



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

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\$2.5 MILLION TO BOOST WATER SKILLS AND AWARENESS

The Rudd Government will provide \$2.5 million for a national water education and awareness program to be developed by science and technology centre Questacon in partnership with the National Water Commission.

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, said the initiative aimed to increase community understanding of science and innovation in water management, and to attract more secondary school students to careers in the industry.

“The main priorities of the Rudd Government’s long-term plan *Water for the Future* are using water wisely, securing our water supplies, tackling climate change, and supporting healthy rivers,” Senator Wong said.

“This funding will contribute to increased awareness of how science and innovation are helping deliver on these priorities.

“It will also encourage more young people to learn about careers available in the water industry – ultimately helping to address the skills shortages we face in that area.

“This project will boost water awareness and build the water management skills we need to deal with Australia’s water challenges.”

Senator Wong said the funding will allow Questacon to develop a portable water awareness exhibition that will tour nationally to regional and rural centres.

“This educational exhibition, to be launched in 2009, will include hands-on displays, games and activities that encourage visitors to explore water in Australia and the science behind the issues.”

The funds will also provide for a permanent exhibit at Questacon in Canberra featuring a series of interactive displays that will promote water awareness and responsible water use to more than 400,000 visitors each year. This major exhibition will be designed over the next 18 months ahead of an expected launch in 2010.

“The funding will also enable Questacon to develop and implement a national in-school program for early secondary school students to promote careers in water sciences and management, and their linkage with maths, science and technology electives,” Senator Wong said.

The program is expected to be up and running by 2009 and will reach more than 70,000 students across regional Australia each year.

Further information on these and other Raising National Water Standards projects is available from www.nwc.gov.au/agwf/rnws/rnws_projects.cfm