for the inclusion of cultural outcomes in water plans to support the protection of the **cultural values** of water resources for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders;
* provide a mechanism to allow for **temporary access to unallocated water** held in strategic water infrastructure reserves; and
* establish new powers for **dealing with urgent water quality issues**. (this means issuing directives to release or hold water to deal with water quality – like the Fitzroy barrage issues a few years ago).

More information is available here:  <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-committees/committees/SDNRAIDC/inquiries/current-inquiries/3MinWatOLAB2018>

***qldwater*** is not intending to submit on the bill as it has been developed in close consultation with LGAQ and we have not identified any issues, but please provide feedback to us if you believe something has been missed.

Submissions close 27 February at 12.00 pm with the report due date of 9 April.

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**5.   Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2018**

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The Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2017 lapsed and all work associated with the plumbing law reforms was placed on hold when the 55th Queensland Parliament was dissolved.

Last week the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport, the Honourable Mick de Brenni MP reintroduced the Plumbing and Drainage Bill 2018 into the house.

The Bill is now available for review on the Queensland Governments Legislative website: [click here.](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/browse/bills#/bill/year/2018/56) (NB click on page 2 to view the Bill)

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**6.   DNRME Water Supply Regulation e-Alerts**

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The Water Regulator provides important information periodically to Water Service Providers through the “Water Supply Regulation e-Alert.”  It typically includes information on performance reporting and other deadlines, opportunities to provide feedback and otherwise be involved in projects, and information on events the Department is running including drinking water symposia.

While we will endeavour to make people aware that a new e-Alert has been released, the Department is keen to maintain its own contact list and distribution process.  To be included on that list, email [drinkingwater.reporting@dnrme.qld.gov.au](mailto:drinkingwater.reporting@dnrme.qld.gov.au).

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**7.   Great Artesian Basin Report**

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The Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee has released their report “Summary of past drilling activity within the Great Artesian Basin”.

The Committee requested bore hole data from the state and territory government databases to be collated to estimate the number of boreholes that have been drilled into the Great Artesian Basin.  This is to inform discussions on the legacy of the 140 years of past drilling activity with respect to the long term management of the groundwater resources of the GAB.

The report is also available on the Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee website: <http://www.gabcc.gov.au/>

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