



Australian Government

WATER for the FUTURE

Environmental water allocated to sites in the Murray-Darling Basin in 2008–09

Almost 11 billion litres (gigalitres) of water was allocated to sites in the Murray-Darling Basin in the first year of environmental watering under the Australian Government's *Water for the Future* initiative.

The water was allocated to 10 sites in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales with the support of state government agencies and private landholders, from March to June 2009.

These sites were chosen by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder upon receiving input from state governments and advice from the Environmental Water Scientific Advisory Committee.

The sites are at risk from the combination of the historical overallocation of water entitlements and continuing low inflows to the Basin. Environmental watering is aimed at giving the sites the best chance of recovery when natural flows increase and will help maintain River Red Gums, Coobahs, Black Box and other native vegetation.

The sites also provide shelter for birds, frogs, lizards, turtles and fish, including the Regent Parrot, Southern Bell Frog, and the Murray Hardyhead which are all listed as vulnerable under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*. Some sites also support migratory birds, such as the Glossy Ibis, the White-bellied Sea Eagle, the Caspian Tern, Latham's Snipe and the Great Egret.

Most of the water (8.7 gigalitres) came from entitlements sourced from Toorale Station, purchased by the NSW Government in late 2008 with significant funding assistance from the Australian Government.



Katarapko Floodplain, SA, before the release of 200ML of Commonwealth environmental water. (DEWHA & M.Mohell)



Katarapko Floodplain, SA, after the release of 200ML of Commonwealth environmental water. (DEWHA & M.Mohell)

Water for the Future is preparing Australia for a future with less water. The 10-year initiative is addressing four key priorities:

- Taking action on climate change
- Using water wisely
- Securing water supplies
- Supporting healthy rivers

A further 2.2 gigalitres was sourced through water entitlement purchases by the Australian Government under the *Restoring the Balance in the Murray–Darling Basin* program.

Watering in early autumn has already delivered benefits. For example, watering at Paiwalla Wetlands near Murray Bridge in South Australia attracted numerous water birds shortly after the water was provided in March 2009.

The Commonwealth, in collaboration with delivery partners and environmental site managers such as state agencies and catchment management authorities, monitors the impact of environmental watering as part of an ongoing evaluation and assessment program. This will also assist in shaping future watering decisions.

Consultation about Commonwealth environmental watering and water entitlement purchases occurs through a number of mechanisms including the nine-member Water Recovery and Environmental Use Stakeholder Reference Panel, whose members come from a broad cross-section of Murray-Darling Basin stakeholders including irrigators, conservationists, water experts and community members. The Australian Government appointed the panel in June 2009.

For more details about environmental watering and locations, visit:

www.environment.gov.au/water/policy-programs/cewh/watering/index.html

The Department has produced a video of watering at Lindsay Island, Victoria in May 2009. You can view the video at: www.environment.gov.au/water/publications/environmental/video-lindsay-island.html

Sites allocated Commonwealth environmental water (as at 30 June 2009)

Location	Amount
South Australia	
Rocky Gully	80ML
Katarapko Floodplain/ Carpark Lagoons	200ML
Paiwalla Wetlands	606ML
Chowilla Floodplain/vari- ous sites	1,786 ML
Markaranka Floodplain	2,236ML
Overland Corner Flood- plain	500ML
Murbpook Lagoon	1,400 ML
Victoria	
Hattah Lakes	2,124 ML
Lindsay Island	1,000ML
New South Wales	
Backwater Lagoon	1,000ML

MORE IN FORMATION

For more information about *Water for the Future* call 1800 218 478 or visit: www.environment.gov.au/water

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