

MEDIA RELEASE



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"Working together – healthy landscapes, viable communities"

Appreciating our wetlands

Wetlands across the globe will be celebrated on Monday, February 2 and residents of the Maranoa-Balonne have a lot to celebrate.

Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC) Water Technical Officer Rebecca Burnett, Roma, said World Wetlands Day encouraged everyone to consider the benefits provided by waterways and how they should be conserved and managed.

"World Wetlands Day has been celebrated internationally since 1997 to raise public awareness of the benefits of wetlands and here in the Maranoa-Balonne we certainly have a large number of wonderful areas," Ms Burnett said.

"The international theme of this year's day is 'Upstream – Downstream Wetlands Connect us all' which is in recognition of how connected we are to water, especially when water is so scarce in some areas.

"We have many wetlands in our region of national importance such as the Balonne River Floodplains near St George, Warrego River Waterholes near Murweh and The Gums Lagoon at The Gums."

Ms Burnett said wetlands were fascinating areas for wildlife and flora enthusiasts who enjoyed a thrill from seeing such a large diversity of species in a relatively confined area.

"Many of our wetlands contain threatened or migratory species and they also play an important role in the agricultural base of our region as well," she said.

"Our closest wetland of international significance declared under the Ramsar Convention is the Currawinya Lakes, about 170km south-west of Cunnamulla which help protect some of the most important inland waterbird habitats in Australia."

Ms Burnett said many wetlands met the needs of not just the environment but also primary industries and urban demands.

"The important thing is to ensure the long term sustainability of these amazing places because they are vital to our landscapes," she said.

"There are some easy steps we can all take to help ensure that happens: take the time to look around you next time you are near a waterway, land managers can access a raft of information from their local Landcare office (including here at the QMDC Maranoa-Balonne Landcare and Catchment Centre in Roma) about what they can do to help boost the health of the local wetlands, school students (and any interested community member) can become involved in water monitoring activities or local waterway health assessments.

"Of course, it can be something much simpler such as keeping an eye out for rare birds or animal species next time you are out near a wetland, or just taking a moment to appreciate its importance."

Media contacts

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NOTE: Photographs of wetlands are available upon request.