Queensland Water Modelling Network
Executive Summary

QWMN is an appropriate, well-executed organisation which can continue to refine its focus and processes to meet long-run outcomes.

The Queensland Water Modelling Network (QWMN) was established to provide tools, information and collaborative platforms to deliver transformative change within the Queensland water sector and to create influence nationally. The 2022 mid-term evaluation assessed the program's appropriateness, process, and short- and medium-run outcomes.

Appropriateness

QWMN continues to appropriately address clear and ongoing needs in the sector for:

- Collaboration.
- Capacity building.
- Expansion of sector knowledge through research, development and innovation.

The network is generally focused on the right topics; however, there are some critical gaps to address.

Example | MEDLI model review

QWMN completed a comprehensive review of the Model for Effluent Disposal using Land Irrigation (MEDLI) model, a foundational model used across the sector, to ensure it reflects recent research and supports best practice.

Process QWMN processes efficiently and effectively deliver program needs. This includes maximising its budget and leveraging funding, as well as strong communication before and during all tenders, projects and programming.

Outcomes QWMN continues to progress towards achieving its intended outcomes. However, there is currently a greater focus on outputs than outcomes which made it challenging for this evaluation to determine the amount of progress being made against all outcomes.

All short run outcomes are currently being achieved or progressed.

Example | Improved sector capacity and capability to use and apply models (achieved and ongoing).

- 41% of survey respondents felt that Capability, Collaboration and Capacity (3CP) events had helped them learn new skills or knowledge that can be applied to their jobs.

- 23% felt the events reinforced skills they already had.

Example | Models consider traditional knowledge and cultural values (in progress).

- QWMN has made explicit the involvement of First Nations people as an evaluation criterion for tender proposals.
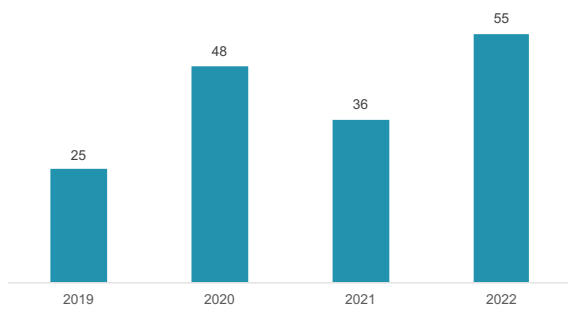
Fig 1 Number of different groups or organisations involved in a tender proposal

By the numbers [1]

5 PhD students funded as Innovation Associates.

14 PhD students involved in the Innovation Cluster.

343 participants across 9 Community of Practice events (includes in-person and online).

55 different organisations comprised the consortiums submitting the **27** proposals for the 2022 tender. The number of organisations has more than doubled since 2019 when the first tender was held (Fig 1).

The amount of money QWMN has allocated to annual strategic tenders has increased yearly; however, the requests for funding have also increased each year. There is a much greater demand for projects than current QWMN funds can meet (Fig 2).

At least **$250,000** of leverage funding through the 3CP program.[2]

[1] From March 2021 to April 2022.
[2] From March 2021-February 2022.

Some medium run outcomes are being progressed.

Example | Knowledge generated is shared across the broader Queensland water modelling community (achieved and ongoing).

- QWMN is considered a leading example for other states ("A lighthouse to the nation").

- There is collaboration among various organisations and various geographies for RD&I

- Personal networks, developed through QWMN events, are used to share knowledge beyond QWMN-sponsored activities.

Example | Improved water planning, decision-making and on-going research in Queensland (in progress).

- QWMN is laying the groundwork through meetings with decision-makers and potential partners (i.e. state and federal governments and potential local partners in-state)
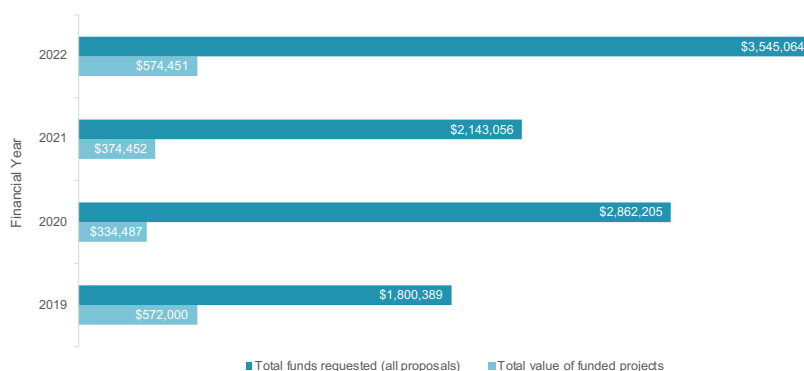
Fig 2 Funds requested vs total amount funded

Recommendations

QWMN has developed into a well-run and mature organisation where the most significant future gains will be made from improved communication and an increased focus on outcomes. The mid-term evaluation made recommendations in three thematic areas:

01 QWMN should increase transparency and communication of processes and outputs.

02 QWMN should target specific strategic needs, such as further inclusion of early career modellers.

03 QWMN should focus on progressing program outcomes.