

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## QMDC: 'More work needed to protect precious soil'

Natural resource management group, the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC), has said that land managers should look closely at how much topsoil may have been lost during the recent downpours.

"With the recent rainfalls and flooding events, runoff has been significant, turning our rivers into chocolate milk," said QMDC's CEO, Mr Geoff Penton.

Mr Penton said that, after so many dry seasons, the sudden and significant rains have washed topsoil, sediment and nutrient build-ups in to the waterways, impacting water quality down stream.

"This means that hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of our regions soils natural fertility is washed away," said Mr Penton.

"Since 2004, QMDC has worked with and supported many landholder groups to do things like build soil conservation works, convert old cultivation country to permanent pasture and some machinery conversions to zero till. We've also helped landholder groups to fence to land types, to improve ground cover, but it's not easy during a drought to maintain this ground cover."

Mr Penton said, "Land managers have made significant improvements across about a third of the region QMDC works in, with more than one and a half million hectares already in the process of keeping the topsoil where it belongs, and improving water quality."

"However, there's still a great deal to do, with more land managers wishing to implement similar projects than our staff can currently support," he said.

In light of this, Mr Penton said that QMDC, as one of 56 regional natural resource management (NRM) bodies across Australia, has called for the federal Labour Government to make a speedy decision about funding beyond 2008.

"With so much work left to do to secure the health and sustainability of the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin, we need to make sure we'll have the funding and resources to continue what we've begun with landholders," he said.

"If we don't have a smooth transition between the last funding program, which ends in June this year, and the next one, we won't be able to continue to provide this support to communities who can really have an impact on the health of the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin as we all try to recover from the drought."

**ENDS**

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**Images**



The Yarrill Creek, near Goondiwindi, breaks its banks during the recent downpours.



QMDC Water Quality Officer, Melissa Cundy, gathers flood samples to see how much top soil came down the rivers in the last lot of rain.

For electronic versions of these images, please contact Amelia Radford on 07 4637 6234, or [ameliar@qmdc.org.au](mailto:ameliar@qmdc.org.au).