

Think liquid assets

Article from: **The Courier Mail**

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July 20, 2007 12:00am

WITH a business focused on tending turf and trees at locations as diverse as army bases and universities, Dominic Murray saw the implications of the water crisis earlier than most.

When it became clear that industry and consumers would not only need to find alternative water sources but be willing to pay for them, Murray made his move.

Impact Water – an enterprise supplying groundwater for swimming pools, grounds maintenance, construction, manufacturing and food processing – is the latest brainchild of the one-time grazer and accountant.

"I guess we've just been waiting for an opportunity ... it's something that we've known about for a number of years," Murray says.

"We believe that with all our modelling, certainly for the next couple of years, there is an opportunity here to do something that's probably quite unique and, I suppose, be first to market."

Murray expects his new enterprise to "double or quadruple" his existing Impact Grounds business.

The main catalyst for Impact Water was level 5 restrictions, which forbid southeast Queensland pool owners from topping up with town water unless they have installed a rainwater tank or a downpipe rainwater diverter.



TENDING to our needs ... Dominic Murray of Impact Water who is topping up supplies of a water-hungry southeast Queensland. Picture: Glenn Barnes

Murray predicts an explosion of demand from pool owners, with Impact Water winning endorsement from the Swimming Pool and Spa Association of Queensland as an official supplier.

The construction industry is likely to be the next largest source of demand.

"They're huge water users – a lot of those people are already using recycled water but there are workplace health and safety issues and it's not suitable for a lot of purposes, where our product is," he says.

It's also the scale of Impact Water's operations that distinguishes it from mostly one-truck recycled water carting operations.

The company has a fleet of seven semi-trailers, each capable of carting between 18,000 and 37,000 litres of water from aquifers outside the water grid.

Murray warns that carted water is "a lot dearer" than town water, since the customer is essentially paying for freight.

"If there's an easier way to move water, I guess it wouldn't be expensive – but the prices that people have quoted previously in the paper to fill swimming pools and things are way, way, way over-inflated," he says.

Murray embarked on his new venture after a detailed cost and risk assessment by business advisory firm BDO Kendalls.

"We don't know how long the drought is going to continue but obviously the water problem we've got is going to continue long after the drought's ended anyway," he says.



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