

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## QMDC welcomes Bligh's budget

Community based natural resource management group, the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC), has welcomed the recent announcement that the Queensland Government has earmarked \$17.2 million for natural resources in 2008/09.

"The announcement that Anna Bligh's government will continue to support community driven natural resource management (NRM) is recognition of the work that communities have achieved over the past 10 years," said QMDC CEO, Geoff Penton.

Geoff said that the funding would bolster the support through the federal government's Caring for our Country initiative, and would help continue QMDC's role in the community, and that of other regional NRM groups, for another year.

"This means that we can continue to provide landholders, local governments and other community groups in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin with technical services and support."

"Both levels of government have provided a good commitment for the next 12 months, but we will need a longer-term commitment of support if we are to continue providing these services to the community."

"Currently, we're working with some 800 landholders, and six of the new regional councils, to address wide-scale natural resource management and sustainable land management issues, including water quality, salinity risk, biodiversity decline and decline in soil fertility, impacting the rest of the Basin.

"We're at the front line of some of the state's most serious weeds, like parthenium, and we have had some of the highest historical rates of clearing in the country, resulting in serious fragmentation of habitat and impacts on iconic species, like the northern hairy-nosed wombat and the regent honey-eater," he said.

"Emerging issues like waste management for growing centres, and the management of coal seam gas associated water, and other mining issues, are also creating significant environmental challenges in the region."

Geoff said that, while some of these challenges have been the focus of widespread activity for the past five years, all of them needed to be long-term considerations for communities and government, alike.

"We welcome any support the Queensland government has for addressing NRM matters with community based NRM groups," he said. "We hope to see that support continue for the longer term, and look forward to on-going partnerships with government agencies in our region."

**ENDS**

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