



Queensland Water

The Water Industry's Resource for News, Events and Information

Issue 2



ANNOUNCING THE 2012 ORICA AUSTRALIA BEST OF THE BEST QUEENSLAND WATER TASTE TEST

Following the roaring success of the 2011 "Best of the West – Water Taste Test", we are pleased to announce Orica Australia as the Statewide event sponsor of the 2012 Orica Australia Best of the Best Queensland Water Taste Test.

qldwater Acting CEO Dave Cameron says 2012 will see the event expand further to allow any Queensland Water Service Provider that meets the appropriate conditions to enter a sample in the competition.

So put your water where your mouth is and enter a sample in your nearest regional heat - and while you're at it, remember to register your prized employees for the conference/ networking opportunity we are holding around each event!

Regional finals will be held across the state and the overall winner will be announced at the Water Industry Operators Association conference on the Gold Coast in June 2012.

While the test itself is a bit of fun, it has a number of more serious objectives, including:

- An opportunity to raise community awareness of the excellent job our water and sewerage service providers do;
- A chance to celebrate our achievements and raise the profile of water and sewerage services amongst elected representatives and senior management;
- Networking, education and information sharing through mini-conferences to coincide with each regional event.

Check out our page at www.qldwater.com.au/water_taste_test with the new 2012 promotional video. Instructions for how to enter will be posted early in the new year.

2012 DIARY DATES:

16 Feb – South West Taste Test and Mini-conference, Charleville

15 Mar – SEQ Taste Test and Mini-conference, Sunshine Coast

12 Apr – Central Queensland Taste Test and Mini-conference, Emerald

30 Apr – Central West Qld Taste Test and Mini-conference, Longreach

4 May – Northern Queensland Taste Test and Mini-conference, Bowen

24 May – Far North Queensland Taste Test and Mini-conference, Cairns.

6/7 Jun – State Final Taste Test, WIOA Conference, Gold Coast

Update from qldwater Acting CEO Dave Cameron

For those who haven't caught up with *qldwater* lately, there have been a lot of changes in the last few months.

David Wiskar formally resigned from our Technical Reference Group to take up a position at NT Power and Water in January and Bruce Gardiner from Cairns Regional Council was voted in as the new Chair, with Trevor Harvey from North Burnett Regional Council as Deputy Chair.

Bruce and the TRG recorded their thanks to David for his enormous commitment, wisdom and guidance since the establishment of *qldwater*.

In August, Rob Fearon went partly off-line to focus on the LGAQ-led Queensland Water Regional Alliance Project, and I took on the CEO role. In addition:

- Dave Scheltinga was appointed as our SWIM Manager to replace Regina Souter;
- Michelle Hill is now acting as Manager, Skills Programs;

- Sally-Anne Walding has commenced as our new SWIM Project Officer, ultimately replacing Pat Morgan who is leaving to study medicine; and
- Desiré Gralton starts as our new part time Communications Manager replacing Sue Tierney.

We have been spoilt by having such excellent staff and wish all those who have now moved on the best and thanks for helping so much with the transition to new arrangements.

To add to the hectic year, we have just moved offices from Local Government House to new leased accommodation at 4/43-49 Sandgate Road, Albion. Once refurbishment is complete, we will have a better meeting room, training room, and best of all, visitor parking. Second best is a close tie – we can't yet decide between the proximity to the Brekky Creek Hotel, dogs/ trots or Allan Border Field.

Our phone numbers have also changed and our individual contact numbers are below. Postal and email addresses remain the same.

Our last day of business for 2011 is 23 December and we will be reopening on 3 January 2012. For a small organisation like ours, the Christmas break is that brilliant time of year when everybody stops working and we get to have real time out, reflect on a successful year and look forward to 2012 (with some trepidation – look at what's happening!).

To all of our members, clients and others associated with *qldwater* we wish you a safe and relaxing holiday and especially hope that those impacted last year by big wets and cyclones get a break this wet season.

New *qldwater* telephone numbers:

Heather Gold General Enquiries	07 3632 6850
Rob Fearon	07 3632 6855
Dave Cameron	07 3632 6854
Michelle Hill	07 3632 6853
Sally Walding	07 3632 6852
Fax	07 3632 6899

2012 Water Connections Tour on Track

qldwater is proud to announce that Dial Before You Dig has again agreed to sponsor the 2012 Water Connections Tour and the details of the service providers to be included in the visit have now been finalised.

