



Protecting the region's waterways

QMDC needs your feedback on the value of water – ecological, aesthetic, cultural, spiritual and economic – in the Maranoa-Balonne, Border Rivers, Moonie River and Lower Condamine catchments.

Healthy systems are essential to meet both community and ecosystem demands on the region's water environments.

The Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC), in partnership with the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM), is developing a *Healthy Waters Management Plan (The Plan)* for the *Maranoa-Balonne, Moonie and Queensland Border Rivers catchments*.

The Plan will outline ways to protect and improve the quality of both surface and groundwater in the region's waterways to sustain economic and social activities as well as ensure ecological health for present and future generations.

Legislatively speaking

The Plan will meet legislative requirements under the Queensland Government's Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009 (EPP Water) and will consist of environmental values, management goals and water quality objectives for waters within the Maranoa-Balonne and Lower Condamine catchments. Healthy Waters Management Plans will also be developed for other Queensland Murray-Darling Basin catchments in the next 18 months.

Liaising with the community

To develop the Plan and to secure community, industry and government input, QMDC will:

- *liaise with key stakeholders* during 2011-2012 through workshops and meetings to identify draft Environmental Values (EVs) including aquatic ecosystem and human use values of water such as primary industries, recreation and aesthetics, drinking water, industrial uses and cultural and spiritual values
- *determine aquatic ecosystem values* by identifying levels of naturalness or ecological values of aquatic ecosystems
- work closely with DERM to *develop water quality*

guidelines from available water quality monitoring data, and water quality objectives (WQOs) which ensure water quality protects EVs

- provide a draft report on EVs and water quality guidelines online and to a number of community and other stakeholder forums for comments.

The final report

QMDC will prepare a final draft report for public comment in 2012.

The process and final report will be reviewed by DERM and considered against social and economic impacts before the EVs, management goals and water quality objectives are included in Schedule 1 for the EPP Water.

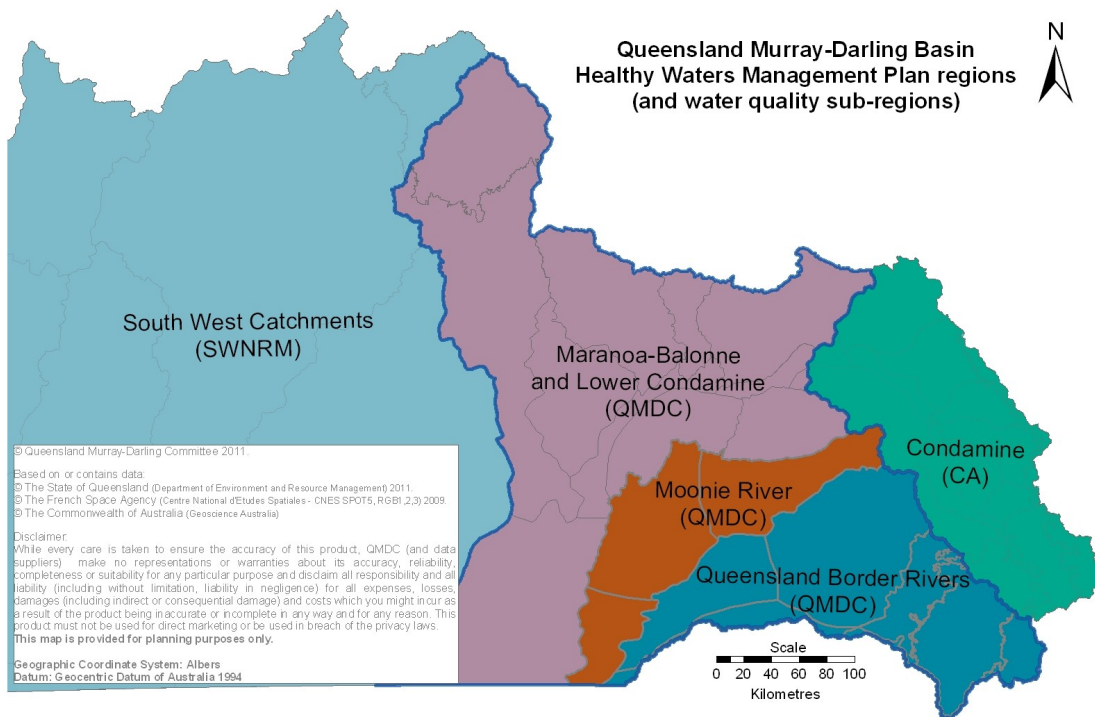
What does this all mean for our community?

