



Australian Government

WATER for the FUTURE

Water for the Future

Australia is facing major challenges due to climate change, climate variability and reduced water availability.

Water for the Future is the Australian Government's long-term initiative to better balance the water needs of communities, farmers and the environment.

It contains a suite of urban and rural policies and programs, including significant funding for water purchasing, irrigation modernisation, desalination, recycling, and stormwater capture.

The greatest focus is on the Murray-Darling Basin to provide farmers and communities with more confidence to plan for a future with less water, to put water use on a sustainable footing, to enhance irrigation productivity, and to improve river and wetland health.

Water for the Future is built on four key priorities:

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

TAKING ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The Australian Government is preparing for the impacts of climate change on Australia's water resources through:

- the development of a Basin Plan to establish sustainable water diversion limits in the Murray-Darling Basin;
- better monitoring, assessment and forecasting of the availability, condition and use of water resources in Australia;
- helping farmers and rural communities plan for the impacts of climate change on water availability;
- assessing current and future water availability in the Murray-Darling Basin, Tasmania, south-west Western Australia and northern Australia through the CSIRO Sustainable Yields projects; and
- investigation of the development of northern Australia's water resources.



Border Rivers - Condamine Catchment area, QLD (A. Mostead)

USING WATER WISELY

The Australian Government is encouraging the wise use of water by:

- providing investment to:
 - improve the efficiency and productivity of on-farm irrigation water use and management
 - help irrigation water providers develop modernisation plans for their districts, upgrade irrigation infrastructure and assess options to adapt to a future with less water, and
 - fund private irrigation infrastructure operators to modernise and upgrade irrigation infrastructure both on and off farm;
- reforming the water market to establish cooperative, efficient and effective planning and management arrangements for the Basin's water and other natural resources;
- helping Australian households and surf lifesaving clubs save potable water supplies by installing rainwater tanks and greywater systems; and
- helping households save water and money with the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (WELS) Scheme.

Water for the Future is preparing Australia for a future with less water.

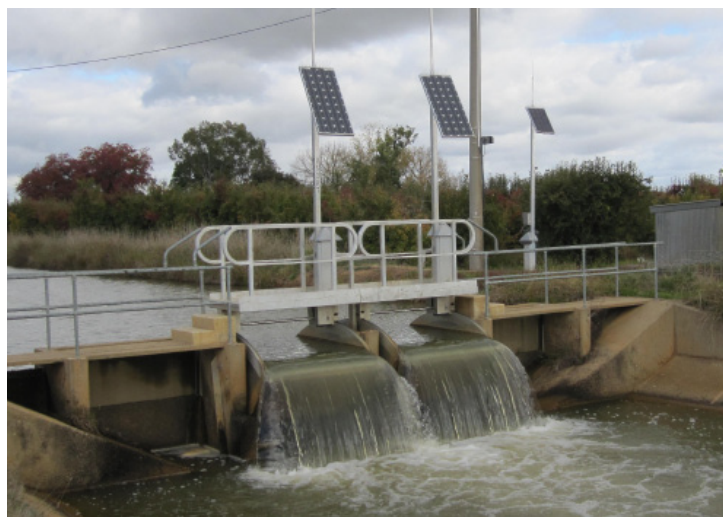
The 10-year initiative is addressing four key priorities:

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

SECURING WATER SUPPLIES

Water for the Future is helping cities and towns secure their water supplies and prepare for a future with less water by:

- supporting local governments in the Murray-Darling Basin to assist in community-wide planning for a future with less water and invest in water savings initiatives;
- investing in desalination, water recycling and stormwater harvesting and reuse projects to reduce reliance on rainfall; and
- funding practical projects that save water and reduce water losses in towns and cities across Australia.



Irrigation infrastructure at Shepparton, Vic (E Begley)

SUPPORTING HEALTHY RIVERS

Many of Australia's river systems are under stress as a result of climate change and drought. The Government is investing to improve the health of our rivers by:

- setting a sustainable level of water that can be taken out of rivers and groundwater systems in the Murray-Darling Basin, and preparing an Environmental Watering Plan for the Basin;
- purchasing water entitlements which can be used for the environment; and
- allocating Commonwealth water to the environmental assets that most need to be protected or restored.

More Information

For more information on any of these programs telephone 1800 218 478 (free call) visit; www.environment.gov.au/water; or email waterinformation@environment.gov.au

Published by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, October 2010.



Cotter River in the ACT before the 2003 bushfires (A Tatnell & DSEWPaC)