



# MEDIA RELEASE

**Senator the Hon Penny Wong**

*Minister for Climate Change and Water*

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PW BUDGET 08

13 May, 2008

## **\$400 MILLION BROUGHT FORWARD TO ACT ON MURRAY-DARLING**

The Rudd Government has brought forward \$400 million in funding to accelerate water purchase and infrastructure projects in the Murray-Darling Basin.

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, said bringing the \$400 million forward in the Murray-Darling Basin delivered on a key election commitment.

“The Rudd Government recognises the need to act urgently to restore the Murray-Darling to health after a decade of inaction,” Senator Wong said.

“This \$400 million bring forward means we can get on with the urgent tasks of purchasing water and investing in infrastructure.

“Together with the historic agreement between the Rudd Government and States on managing the Basin, this investment helps put the Murray-Darling Basin on the right track.”

Senator Wong said the effects of extended drought, climate change and over-allocation were being felt by all Basin communities.

The \$400 million forms part of the Rudd Government’s \$12.9 billion *Water for the Future* package.

*Water for the Future* focuses on four key priorities: taking action on climate change, using water wisely, securing water supplies and supporting healthy rivers.

“As part of our focus on using water wisely, the Government will be investing in more efficient irrigation systems to support better and more productive farming,” Senator Wong said.

“The Government will also extend the program launched in February this year to buy water from willing sellers to put back in the Murray and other Basin rivers.”

The Government will bring forward \$177.2 million for water buybacks under the *Restoring the Balance in the Murray-Darling Basin* program. This will take the total allocation for this program to \$170.1 million in 2008-09 and \$482.7 million in 2009-10.

“Bringing forward this funding will support the Government’s urgent action to put water back in the rivers by addressing over-allocation and overuse.”

A further \$222.8 million has been brought forward for the *Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure* program to fund urgent infrastructure projects in the Murray-Darling Basin, taking the total investment under this program to \$953.7 million for 2008-09 and 2009-2010.

\$15.2 million of the bring forward was delivered through the 2007-08 Additional Estimates process. \$384.8 million is being delivered through the 2008-09 Budget process.