

**Question on Notice
No. 900
Asked on 7 June 2007**

MR SPRINGBORG asked the Premier and Minister for Trade (MR BEATTIE) -

QUESTION:

With reference to grave concerns from Macintyre Valley irrigators below Goondiwindi who are worried about the serious impact on their enterprise from planned cuts to their water entitlements under the Border Rivers ROP and given that the cuts are far more dramatic than was suggested during the WAMP and the ROP consultation process and will have a devastating economic impact on both entitlement holders and the extended community which they service—

- (1) Given the likely devastating impact of these cuts, will he give a commitment to phase in these changes?
- (2) If the data and modelling which has been used to justify these allocation cuts is proven to be further flawed, will he commit to reinstate any rights and entitlements unjustly stripped away from irrigators?

ANSWER:

The Border Rivers Catchment is managed as a shared water resource and is governed by the 1946 Agreement between New South Wales and Queensland, ratified under the *New South Wales-Queensland Border Rivers Act (QLD 1946, NSW 1947)*. The agreement establishes water sharing arrangements including river flows and water quality requirements.

Queensland is progressing the water planning activities in the Border Rivers catchment to establish a framework for the sustainable management and allocation of water. The Border Rivers Water Resource Plan will be implemented through the development of a Resource Operations Plan and this will include arrangements for converting existing water allocations to tradeable water allocations, operating arrangements for water supply schemes, water trading rules and water and ecosystem monitoring.

The draft Resource Operations Plan does have provisions for transitional arrangements to minimise the impact of latent entitlements coming on line and to ensure that the overall take of water does not exceed the cap established under the interim Inter-Governmental Agreement.

The Integrated Quantity and Quality Model for the Border Rivers is the best modelling tool available at present. The conversion of water harvesting entitlements across the whole Border Rivers plan area, including the Macintyre River below Goondiwindi, will consider all the views expressed in the submissions received, and will be based on the best hydrological data available.