



Wild Rivers listing stifles development

Today's Queensland Government decision to make a Wild Rivers declaration proposal over the Georgina and Diamantina River systems will create more uncertainty for landholders.

AgForce CEO Robert Walker said the announcement from State Environment Minister Vicky Darling places an unnecessary layer of regulation on property owners across a vast proportion of Far Western Queensland.

"Our organisation has a long-standing policy of opposing Wild Rivers legislation because it effectively locks landholders in a production time warp, limiting their ability to expand, intensify or diversify their operations," Mr Walker said.

"The Act fails to acknowledge the good land management of both traditional owners and rural landholders in affected catchments which ensure these rivers remain in a pristine condition, ignoring economic and social outcomes to the detriment of regional communities."

Mr Walker said property owners who have a high proportion of their country classified as a 'High Preservation Area' will be unable to adapt their enterprises in response to changing markets or climate.

"Practically speaking, Wild Rivers' declarations can limit the construction of fences, dams and the management of erosion and weed control," Mr Walker said.

"Of even more concern is the potential for property values to be eroded."

AgForce will forcefully argue on behalf its members during the government's three-month consultative phase ending on 28 November 2011.

"We are disappointed this legislation fails to recognise the strong work already being done by graziers in protecting their land. We will continue to argue that the best environmental outcomes are achieved by incentive-based policies rather than blunt regulatory instruments," Mr Walker said.

The areas affected by proposed Wild Rivers' listing can be viewed at www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildrivers/wildrivers-map.php.

Information about upcoming consultation meetings can be found at: www.derm.qld.gov.au.

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Who is AgForce? AgForce represents thousands of Queensland broadacre producers who recognise the value in having a strong voice. AgForce leads the way to ensure agriculture's social, economic and environmental contribution is recognised by all levels of government. AgForce works alongside landholders, encourages and supports the next generation, builds industry partnerships and skills and promotes agriculture - for secure, sustainable, progressive and profitable food and fibre into the future.