

MEDIA RELEASE

22 September 2008



Communities to address local unemployment and skills shortages

Members of the public will get the chance to have their say in October about a community employment strategy, which will aim to address education, employment and business opportunities existing in the natural resources and agricultural industries.

Organised by natural resource management group, the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC), a series of public meetings will be held across southern Queensland to map out potential training and employment opportunities in order to fill existing skills gaps across these two industries.

“We work with a lot of different sectors within the natural resources and agricultural industries, and we’ve seen so many labour gaps, and specific skill gaps, which are making it hard for these industries to continue their roles as stewards and economic drivers of the area,” said QMDC’s Border Rivers Catchment Coordinator, Julia Telford.

“So, we hope to bring a range of people together during these meetings and discuss which skills shortages exist, and what opportunities there might be to address unemployment levels and fill these shortages at the same time.”

QMDC will use information from these meetings to build a specific Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the region as part of a Department of Employment and Workplace Relations funded project.

QMDC Aboriginal Program Officer, Cheryl Moggs, said that the Aboriginal Employment Strategy would provide the region with a framework to address Aboriginal employment issues.

“But the discussions we’re hoping to facilitate at the public meetings will be relevant to all sectors of the community, matching unemployed people with local skill requirements, and working out how to provide the necessary training to achieve this,” said Cheryl.

“We’re looking for people from the general community, as well as local employment networks, landholders, small businesses, educational institutions and Aboriginal people to attend these meetings,” she said.

“We hope that it’ll create local partnerships, and provide guidance on ways QMDC can address Aboriginal unemployment, but also ways that the whole community can address all unemployment, and fill local skills shortages across our natural resource and agricultural industries.”

Public meetings will be held at:

- Inglewood Bowling Club – 6 October, 9.30am to 11.30am
- Goondiwindi Bowling Club – 8 October, 9.30am to 11.30am

- Dirranbandi Motor Inn – 10 October, 10.30am to 12pm
- Balonne Skill Centre, St. George – 13 October, 10am to 12pm
- Berkley Lodge Motor Inn, Mitchell – 14 October, 9.30am to 11.30am
- Maranoa Club, Roma – 15 October, 9.30am to 11.30am
- Murilla Landcare Centre, Miles – 16 October, 9.30am to 11.30am

For more information, or to register attendance, people can contact QMDC's Border Rivers Landcare and Catchment Centre in Goondiwindi on 07 4671 7900.

ENDS

Media contact/s

Written and released by:

Amelia Radford, Communication Officer, QMDC, 07 4637 6234, 0427 468 861

More information:

Julia Telford, Border Rivers Catchment Coordinator, QMDC, 07 4671 7900, 0427 580 399

Cheryl Moggs, Aboriginal Project Officer, QMDC, 07 4671 7900, 0417 468 861