



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

ENV07

12 May 2009

\$94.7 MILLION BOOST FOR BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

Weather forecasting across Australia will be transformed through the investment of \$78.5 million for the Next Generation Weather Forecast and Warning System and for four new weather radars.

Environment Minister Peter Garrett said the funds, announced in the 2009-10 Budget, would improve weather services and forecast periods, including by expanding the availability of seven-day forecasting services to 650 cities and towns across Australia.

“\$30.5 million has been committed over five years for Next Generation Weather Forecast and Warning, allowing new seven-day forecasts to be available via interactive maps on the Bureau’s very popular website. Communities across the country will have access to the kinds of forecasts that the capital cities take for granted.

“Accurate weather forecasting is crucially important during severe weather such as cyclones, thunderstorms, floods, and bushfires and the Next Generation Weather Forecast and Warning System will ensure that Australia has the best possible system.

The Government will also install four new radars over a five year period from 2009-10 to 2012-13 and invest in the underlying science to integrate this technology into the current radar network at a total cost of \$48 million over seven years.

“The four new radars at Croker Island/Maningrida in the Northern Territory; Hobart; Mount Isa and Wollongong will close significant gaps in our existing radar capacity,” Mr Garrett said.

“This improved radar coverage will provide better weather surveillance, improved cyclone tracking and early warning capability, improved early warning of rainfall, storm and flood events and improved wind prediction, which is critical to fighting bushfires.”

“The introduction of these new forecast systems and radars will keep Australia at the forefront of international weather forecasting and recognises the critical role of the Bureau in so many aspects of Australian life.”

In addition to this funding, the government will provide net additional funding of \$16.1 million over four years to the Bureau by allowing it to retain all revenue received from providing specialised weather services to the aviation and defence sectors from 1 January 2010.