WIOA Interest Day attendees are shown the Maxcon Industry workshops

Aquatec Maxcon Group (AMG) were the proud hosts of the Water Industry Operators Association of Australia (WIOA) Water Interest Day on the 7th of November 2019. WIOA hosts several national events every year with these events aiming to bring together like-minded individuals from city and regional water authorities. Interest Days provide water professionals with opportunities to network and share valuable lessons and experiences with each other. The event held at AMG was organised by Colin Haynes (Queensland Committee Chair) and facilitated by WIOA staff with help from other advisory committee members. Our AMG Service Manager, Zak Floyde Smith, assisted other committee members with organising the water interest day at our Ipswich Facility. Zak currently sits on the WIOA Queensland Advisory Board.

The Queensland Water Interest Day was attended by over 60 people. 8 Councils or Water Authorities were represented as were 2 State Government Departments and numerous suppliers to the greater water industry. Aquatec Maxcon Group was selected to host the interest day as it is unique and the only business of its kind in Australia. Peter Ferrando, Managing Director of AMG, gave the opening presentation covering the history and a brief overview of the Aquatec Maxcon Group. Three papers were presented by Andy Watson (from the South Burnet Regional Council), Terry Heness (Toowoomba Regional Council) and Gary Hargreaves (TAFE Queensland). The speakers covered three separate topics including: New high tech headset equipment on show by TAFE QLD demonstrating the potential technology of the operators of the future; South Burnet Regional Council covered the huge financial and social success of utilising recycled water from their new Nereda Treatment plant in order to grow cattle feed and irrigate sporting grounds; Toowoomba Regional Council addressed a water treatment plant that is undergoing trials in order to improve operations.

Wrapping up the formal presentation component of the day, Jason Lee (QUU) held a Panel discussion where Tim Hardcastle (QUU) Shannon Thomas (Unity Water) and Marcus Boyd (Toowoomba Regional Council) spoke freely about several key topics including: What technologies could make a difference in the near future to operations; how to budget and organise funding; and how to encourage the next generation of emerging water professionals to get involved in the water industry.

Attendees were invited to participate in several tours of different key areas of the AMG premises. Aquatec Maxcon design was showcased in the design and drafting area integrating process, mechanical and electrical design as well as models that can be viewed in 2D, 3D and even in Virtual Reality. A tour was of the steel fabrication business, Maxcon Industries, was conducted. Maxcon Industries (MI) fabricates specialist equipment in mild steel as well as stainless steel. MI also boasts onsite sand blasting, three large painting bays and a large assembly bay. A tour of the MPA Engineering facility was also held. At the MPA workshops, the groups were shown how the design and construction process for an entire switchboard is conducted. Starting with a set of drawings, progressing to an empty enclosure and ending with a switchboard under Factory acceptance testing - a lot goes into the manufacturing of a switchboard.

A little about WIOA: WIOA is an association whose members represent Private and Public Water Authorities across Australia. Members are welcomed from any organisation responsible for the maintenance or operation of any facet of the Water Industry. Interest Days provide water professionals with opportunities to network and share valuable lessons and experiences with each other. The numerous state based committees aim to promote increased standards of training as well as access to teaching material throughout the industry in order to increase the efficiency and competency of members. WIOA members are the unsung heroes of public health and environmental protection. Without highly skilled and well-trained operations staff across Australia we would not have safe drinking water at our disposal.

A quick thank you to our sponsors: Trojan Technologies (who sponsored the morning tea of Krispy Kreme doughnuts)

Feedback from those who attended the Interest Day has been very positive and the day has been cited as a great learning opportunity for all involved.

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