

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Community to tell of significant change

Over 20 people attended a summit workshop in Mitchell last week to determine the most significant changes that have occurred in the region as a result of government and community investment in natural resource management.

The summit workshop was part of a project supported by the Australian Government, and delivered by Hassall and Associates consulting firm, in partnership with the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC), to find a better way to evaluate the impact of investment in natural resource management activities.

Ms Tricia Gowdie, from QMDC, said that the project was a pilot, and the first to be tried in Queensland.

“Last week’s workshop was part of a pilot project to trial an evaluation method, called Performance Story Reporting, and is one of ten trials happening around the country,” she said.

“We hope that, through performance story reports, we can better demonstrate to the Australian community the impact of the investment and the importance of funding programs such as the Natural Heritage Trust,” she said.

Working with the Maranoa Regional and Mitchell and District Landcare Associations, QMDC and Hassalls have been travelling across the Roma, Mitchell and Injune districts for the past month interviewing landholders who have participated in natural resource management projects since the early 1990s.

“We’ve gathered stories from the landholders about their experiences being involved with local Landcare groups and working together to find solutions to common natural resource problems,” said Ms Gowdie.

“These stories have helped us to understand the impacts that funding support for natural resource management has, both on the condition of the environment, and the health of the local communities.”

“Last week’s workshop allowed the community to review all of these stories and pick the ones they think best tell the story of change.”

The Australian Government has been an active participant in the trial, with various staff attending Monday's workshop, including the recently appointed First Assistant Secretary in the Department of the Environment and Water Resources, Ms Alex Rankin.

"The summit achieved a number of important things," said Ms Rankin. "Not only did it give us the opportunity to test out a new method for assessing what is being achieved through programs such as the Natural Heritage Trust, but it also allowed interested people across the region to get together to share their successes and the lessons learnt."

The Queensland Departments of Natural Resources and Water, and Primary Industries and Fisheries were also represented at the workshop, along with local governments from the nearby areas.

**ENDS**

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