

## Media Release 25 May 2017

### Submission on the Draft Great Artesian Basin & Other Regional Aquifers (GABORA) Water Plan and the Draft GABORA Water Management Protocol

In response to the Queensland Governments call for submissions regarding the Draft Great Artesian Basin & Other Regional Aquifers (GABORA) Water Plan and the Draft GABORA Water Management Protocol, the Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) has raised a range of matters which it considers important in regulatory and planning frameworks, to ensure the long term sustainable management of the Great Artesian Basin and its associated aquifers.

In summary the RAPAD Board:

- Seeks clarification from the Queensland Government on how the GABORA Water Plan can provide a framework for sustainably managing water and the taking of water in the GABORA plan area when:
  - the take of water by the resources sector is managed independently of the GABORA Water Plan, and when,
  - the take of water by the CSG and mining industries is not considered in the overall water balance for the GABORA aquifers across the State,
- Is concerned that a self-regulatory approach to the monitoring of water quality in the GABORA Water Plan may increase the risk of chemical and heavy metals contamination or pollution of the water supplies for towns as well as primary producers, stock & domestic supplies in the Central West and surrounding regions,
- Expresses its concern at the limited volume of General Reserve unallocated water that may be potentially available to primary production enterprises – either extensive or intensive in the Central Western Qld region,
- Holds a strong view that uncontrolled flows from GAB bores do need to be addressed, and an ongoing program to cap the flow of these bores does need to continue,
- Contends that a complete understanding of the volume of water that is extracted from the GABORA aquifers in each water year is essential for maintaining the GABORA as a secure source of water for future generations, and
- Supports the scope of the GABORA Water Plan being expanded to include the Betts Creek Beds and the Winton Mackunda Formation.

Cr Rob Chandler, Chairman of RAPAD says; “The rural townspeople, the commercial businesses and the primary producers who live in the Central Western Qld Queensland greatly depend on water from the GAB for their livelihood”.

“Many of the region’s townships, industry within these towns and primary producers are totally dependent on their ability to access GAB water for their domestic, industrial and livestock water supplies”

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“Without access to GAB water, these communities and enterprises would no longer exist or be commercially viable. We recognise that it is vital, that appropriate regulatory mechanisms are put in place and maintained to protect the health of the GAB and ensure its sustainability”.

The Great Artesian Basin is one of the largest groundwater basin complexes in the world lying beneath 22% of Australia, intersecting four state and territory boundaries. Approximately 70% of the GAB lies within Queensland.

RAPADs submission can be found at [www.rapad.com.au](http://www.rapad.com.au/) / <http://www.rapad.com.au/assets/Documents/Policy-and-Submissions/GABORA-submission-RAPAD-April-2017.pdf>

**Ends:**

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