

MEDIA RELEASE

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Celebrate the region's waterways on World Wetlands Day

Residents of the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin are being urged to get their feet wet, do a spot of waterbird watching or drop in a line next week in celebration of World Wetlands Day.

Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Water and Wetlands Regional Coordinator Paul Webb said the international day, celebrated on Tuesday, February 2 was all about raising awareness of the importance of all wetlands, including rivers, lakes and swamps.

"World Wetlands Day has been celebrated internationally since 1997 and this year's theme is *Wetlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change*, all of which are incredibly relevant in 2010," Mr Webb said.

He said QMDC, as a natural resource management organisation, supported communities and land managers to use the region's resources sustainably every day and the impact of climate variability only underscored the urgency of the work.

"Dry periods that cause a reduction in the amount of water entering our wetlands can lead to reduced vegetation growth within and alongside wetlands and rivers. This further contributes to erosion and soil loss which makes the work carried out by farmers and graziers to reduce run-off and stock access to creek banks absolutely vital.

"Good natural resource management is essential if rural communities and agricultural industries are going to remain viable in the future.

"Here in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin, we all have a key role in protecting the lifeblood of our environment, our industries and our communities: our waterways and wetlands."

Mr Webb said there were groups across the region working to reintroduce native fish species, protect fragile riverine environments, keeping an eye out for invading pests and weeds and much more.

"While not everyone might have the time to join such a group, we can all appreciate the importance of our wetlands and learn more about them," he said.

"So this weekend, why not check out the Cascades and Crows Nest Falls in the Crows Nest National Park, or perhaps visit Dr Roberts Waterhole in Girraween National Park 35km south of Stanthorpe or go platypus-spotting at Emu Creek in the Benarkin National Park and State Forest 136km north of Toowoomba."

The Queensland Murray-Darling Committee is a natural resource management organisation that supports communities in within the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin to sustainably manage their natural resources. Visit www.qmdc.org.au for more information.

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