



# MEDIA RELEASE

**Senator the Hon Penny Wong**

*Minister for Climate Change and Water*

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## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE APPOINTED TO NEW MURRAY-DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY**

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, today announced the appointment of a chief executive to the new independent Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

Robert Freeman, currently the chief executive of the South Australian Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation and deputy president of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, has been appointed to the role.

“Following our historic agreement with the States, for the first time we have established an independent authority to set a sustainable cap on water use in the Murray-Darling Basin,” Senator Wong said.

“Mr Freeman has exemplary skills in water resource management and public sector governance, and so is ideal for the role heading up the new Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

“His experience will provide the strong leadership needed to establish the new Authority and to lead the development of a new Basin Plan, including a sustainable cap on surface and groundwater extractions in the Basin.”

Mr Freeman will commence in the new role on 8 September 2008. He will act as chief executive and chairman for three months, or until amendments to the Water Act come into effect that separate the roles of chairperson and chief executive, whichever comes first.

“Once the amendments to the *Water Act 2007* come into effect, I expect to be able to confirm Mr Freeman in the role of chief executive of the new authority on an ongoing basis,” Senator Wong said.

The Basin Plan is a key part of our \$12.9 billion *Water for the Future* plan that has four priorities: tackling climate change, securing our water supplies, supporting healthy rivers, and using water wisely.

Mr Freeman has also been appointed as a member of the new Authority.

The Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts will shortly advertise for applications for the four other Authority members’ positions and for the ongoing chairperson role.