



Media release

From the Commonwealth Minister for Climate Change and Water
Victorian Minister for Water

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WONG AND HOLDING MEET ON MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

Commonwealth Water Minister Penny Wong and Victorian Water Minister Tim Holding have held discussions in Melbourne today on the future of the Murray-Darling Basin.

The meeting was the continuation of negotiations following initial talks in Melbourne between Premier John Brumby, Senator Wong and Mr Holding earlier this month.

Senator Wong said today's discussions were another important step in reaching an agreement between the Basin States.

"A key outcome of the meeting was an agreement to work with Victoria and all Basin States on an appropriate governance model that brings together the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the Murray-Darling Basin Commission into a single body," Senator Wong said.

"We are determined to provide national leadership for the Murray-Darling Basin and we understand we have to act urgently, but we are also determined to get this right.

"We are undertaking a number of immediate measures – including purchasing water for the Murray River – but this is a long term plan that requires cooperation from all States.

"I will continue to meet with Victoria and the other States to discuss the best way forward for a national plan and seek their cooperation on an agreement."

Mr Holding said the meetings have provided an opportunity for the Commonwealth to hear in detail Victoria's concerns about the former Howard Government's approach.

"Today's discussions were very positive and has provided the Commonwealth with a better understanding of Victoria's position on the Murray-Darling Basin," Mr Holding said.

"Victoria has always maintained that we support a national approach to the management of the Murray-Darling Basin through an agreement between the Commonwealth and the States.

"We are optimistic that ongoing negotiations over the coming weeks and months with Senator Wong and the other Basin States will see a positive outcome for all water users along the Murray River."

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“Victoria’s leadership in water management has ensured a reliable and secure water supply for regional centres, irrigators, business and the environment, and allowed for investment in high value agricultural enterprises.

“We are looking for an approach that will enable this to continue.”