

\$80K for innovative Arts program

Communities in the Queensland Murray-Darling region will have an opportunity to experience the arts under an innovative new project to promote Natural Resource Management.

Under the project the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC) is investing \$80K into USQ's *Creative Communities* fund to conduct Visual Arts and Theatre workshops in the Border Rivers Catchment Area.

Dr Janet McDonald is a Lecturer in Theatre Studies at USQ and says the project has been in the pipeline for a long time.

"QMDC approached us in January 2005 and told us they had a pool of money to reinvigorate their Natural Resource Management (NRM) policy and education out in their catchment areas.

"It has taken us about eighteen months to work out how USQ Visual Arts and Theatre can best use this money to educate people about NRM," Dr McDonald said.

Under the proposal the Arts Faculty will conduct theatre performances, art workshops and visual arts exhibitions in various towns and communities.

Dr McDonald said the next step is to conduct an audit of the towns, so the programs are relevant to people at a local level.

"The show we create needs to deal with local people's stories and it needs to connect those stories to good management of their natural resources.

"And what I would like to do is create a local community effort and build real rapport and connect with these people who don't have access to USQ in other ways."

The Theatre Department hope to have a prototype show by September or October this year that they will deliver and get feedback on at QMDC's Discovering Landcare Conference in Toowoomba.

"Visual Arts will also do a series of workshops that will create art works that will be displayed and exhibited in the towns we visit," Dr McDonald said.

The \$80K project will be announced at a Vice Chancellor's Cocktail Reception on Tuesday 20 June at 6pm. Project stakeholders will also be available to comment on the project during work hours.

WHAT: USQ/QMDC innovative Arts program launched

WHERE: Vice Chancellor's Conference Room,
2nd Floor B Block, Toowoomba Campus

WHEN: Tuesday 20 June 2006, 6pm

Media Contact: Connie-Louise Alexander, USQ Media, +61 7 4631 2977 or 0439 760 106