

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$273,000 to help South QLD farmers manage soil

The Queensland Murray-Darling Committee's (QMDC) pilot 'Soil Management Tender' has closed, with letters of notification sent to successful farmers recently.

The Tender was aimed at individual farmers on properties throughout the Maranoa-Balonne and Border Rivers catchments that were in highly fertile soil regions.

"QMDC aimed to provide funding and support to help farmers in the two catchments to protect and better manage one of our most valuable natural assets – our soil," said QMDC Manager Geoff Penton.

"Our fertile soil regions are of high importance, and state and federal governments have allocated funding to help farmers change their management practices," he said.

So QMDC put the funding out to tender, in a first for Queensland natural resource management initiatives.

"Competitive tendering for funding in farming communities has been used in Victoria, NSW and WA with a fair amount of success. We wanted to see how it would work in Queensland," said Mr Penton.

The project has been a big success, so far, with 65 Expressions of Interest submitted to QMDC late last year.

"We have now approved 17 farmers, and committed a total of \$273,686 over 8,900 hectares from the government's Agriculture State Investment Project initiative to help these farmers implement effective soil management changes," said Mr Penton.

The approved applications were assessed competitively against other applicants and were considered the most sustainable over a five year period, demonstrating that they would be a good investment of funds.

"This Tender initiative will assist farmers to implement good, but often costly, management practices. We hope it'll also raise standards over time as farmers compete to access this type of support," he said.

QMDC will be running another Soil Management Tender, to kick off around September this year. For more information, please contact the QMDC office on 07 4637 6201.

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Caption: This fence line clearly shows what happens when land is over grazed: much of this topsoil will simply wash away with the next heavy rain. QMDC's Soil Management Tender will help 17 farmers across southern QLD to cover the expense of changing management practices to prevent this from happening.

