



## 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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Monday 16 March 2009

### **RUDD GOVERNMENT HELPING WITH MORETON BAY CLEAN-UP**

The Rudd Government will immediately provide \$2 million to help local community groups and natural resource management bodies continue the clean-up of Moreton Bay, following last week's oil spill.

Environment Minister Peter Garrett and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Tony Burke said the funds would help with the restoration of the Moreton Bay wetlands and coastal environment.

It will be provided through the Coastcare program, under Caring for our Country. It follows an increase in funding for similar work to protect sensitive environmental sites, productive farming land and water resources in fire-affected areas of Victoria.

Mr Garrett said the oil spill continued to pose serious risks to the region's environment.

"There is significant effort being made right throughout this region to get the clean-up concluded and to ensure that we protect the environment as best we can from significant, long-term damage," Minister Garrett said.

"That will need to continue over the medium- to longer-term and this funding will assist with that effort.

"The environmental significance of the Moreton Bay wetlands is internationally recognised under the Ramsar convention and this funding will assist local community groups, natural resource management organisations and others undertake the really necessary work that will come after the initial clean-up, to restore the health of this special part of the Queensland coastline."

Minister Burke said the Federal Government would continue to assist the Queensland Government through the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and other agencies such as the EPA, regional natural resource management groups, Landcare Queensland and councils.

"We share the concern of local fishers about the potential impact on fish stocks and the valuable seafood industry, including the Moreton Bay crab fishery, snapper, whiting, mackerel, flathead and king prawns," Mr Burke said.

"The seafood industry supports regional jobs and contributes to the Queensland economy and we will continue working with the Queensland Government on the clean-up.

"We recognise that the work of volunteer groups like Landcare Queensland is vital to the long-term health of Moreton Bay and its islands and we will continue to support them through Caring for our Country."