



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

PW BUDGET 08

13 May, 2008

\$1 BILLION PLAN TO HELP SECURE CITIES' WATER SUPPLIES

The Australian Government will provide \$1 billion over six years to help secure water supplies for working families and businesses through desalination, recycling and stormwater harvesting.

“The effects of climate change mean most of Australia’s cities and towns have less water, and we can no longer rely on rainfall to supply all our drinking water,” Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, said.

“National leadership is required to respond to this crucial challenge, and the Rudd Government is providing that leadership by supporting Australian cities as they seek to diversify their water supplies.”

Water for the Future, the Rudd Government’s \$12.9 billion long-term water plan, identifies securing water supplies as a key priority.

The \$1 billion *National Urban Water and Desalination Plan* was a key element of Labor’s election policy on water.

Cities and towns of 50,000 people or more will be eligible for funding under the plan to establish new sources of water supply through the use of desalination, recycling and stormwater harvesting.

The private sector, water utilities and state, territory and local governments will be able to apply for funds, which will be provided through grants and tax offsets.

Access to funds will be conditional on state and territory governments achieving agreed water reforms through the Council of Australian Governments.

The first projects to be approved for funding from the plan are the Glenelg to Adelaide Parklands water recycling project in South Australia (\$30.2 million) and the Barwon Shell recycling project in Geelong, Victoria (\$20 million).

“These projects will free up four billion litres of drinking water by using recycled water for parklands and industry,” Senator Wong said.

The Australian Government will also provide funding for Adelaide’s desalination plant, subject to a suitable proposal from the South Australian Government.

The Plan also provides funding of \$20 million over five years for a Centre of Excellence in Desalination in Perth and a further \$20 million over five years for a Centre of Excellence in Water Recycling in Brisbane.

“The Centres of Excellence will support work in developing new technologies and practices that will be a vital part of securing water supplies in the future,” Senator Wong said.