Well over 50 visits have now been made to regional and remote councils and the support from Dial Before You Dig helps us ensure it stays a key annual event for the Queensland Water Directorate.

The week's activities are also linked to two of the regional taste tests and mini-conferences.

The tour not only provides a chance for *qldwater* to connect with its members and hopefully offer assistance; in recent years it has also been a way of getting State and Federal government representatives exposed to the challenge of delivering essential services in regional and remote Queensland.

For more information, visit http://www.qldwater.com.au/Water_Connections_11.

Proudly sponsored by:



The Essential First Step.

2012 Tour Destinations

- 30 April – Longreach
- 1 May – Croydon, Etheridge
- 2 May – Cook, Wujal Wujal
- 3 May – Cassowary Coast, Burdekin
- 4 May – Whitsunday



Call for Subscribers to Skills Partnership

qldwater established the Queensland Water Skills Partnership to continue the important workforce development and skills work that has been undertaken through the Department of Education and Training funded Water Skills Formation Strategy (SFS) which will end on 31 December 2011.

On 16 November, **qldwater** hosted a workshop with industry to prioritise the key projects for the partnership, including the development of an industry video library, regional training alliances, water operations training, legislative responsibilities training (e.g. expansion of current induction program), and engaging with schools. A list of the projects with further detail will be available on the **qldwater** website soon.

There are 12 financial subscribers already, however the Partnership needs to grow its membership to demonstrate to DET, Skills Queensland and key national bodies that Queensland has a coordinated voice for water

skills and to assist in levering more State and Federal investment.

qldwater is now offering a subsidised rate of \$12.50 per employee (50%) to subscribe to the partnership for the remainder of the 2011/2012 financial year to get involved in the projects for this important skills work.

Further information can be found on the **qldwater** website or by contacting Michelle Hill at mhill@qldwater.com.au.

The call for membership for the 2012/13 financial year will be made by written invitation to each water service provider in early 2012.



Training Places Funded by Strategic Investment Fund

qldwater recently secured \$540,000 for training places as part of Skills Queensland Strategic Investment Fund.

The funding, which will be administered by LGAQ, will be used for direct training places for qualifications at Certificate IV level and higher. As LGAQ have a separate SIF allocation for Local Government water service providers, the **qldwater** funding will primarily fund places for non-council providers including Queensland Urban Utilities, Allconnex, Unitywater, Seqwater, SunWater and Wide Bay Water.

Michelle Hill, Manager Skills Programs, said the funding, on top of monies already secured through User Choice and other programs, will be administered in a similar manner to the process for the now expired PPP funding.

"We plan to direct a portion of the **qldwater** funds towards stimulating the delivery of new qualifications, and we are currently determining how best to develop these pilot activities," Michelle said.

"The strongest interest to date is around asset management training that is specifically contextualised for water, but we are keen to hear from our members if they have any other ideas."

SIF will cover 70-75% of the training costs with industry required to provide the remainder.

A call for expressions of interest will go out in early 2012 and it is anticipated that contracts will be finalised by the end of March 2012.

Urban Water Industry Induction Now Available Online!

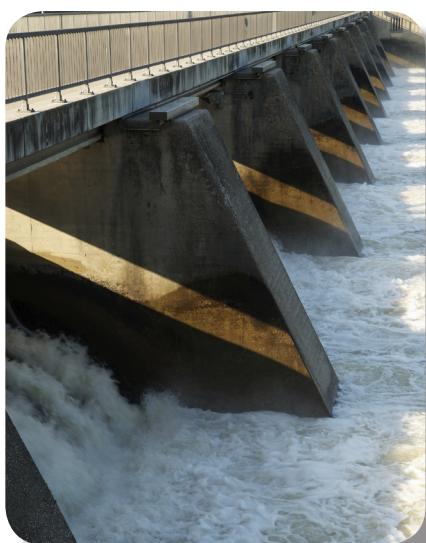
The much-anticipated "Introduction to the Urban Water Industry" online induction is now available on the **qldwater** website!

Developed through the Queensland Water Skills Partnership, the course contains relevant information for new entrants to the water industry, potential employees and those already employed in the industry who would like to find out more.

