



## MEDIA RELEASE

**Senator the Hon Penny Wong**

Minister for Climate Change and Water

**The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP**

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

19 March 2008

### **OECD REPORT SUPPORTS RUDD LABOR GOVERNMENT'S ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

An independent report released today supports the Rudd Labor Government's action on climate change and the environment after 11 years of Howard Government neglect.

Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett, and Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, jointly received the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Environmental Performance Review of Australia from Mr Lorents Lorentsen, head of the OECD Environment Directorate.

"The OECD has prepared a comprehensive report on environmental management in Australia, covering national, state, territory and local government efforts over the last decade," Mr Garrett said.

"This independent report demonstrates that the effects of 11 years of Howard Government neglect of the environment required decisive action by the Rudd Labor Government."

Mr Garrett said the Government had already pre-empted many of the report's 45 recommendations with programs such as the new \$2.25 billion program called *Caring for our Country*, announced last week.

"*Caring for our Country* supports the recommendation that the capacity of regional natural resource management bodies should be expanded," Mr Garrett said.

The program focuses on six national priorities to help restore the health of Australia's environment and improve land management practices:

- the national reserve system;
- biodiversity and natural icons – including weed and feral animal control and threatened species;
- coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats;
- sustainable farm practices – including Landcare;
- natural resource management in remote and northern Australia; and
- community skills, knowledge and engagement.

Senator Wong said the Rudd Government had already moved on one of the report's most significant recommendations: the need to introduce a national greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme.

"On Monday, I announced a detailed timetable for the introduction of emissions trading," Senator Wong said.

“The first act of the Rudd Government was to ratify Kyoto and we are on track to meet our Kyoto target.

“And we have begun the process of restoring the River Murray by announcing \$50 million this year for purchasing water for the environment.”

Conclusions and recommendations of the OECD report are available at:

[www.environment.gov.au/commitments/oecd/publications/review2008.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/commitments/oecd/publications/review2008.html)