

# MEDIA RELEASE



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"Working together – healthy landscapes, viable communities"

## QMDC promotes large scale water use efficiency

The Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC) will release an independent technical report on Monday, March 2 outlining the wins for agriculture, regional communities and the environment available through large scale water use efficiency measures.

QMDC Chief Executive Officer Geoff Penton will release the report when he addresses the Murray Darling Association's *National Plan for 'Water for the Future' Local Government Forum* in Goondiwindi on Monday.

"Up to 200 gigalitres of water can be saved through \$200 million worth of investment in best management practice across the Queensland Murray-Darling's irrigation areas as part of a proposed six-year plan," Mr Penton said.

He said the QMDC had consistently advocated for a larger investment in rural water use efficiency.

"Not only does this technical report demonstrate what is feasible through such investment, we also have landholders within the region already trialling new water use efficiency measures and technologies and a large number of their fellow producers are interested as well," he said.

"Currently the Murray-Darling is under threat of climate change potentially destroying the ability of the system to cope with that demand now and into the future.

"A collaborative approach to water use efficiency that provides wins for agriculture, communities and the environment is a clear and practical way forward."

Mr Penton said the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin was a key contributor to the Australian economy that produced \$400-600 million of food annually.

"Irrigation is a major industry with more than \$690 million worth of irrigation infrastructure currently in place," he said.

"QMDC proposes a six-year investment program focused on large scale rural water use efficiency and river management work throughout the Basin in Queensland; we estimate that a reduction in water extraction through improved infrastructure alone has the potential to contribute significantly toward improved environmental flows."

Mr Penton said the project had the potential to enhance food production through applying best management practice, increase environmental flows and downstream river benefits, sustain rural communities, reduce salinity risks in priority areas and through specific projects targeted at the control of aquatic pests and weeds, protecting riparian areas and promoting fish migration it would also boost river health.

"The program's intrinsic results are not just water savings. It is about having a continuation of food production and land management by landholders, all of which is aimed at improving river health and ensuring the viability of rural communities," he said.

"Queensland can play a very significant role in improving the health of the northern Murray-Darling Basin with benefits throughout the catchment."

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