



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and
the Arts

The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

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GIPPSLAND COMMUNITY TO BENEFIT FROM NEW WEATHER RADAR

Farmers and land managers will benefit from improved weather and climate predictions generated by a new state-of-the-art radar in Bairnsdale, the Rudd Government announced today.

Minister for the Environment Peter Garrett and Minister for Agriculture Tony Burke said the new radar was more precise, more sensitive to changes in the weather and had better resolution than the obsolete East Sale radar.

Minister Garrett said the new information would be fed through the Bureau of Meteorology website, which was already cutting-edge and one of Australia's most popular websites.

For the first time, the local radar will be used solely for radar watch, meaning the images will be available 24 hours a day, without interruption.

"This new radar is located further east than the one at East Sale and heading west it provides radar coverage that now overlaps with the Melbourne radar," Mr Garrett said.

Mr Burke visited Bairnsdale Airport to officially open the radar and present an award to a local volunteer.

"Farmers work hard to develop vibrant agricultural industries and agri-businesses," Mr Burke said.

"It is essential for these experts to have access to up-to-date weather and climate information, including the best estimates of rainfall, flood forecasts and thunderstorms.

"During the fire season the increased sensitivity will also help forecasters to detect vital wind changes as they move across Gippsland."

As part of today's launch, Minister Burke also presented an Excellence Award to local resident Neil Nicoll, from Hoddle Range near Fish Creek, whose family has been recording daily rainfall observations on behalf of the Australian Bureau of Meteorology for a century.

"For five generations the Nicoll family has volunteered to make this fantastic contribution to our national climate database," Mr Burke said.

"It's fitting to acknowledge them, and the 6,000 voluntary rainfall observers across the nation, particularly in the centenary year of the Bureau of Meteorology."