Topics covered include:

- water supply and sewerage systems;
- information on key government departments and industry bodies;
- an overview of key legislation;
- an outline of the urban water industry in Australia and Queensland;
- requirements for Queensland water service providers;
- sample career paths;
- training and further education; and
- key issues impacting the industry and other relevant information.

Have a look at http://www.qldwater.com.au/Skills_Water_Industry_Induction and send your feedback to skills@qldwater.com.au.



Update on Statewide Water Information Management System (SWIM)

qldwater's SWIM project continues in the fast lane with high levels of participation in water data reporting supported by further funding, new people and projects, and better functionality that allows for improved SWIM Quality Control processes and historic data submission.

SWIM Manager, Dr David Scheltinga, welcomed the continued high levels of reporting, stating that it was essential to provide transparent, high quality water services and benchmarking to ensure a sustainable water industry.

David joined **qldwater** as SWIM Manager in July 2011 and Sally Walding recently joined the team as SWIM Project Officer to replace Patrick Morgan who is leaving to pursue a career in medicine.

Two new spin-off projects to the system include SWIMLocal and voluntary open publication of water data.

SWIMLocal

A successful application for further funding from BOM has enabled **qldwater** to initiate SWIMLocal, a local data collation system that will allow individual councils to integrate data from the various locations where data is generated.

David said the need for SWIMLocal had been identified by many members, particularly those that needed to integrate water data after amalgamation and small councils that lacked the capacity to create internal systems or afford off-the-shelf generic data management systems for their water services.

"The primary objective of this project is to streamline and add value to the process of collating and reporting data by Queensland reporting entities."

Many organisations currently use the SWIM system to transfer their data from their own systems, and the most time-consuming and error-prone step in this process is the collation of data.

Data is commonly dispersed across a number of business groups of reporting organisations (e.g. asset systems, monitoring systems, financial systems) and even within a category type, data is often generated at numerous locations (e.g. different storages, stream gauges, water quality test sites).

In some organisations these different locations may be connected electronically so that data is shared, however the recent local government amalgamations have meant that for many organisations, locations that generate data use different storage systems or procedures.

The SWIMLocal project provides a software solution that allows WSPs to easily synchronise any data from their dispersed locations. A 'cloud-based' system will enable multiple locations to maintain complete and up-to-date datasets that are simultaneously synchronised with the central SWIM system.

Synchronisation of data will occur regularly (as controlled by the WSP) and reporting of data will be either automatic or a simple click of a button. The central SWIM system will transfer specified data to State and Commonwealth agencies at required intervals and enable additional quality assurance checks, translation and data backup.

Open publication of water data

The content (indicators) of SWIM have, to-date, been determined by the reporting requests or requirements of the State and Commonwealth agencies and retained by those agencies.

According to David, the participation by water industry has now enabled development of an industry-determined set of Key Performance Indicators. These indicators are useful for individual water businesses for benchmarking, assessing business performance and assisting in resource planning, and will be refined over time.

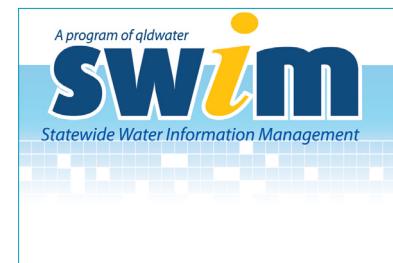


"Currently, 13 industry leaders have agreed to participate in the trial to develop a publicly available report on their performance using these indicators."

qldwater continues to advocate for members in relation to SWIM indicators and is currently:

- examining potential licensing arrangements between the WSPs submitting data to SWIM, and the organisations receiving data;
- working to improve feedback from Government data recipients (i.e. provide WSPs with confirmation their data/reports have been received and providing specific feedback regarding how that data was used);
- holding discussions with State and Commonwealth agencies with regard to refining indicators and their definitions with a view to further indicator rationalisation; and
- discussing ways to get changes to indicator information provided to WSPs the year before the reporting is required instead of after the data for the indicators has been collected.

Please visit www.swim.qldwater.com.au



Preparing for another ‘wet’ wet season

Well, it looks like our members in the South East corner are gearing up for another wet summer while Central and Western Queensland should receive around their median rainfall – but you never can tell!

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) updated its forecast for the summer wet season, with the latest indications suggesting that weather patterns are returning to La Niña seasonal weather patterns with a high chance of above median average rainfall in the South East corner and higher than average cyclone activity in Queensland (see Figure 1).

The Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) has developed the SPOTA-1 (Seasonal Pacific Ocean Temperature Analysis version 1) model to monitor Pacific Ocean sea surface temperatures (SSTs) from March to October each year and, on this basis, provide long-lead outlooks for Queensland summer (November to March) rainfall. More information is available on The Long Paddock website at <http://www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/> (see Figure 2).

Despite variations in predictions, both systems predict higher than usual rainfall in areas of the state over summer.

While these latest forecasts are concerning, the resilience shown in the wake of multiple disasters during the 2011 wet season has shown the effectiveness of Local Government disaster management preparedness, especially in the provision of water supply and sewerage services.

qldwater would like to encourage our members to provide us with feedback of effective disaster management plans to assist us in sharing the knowledge and building comprehensive plans that will reduce flood and other damages now and into the future.

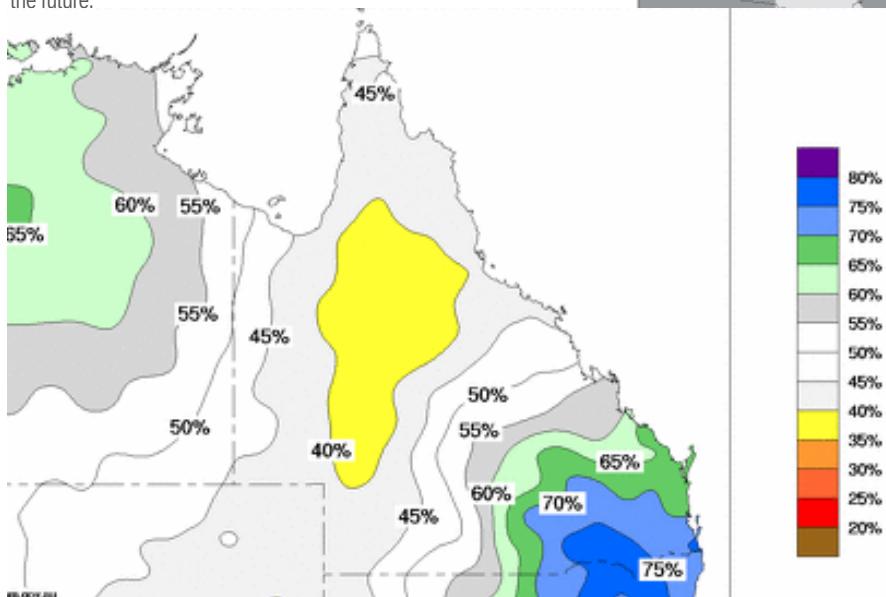


Figure 1 (left): BOM Chance of exceeding the median rainfall from December 2011 to February 2012 (product of the National Climate Centre).
Image: www.bom.gov.au.

