

## Media Release

22 March 2021

### **North Queenslanders mark World Water Day by fundraising for a sustainable future for the Burdekin River.**

#### **Highlights:**

- North Queensland's Burdekin River system is one of Australia's most important, and supports:
  - Internationally important wetlands, which are breeding grounds for native species,
  - Productive agricultural areas, and
  - Important cultural sites to First Nations groups and the wider North Queensland community.
- NQCC is working alongside experts, stakeholders and policy makers to explore integrated, innovative approaches for improved ecological and economic outcomes for the region.
- The Swim for Our Rivers fundraiser has raised almost \$6,000 towards this work.

22 March is World Water Day, which provides an opportunity to reflect on what the future holds for the mighty Burdekin River – one of Australia's most important river systems. According to eminent scientist John Williams, if urgent action is not taken, the Burdekin River could follow the same path to degradation as the Murray-Darling. With four dams proposed, it appears that its plight is heavily misunderstood.

The Burdekin River is one of the largest rivers in Australia, supporting:

- Internationally important wetlands, including breeding grounds for native species such as Barramundi, Mangrove Jack and Empire Gudgeon
- Productive agricultural areas, and
- Important cultural sites to First Nations groups and the wider North Queensland community.

If managed well, this river system could sustain North Queensland for many generations to come. However, there are currently multiple dams proposed for the Burdekin River system and if the cumulative impacts of each dam are not assessed together it could become the next Murray-Darling, with devastating consequences for the Great Barrier Reef.

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# North Queensland Conservation Council

... the voice for the environment in North Queensland

Since the construction of the Burdekin Falls Dam, water tables have risen significantly in the Lower Burdekin, bringing salt closer to the root zone of sugar cane crops. If this trend continues, it will soon threaten the long-term viability of sugar cane farming in the area.

North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) has been working closely with a range of experts, government representatives, farmers and other stakeholder groups to explore opportunities for innovation that could lead to more sustainable water use, improved economic efficiency and better ecological outcomes for the whole region.

NQCC spokesperson Crystal Falknau says “it is important to all North Queenslanders that the Burdekin River can support our region for generations to come. More sustainable water use has benefits for farmers, fishers and the environment. With innovation, community support and political will, we can eliminate the need for new dams on the Burdekin and still have a thriving economy.”

Last weekend, seven fundraising teams took part in aquatic challenges for NQCC’s Swim for Our Rivers fundraiser. \$5,900 has been raised to support their advocacy work.

## **CONTACTS**

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