The development of the Healthy Waters Management Plan will allow communities and groups to collate past and present information about our waterways, and to clearly identify the values for protection into the future. Through the setting of WQOs, it will be possible to determine what water quality is needed to protect the identified environmental values (EVs). This means the community can easily determine if their actions are helping to meet their water quality objectives by providing the expected values of measured parameters, associated with the objectives.

For example, if EVs for stream water include conservation values plus stock watering values, stream Electrical Conductivity (salinity) guidelines may be set for a range from 20 to 500 microsiemens/cm. This range would be based on observed readings for this stream type in healthy conditions and is well below recommended guidelines for stock water.

Local monitoring program results can then be compared with the Guidelines to determine if environmental values are, in fact, being protected or if more work is needed.

Healthy Waters Management Plan areas

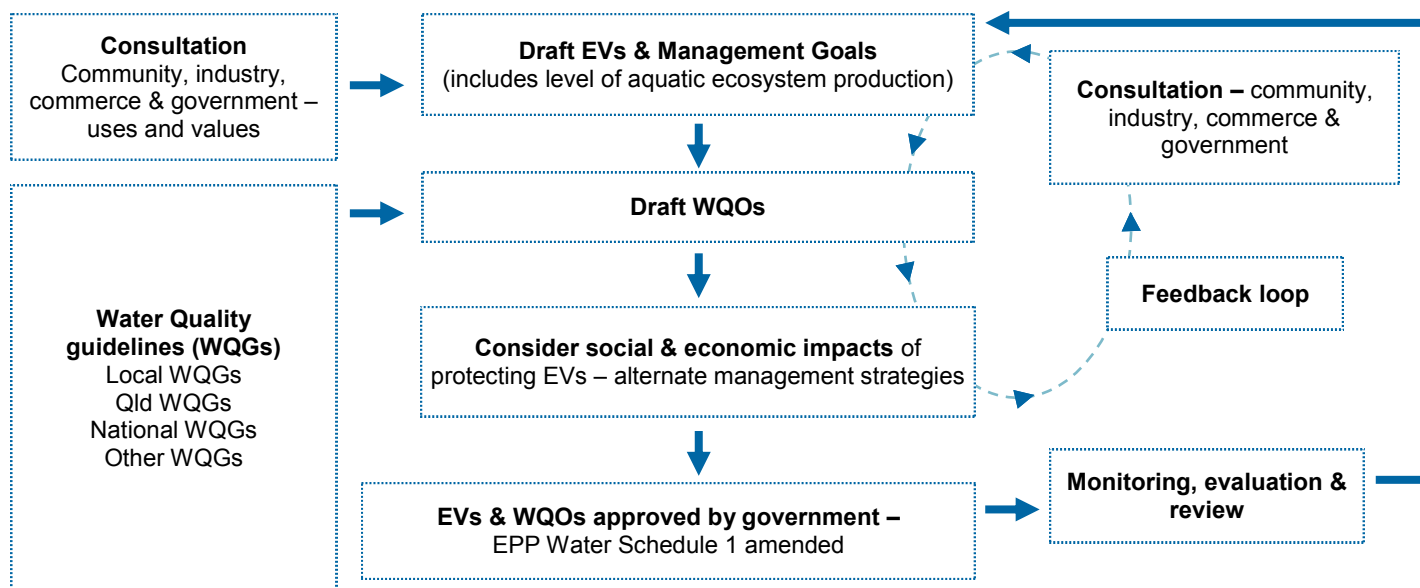


Healthy Water Management Plans are being developed for all catchments in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin with support from the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM). Plans for the Maranoa-Balonne, Moonie River and the Border Rivers are being developed by QMDC. The plan for the Condamine catchment (down to and including Charley's Creek) is being developed by Condamine Alliance (CA). The plan for the western catchments is being developed by South West NRM (SWNRM).

Regional NRM Bodies facilitating Plans: QMDC (Queensland Murray-Darling Committee), SWNRM (SouthWest NRM), CA (Condamine Alliance)

Healthy Waters Management Plans

Establishing environmental values, management goals and WQOs for waters under the EPP Water



Notes:

1. Establishing environmental values, management goals & WQOs for Queensland waters advances the achievement of the purpose of EPP Water. It is through this process that the object of the EP Act (under which the EPP Water is made) is achieved – that is, to protect Queensland's waters while allowing for the development that is ecologically sustainable.
2. Draft environmental values, management goals and WQOs for waters, which are developed under a HWMP in accordance with the provisions of Part 4 of the EPP Water, subsequently derive their legislative force and effect when included in Schedule 1 of the EPP Water.

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