



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

PW 48/08

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WATER REPORTS FOR LACHLAN AND MACQUARIE-CASTLEREAGH RELEASED

Reports on water availability for the Lachlan and Macquarie-Castlereagh regions in central-western NSW have been released this week.

The *CSIRO Murray-Darling Basin Sustainable Yields* project is being undertaken on behalf of the Australian Government and the Murray-Darling Basin states.

The project looks at the impacts of climate change and land-use change across the 18 catchments comprising the Murray-Darling Basin.

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, said the reports illustrated the challenges posed by forecast reductions in water availability and anticipated increases in water demand.

CSIRO's 'best estimate' (median) of climate change by 2030 indicates a reduction in surface water availability of 8 per cent in the Macquarie-Castlereagh and 11 per cent in the Lachlan.

In both regions, this level of reduced water availability would be expected to reduce the scale of important waterbird breeding events. There would also be four per cent less water for irrigation in the Macquarie-Castlereagh and 8 per cent less in the Lachlan.

In the absence of changes to management regimes, groundwater use is projected to grow by 125 per cent in the Macquarie-Castlereagh and by 86 per cent in the Lachlan.

"National leadership is required to secure a sustainable future for the Murray Darling Basin, and the Rudd Government has taken the first step by securing a historic agreement with the States on the Basin's future," Senator Wong said.

"However, our approach must be evidence-based.

"The *Sustainable Yield* reports demonstrate the huge challenges that lie ahead when delivering on our aims of using water more wisely while also returning water to the environment and securing supplies for cities and towns.

"Together these reports will lay the groundwork for our efforts to adapt to the challenge climate change poses in the Basin."

Reports on the catchments are being published progressively. More information about the CSIRO Murray-Darling Basin Sustainable Yields project and copies of the Lachlan and Macquarie-Castlereagh reports can be found at www.environment.gov.au/water/mdb/yields.html