



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

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1.5 BILLION LITRES OF EXTRA WATER FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WETLANDS

Two wetlands in South Australia are receiving a total of 1,531 million litres of environmental water this month under the Australian Government's *Water for the Future* plan.

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, said most of the water was sourced from Toorale Station which was purchased by the New South Wales Government in late 2008 with funding assistance from the Australian Government.

"So far this year, some 8.7 billion litres of water sourced from Toorale have been allocated to seven sites in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia," Senator Wong said.

"This new round of environmental watering will occur at Murbpook Lagoon, near Blanchetown, and Paiwalla Wetland, near Murray Bridge, during June.

"The sites were selected by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder in consultation with the states and the Environmental Water Scientific Advisory Committee.

"This latest round of watering brings a total of 10.9 billion litres of water allocated to the environment so far as a result of the \$3.1 billion water buyback being conducted through the Government's plan *Water for the Future*."

Murbpook Lagoon, between locks 1 and 2 on the River Murray, is about 17 km north of Blanchetown. The lagoon has been dry since 2004 when it became disconnected from the main river channel due to lower river levels. Murbpook Lagoon will receive 1,400 million litres.

The watering aims to maintain the health of the River Red Gums and Coobahs and halt further salinisation of the wetland bed. Murbpook Lagoon is a known refuge site for species such as the Regent Parrot (listed as vulnerable under *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*) and a number of migratory bird species.

Paiwalla Wetland, between Lock 1 and Wellington near Murray Bridge on the River Murray will receive 131 million litres, topping up the 475 million litres of Commonwealth water the site received in March 2009. Paiwalla Wetland is an important drought refuge below Lock 1 for water-dependent and wetland associated species such as frogs and waterbirds.

The additional water will maintain water quality and levels in the wetland for a longer period than previously and maintain vital habitats including the damp sedgeland that support the Painted Snipe and Little Bittern, species listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

More information is available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/water/policy-programs/cewh/>