



## FOR CEO APPROVAL

**Distribution: All media**

**Headline: Water Collaborative calls for recycled water to boost economy**

**Other Comments:**

		APPROVAL DATE
DRAFTED BY	Neil Williamson	17.08.2022
REVIEWED BY	Graham Quirk	17.08.2022
	Brock Sutton	17.08.2022
	Troy Qualischefski	17.08.2022
APPROVED BY	CEO Ian Church	17.08.2022
	Mayor Tanya Milligan	17.08.2022
	CEO Andrew Johnson	17.08.2022
	Mayor Graeme Lehmann	17.08.2022

**Does the CEO approve this for release (circle)? YES      NO (with comments)**

## **Water Collaborative calls for recycled water to boost economy**

The Lockyer Valley and Somerset Water Collaborative is calling on the State Government to release the available supply of untapped recycled water to ensure water and food security for Australia's Salad Bowl, preventing future supply being imported canned vegetables.

Chair of the Water Collaborative, former Lord Mayor Graham Quirk said the Lockyer Valley and Somerset regions are among the most fertile land regions in the world, yet many parcels lay unutilised because there is insufficient water being made available to produce the crops.

"Growers, through the local Water Collaborative have produced a comprehensive Business Case to show how the scheme could grow our economy and return any investments made by government," Mr Quirk said.

"The Water Collaborative and scheme is supported by the growers, the Chamber of Commerce and the Lockyer Valley and Somerset Regional Councils and just needs the support of the Queensland Government to unlock it's potential," he said.

Lockyer Valley Regional Council Mayor Tanya Milligan said recycled water would provide an additional water source that could unlock the land and double production in the Lockyer Valley, and was a subject discussed with Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry recently.

"This scheme has been talked about for years, but now the detailed Business Case has clearly shown that an extra \$300 million in economic benefit will be generated annually for Queensland and Australia. It's time to make it happen," Mayor Milligan said.

Collaborative member and Manager of Sutton Farms, Brock Sutton said the scheme will create around 2,600 new full-time jobs and has the potential to produce between \$60 to \$80 million in export earnings annually.

Owner and manager of Qualipac, a major supplier of vegetables to the domestic and international markets, Troy Qualischefski said the region's farmers have had a tough run with drought then floods and while not looking for a hand-out, believed government investment in water security infrastructure was vital in maintaining local food supply.

"It would be disappointing if we were importing produce that could be easily grown here if we had greater water security," Mr Qualischefski said.

Somerset Regional Council Mayor Graeme Lehmann emphasised the opportunity on offer saying the land is there, the capacity is there, the know-how is there, we just have to add water – and recycled water would provide the means of doing it.



Mr Quirk reiterated that local growers are prepared to invest heavily into the project, but it also needs government investment.

“We say investment, because the project will provide significant returns to government through GST, Income tax, Payroll Tax and export earnings.

“The first investment we need from Government should be around enabling the project through the decision to provide recycled water – a resource that is already there and just needs to be released,” Mr Quirk said.

For more information on the Lockyer Valley & Somerset Water Collaborative and the water security project visit <https://lvandswatercollaborative.com.au/>.

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#### Contacts for Media

Graham Quirk, Chairperson Lockyer Valley & Somerset Water Collaborative – 0418 650 380, [graham@lvandswatercollaborative.com.au](mailto:graham@lvandswatercollaborative.com.au)

Media Team, Lockyer Valley Regional Council – 5466 3518, [media@lvrc.qld.gov.au](mailto:media@lvrc.qld.gov.au)

Media team, Somerset Regional Council – 5424 4000 – [mail@somerset.qld.gov.au](mailto:mail@somerset.qld.gov.au)