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

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

**(Issue #299 –  24 October 2016)**

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**1.****Queensland State of the Environment Report**

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The Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection has released the sixth State of the Environment report. This report is produced every four years for Queensland with this the first to be prepared in a web-based format. The new format allows users to interact within a web-based environment, interrogating spatial data and maps with regionally-specific interpretive text, tables, graphs and charts.

This report covers the period 2012-2015 and meets the legislative requirements of both the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995.

This report is structured around four themes—biodiversity, heritage, pollution and climate. Each theme is divided into sub-themes, against which indicators mainly relating to extent and condition (state), and pressures, are reported on.

[Queensland State of the Environment 2015 In Brief](http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/state-of-the-environment/pdf/soe-2015-in-brief.pdf) provides a summary of the Report.  For more information please visit:  <http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/state-of-the-environment/>

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**2.   Ixom 2016 Best Tap Water in Australia competition**

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Barrington, Tasmania has been judged the best tasting tap water in Australia at the Ixom 2016 Best Tap Water in Australia competition held last week in Marysville, Victoria. The winning sample was provided by TasWater from the Barrington Water Treatment Plant.

Barrington and TasWater will get bragging rights for the next 12 months and will go on to represent Australia at the Berkeley Springs International Water Tasting Competition held in West Virginia, USA.

The Queensland finalist was the winner of the 2015 Queensland grand final – Barcaldine Shire Council.  The other states entrants were Myrtleford WTP - Victoria, Morgan WTP – SA, Bowraville WTP – NSW.  Congratulations to TasWater and commiserations to Barcy.

Despite the fun side to the contest, the competition honours the hard work of the water operators and their crews who work all year-round to ensure we have safe, clean drinking water.

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**3.   DEHP Underground Water Management Bill**

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The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection has released its latest Environmental Regulatory Update #23.   Of interest to our members the update advises that on 13 September 2016, the[Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016](https://www.vision6.com.au/ch/33369/19mrx/2491585/2c4ecn791.pdf) was introduced into the Queensland Parliament. The Bill proposes to strengthen the effectiveness of the environmental assessment and ongoing management of underground water extraction by resource projects. For more information on the Bill, refer to the [explanatory notes](https://www.vision6.com.au/ch/33369/19mrx/2491586/2c4ecwbvy.pdf).

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**4.   DEWS DG Presentation on Urban Water Initiatives at LGAQ Conference**

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At the LGAQ Annual conference last week, Prof. Paul Simshauser, Director General of the Department of Energy and Water Supply  addressed delegates on the subject of water management in regional Queensland. The presentation provided a coherent overview of Department’s activities relevant to the urban water sector including the regional water supply security assessments, QWRAP, long-term water strategy and service provider performance reporting.

There are no details as yet about the replacement for the last government’s WaterQ strategic plan but the DG listed focus areas for the next 12 months which included further clarification of regulation and compliance issues, an indigenous safe drinking water project and a focus on water treatment operator competency.

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**5.   Debate on Regulatory KPIs at International Conference in Brisbane**

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The World Water Congress has come and gone with Dave Cameron attending the Industry Leaders Forum and Rob Fearon participating in a debate entitled “the Purpose of Benchmarking” with representatives from EurEau (a European membership body for utilities), Mozambique, Zimbabwe, the Netherlands, Australia, the Czech Republic, and with a Spanish moderator.

Rob was challenged to be the speaker in favour of the motion “is benchmarking an effective tool for regulation of efficient services? – or is it instead an obstacle to efficiency with excessive regulatory intervention?”

A live voting process was conducted with attendees able to change their position throughout the debate.  Despite losing the lead early, Rob was successfully able to bring the room around to finish level-pegging with the negative speaker.  A photo of the debate is available [here](https://qldwater.smugmug.com/Debate-on-Regulatory-KPIs-at/).

While the event was a bit of fun with speakers in many cases arguing a position contrary to their own beliefs, the end result really reflects that there are two types of benchmarking with equally valid objectives.  As ***qldwater*** members are in the middle of submitting their annual regulatory data, they should take comfort in the knowledge that an international forum has reinforced that quality benchmarking is crucial, for both utilities to compare against each other to identify potential efficiencies, with a need for regulatory backing for some core indicators to ensure consistency and a customer focus.

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**6.****Generous winner for 2016 *qldwater* Footy Tips**

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We have a winner!  The **qldwater** NRL tipping competition is over again for another year.

Congratulations to our winner, Sean Hinton from Unitywater for some very strategic tipping  - Sean has won a $400 Mantra/Peppers gift card.    Sean has generously decided to donate half the value of the gift card to [Tangaroa Blue Foundation,](http://www.tangaroablue.org/about-us.html) an Australian registered charity which focusses on the health of our marine environment, and coordinates the Australian Marine Debris Initiative, an on-ground network of volunteers, communities, organisations and agencies around the country monitoring the impacts of marine debris along their stretch of coastline.

Sean’s $200 donation to Tangaroa Blue Foundation has been kindly matched by Unitywater.  A very generous donation from both and a great cause, well done Sean and Unitywater!

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**7.   QUICK LINKS – ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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The Queensland Police Service have released a new [confidential notice](http://www.qldwater.com.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=218807) that can accessed by ***qldwater*** members from the secure area of our website.    Please note these documents are provided on a confidential basis for ***qldwater*** member use only.

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