



Salinity Hazard in the Queensland Murray–Darling Basin

This map identifies large areas of the basin that have significant potential to develop salinity. This situation must be addressed now to ensure the potential does not become a reality. The Queensland Government needs your support to safeguard the future of the basin's primary industries, economy, environment and infrastructure.

What is the Queensland Murray–Darling Basin?

The Queensland Murray–Darling Basin is one of the State's most significant agricultural areas. It makes up about 15 per cent of Queensland and about a quarter of the Murray–Darling Basin.

The region is known for its varied land types and diverse flora and fauna. Land use is mostly agricultural, with about five per cent conserved in national parks, State forests and other protected areas.

Previously a grazing area, the region now supports extensive irrigation and dryland cropping. These lands must remain viable so we can continue to enjoy the food and fibre produced in the basin.

Why is it so important to protect the basin from salinity?

Salinity is a threat to the economy, environment and infrastructure of the region, particularly because of the area's significant agricultural production. The effect of salinity on good quality water flows downstream to other interstate users.

Salinity becomes a problem when the levels of salt in land and water become so high that use is limited. Parts of the Murray–Darling Basin in other States have been extensively affected by salinity.

The Queensland section has fairly low levels of salt-affected land, but there are high salt levels in its soils and groundwater.

We can recognise the early warning signs. If we don't act now we face the prospect of damaged buildings, roads and bridges, our towns declining and large areas losing much of their productive capacity and environmental value.

What does this salinity hazard map show?

Large areas of the basin have the potential to develop salinity in the longer term unless changes are made now to the way we manage our land and irrigate our crops.

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines produced this map in partnership with the Queensland Murray–Darling Committee. It is an indication of the vulnerability of the

landscape to salinity due to the inherent characteristics of the landscape.

This map is not intended to replace on-the-ground and site-specific environmental impact assessments. **You cannot use this map to determine if your property is prone to salinity hazard.**

The scientific methods used to develop the map have been independently reviewed by leading scientists, including CSIRO; the National Land and Water Audit; and Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia (AFFA). The methods used have been confirmed as a sound way to show those areas sensitive to land-use change, and with the potential to develop salinity.

What is being done to prevent widespread salinity occurring in the basin?

The Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Government have committed \$162 million to the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality. All basin States are collaborating on a salinity management strategy, which will be complemented by Queensland's regional vegetation management planning and regional natural resource management plans.

The Queensland Government is working closely with industry, community groups and other agencies to tackle the problem.

Many farmers are already taking action by changing their land management practices, for example by planting trees and using alternative cropping methods.

Continuing scientific research will provide a solid basis on which regional communities can make better natural resource management decisions.

For more information, visit the NR&M website <www.nrm.qld.gov.au>, or contact your nearest NR&M office.



Queensland Government
Natural Resources and Mines