

CONCERNED COMMUNITIES OF SOUTH-WEST QUEENSLAND

Media Release

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Queensland Premier urged to support Murray Darling Basin communities

A wide cross-section of local government, community and industry groups have called on Queensland Premier The Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk to support communities in the state's south-west, whose fate will be decided in Federal Parliament sometime in the next two weeks.

When Federal Parliament resumes it must decide on the next stage of the Murray Darling Basin Plan, voting on a Disallowance Motion moved by Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young.

"If successful, the Disallowance Motion will make a mockery of an extremely detailed three-year review by the independent Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA), and threaten the viability of communities and the livelihoods of hard-working farmers across the Northern Basin, including many in South-west Queensland," says Cr Fiona Gaske, Deputy Mayor of the Balonne Shire Council.

"The Disallowance Motion would result in the Northern Basin Recovery water recovery target increasing by 70 gigalitres (Gl), which would prompt further additional losses in rural economies - communities that are already struggling with the loss of 320Gl of water which is being recovered across the Northern Basin as part of the overall Murray-Darling Basin Plan."

"The Murray Darling Basin Authority's (MDBA) own modelling demonstrates employment losses in communities across the Northern Basin will increase by 180, taking the total to 710 full-time jobs lost due to water recovery and buybacks and causing further economic harm to small communities, which would be an extraordinarily cruel blow."

Cr Gaske said her Council, Goondiwindi Regional Council, the St George Chamber Of Commerce, the Dirranbandi Progress Association, Queensland Farmers' Federation, AgForce Queensland Farmers and other representative organisations have written to Ms Palaszczuk calling on the Queensland Government to urgently, publicly and unequivocally ask all Queensland Senators to oppose the Disallowance Motion and allow the amendments to the Murray Darling Basin Plan to stand. *(See below for a list of signatory organisations)*

"If successfully opposed, the Disallowance Motion would help save crucially important jobs in towns in the state's south-west," Cr Gaske says. "For instance, reducing recovery targets in the Condamine-Balonne would save 54 full-time jobs in St George, and 15 full-time jobs in Dirranbandi."

"The State Government should join local governments and very publicly show its support for jobs and better environmental outcomes. It is time for the Queensland Government to step up and make its position clear on the Murray Darling Basin Plan's Northern Review."

"Ms Palaszczuk's Government should call on Queensland Senators to oppose the Disallowance Motion for the good of the communities in the state's south-west."

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Signatory organisations include:

-) Agforce Queensland Farmers
-) Balonne Shire Council
-) Border Rivers Food and Fibre
-) Cotton Australia
-) Dirranbandi Progress Association
-) Goondiwindi Regional Council
-) Growcom
-) Queensland Farmers Federation
-) Smart Rivers
-) St George Chamber of Commerce
-) South-West Local Government Association