

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 994

asked on Thursday, 13 June 2019

MR D LAST ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, MINES AND ENERGY (HON DR A LYNHAM)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline the findings and recommendations from the consultant's report due 30 June 2019 analysing the Queensland Bulk Water Opportunities Statement and more specifically the significant quantities of unused water in Queensland dams and supplemented areas, even in dry times?

ANSWER:

An assessment undertaken as part of the Queensland Bulk Water Opportunities Statement (QBWOS) found that there are significant quantities of unused water in Queensland dams and unsupplemented areas, even in dry times. These findings led to the development of the underutilised water partnership project in 2018.

The partners in the project are the Queensland Farmers' Federation, the Queensland Resources Council, AgForce and the Local Government Association of Queensland. These groups have been crucial in designing the project, choosing case study locations, recommending contacts for the case studies and in steering the project's progress.

Four case studies were recently completed after extensive consultation with more than 70 irrigators, resource companies, local governments, industry representatives, scheme managers and industry experts. Water usage assessments and the case studies were presented at an industry forum on 29 April 2019 which brought together around 40 cross-sector water users, industry representatives, and local government, Sunwater and Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy representatives.

These stakeholders assisted in prioritising a range of recommendations, including improving water trading processes and rules; providing better information flow for transparency, decision making and to support industry investment; transition and making best use of water resources for economic development.

The final project report was delivered on 13 June 2019 and sent to all stakeholders and forum participants on 14 June 2019. Key findings concluded that addressing underutilisation is the responsibility of all stakeholders and has the potential to generate significant economic value at much lower cost than new bulk water supply infrastructure.

The Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, in consultation with all stakeholders, is leading the development of a water optimisation project to respond to the final report detailed recommendations. As part of this project, the department will develop initiatives for improving Queensland's water products, market and trading processes, planning practices and the way information is provided to users and investors. These initiatives will help realise the full economic potential of Queensland water resources and water supply infrastructure.