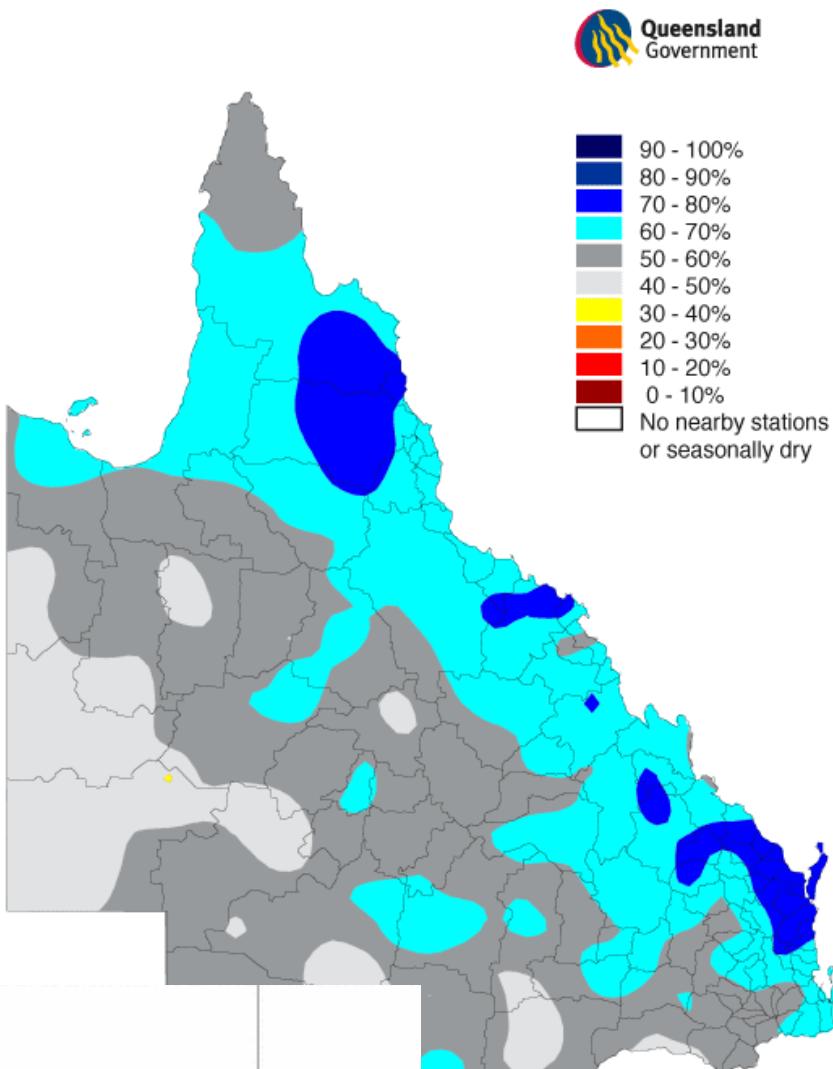


Figure 2 (above): SPOTA median rainfall prediction for December 2011 to February 2012 based on consistently positive phase during October / November 2011.
Image courtesy of DERM.

Collaboration The Key to Success

Central Western Qld Local Government Mayors recently endorsed the formation of the Outback Regional Water Group (ORWG) to progress a collaborative approach to urban water management.

Mirrored on the successful Outback Regional Roads Group (ORRG) - a collaboration between the Central Western Qld Local Governments, the Local Government Association of Qld (LGAQ) and the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) - the ORWG will operate at the strategic and operational levels with external stakeholders invited to join in.

Dr Rob Fearon, Director of Innovation Partnerships at *qldwater*, says the ORWG will consist of an elected representative of the regions seven Local Governments, the LGAQ, the Department of Environment and Resource Management, the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia - Qld Division and *qldwater*.

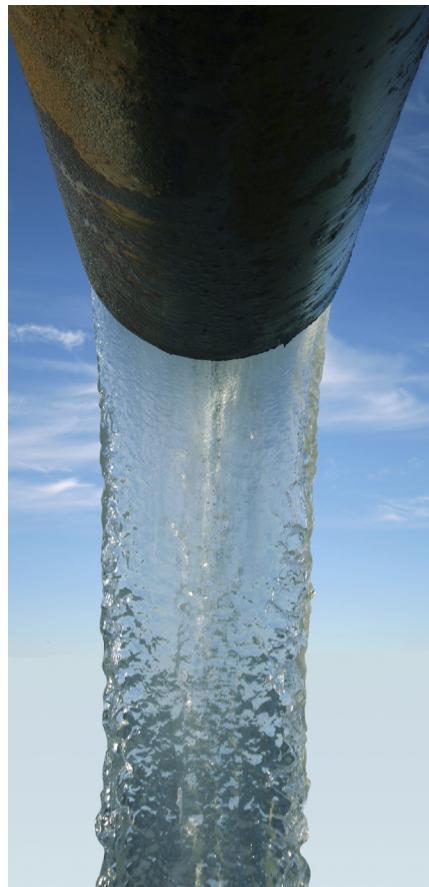
"The technical water group will consist of all the above organisations with the exception being that the elected officials will be replaced by the Local Government engineers."

According to Cr Warren, Chairman of RAPAD, the ORRG had shown that the practical function of the technical group feeding information and making recommendations to the strategic group worked exceptionally well.

"The ORWG's draft vision - to take a leadership and advocacy role in the safe, secure and sustainable urban water and waste water services of the local government areas of the Central West RAPAD group of councils - outlines clearly and concisely the outcomes we seek, Cr Warren added.

"Urban water provision is costly and increasingly complex in its compliance requirements."

"By collaborating we hope to share skills and ideas, advocate for funding when needed, and above all else ensure safe, secure and sustainable urban water and waste water services in our communities."



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"The Queensland Water Directorate (*qldwater*) is the central advisory and advocacy body within Queensland's urban water industry and represents members from Local Government and other water service providers across Queensland."