



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

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EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON TASMANIA'S WATER AVAILABILITY

Climate change is expected to reduce both rainfall and runoff in Tasmania by 2030, a report into Tasmania's future water availability has today found.

The CSIRO Tasmania Sustainable Yields report - a snapshot of the expected impacts on Tasmania's water availability into the future – was released today in Hobart by the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong.

The 18-month project, undertaken in partnership with the Tasmanian Government, looked at the impacts of climate variability and expected climate change, catchment development and changing groundwater extraction on the availability and use of water resources in Tasmania.

Surface water and groundwater across almost 50,000 sq km of northern, eastern and central Tasmanian – approximately 72 per cent of Tasmania – was considered for the report.

The report found:

- The recent climate (1997-2007) had been significantly drier than the historical climate.
- By 2030, the projected impact of climate change on rainfall will be a 3 per cent reduction under a median future climate (ranging from an increase of 1 to a decrease of 7 per cent under wet and dry extremes).
- The reduction in rainfall is projected to lead to a 5 per cent reduction in runoff under a median climate (ranging from an increase of 1 to a decrease of 10 per cent under wet and dry extremes).
- Of 150 key ecological sites identified in this project, 71 are potentially impacted by changes in the flow regime due to the recent climate and its significant drought conditions.

Senator Wong said the findings of the report were critical to the development of water management initiatives for Tasmania.

“The Australian Government is working with all states and territories to prepare for the impacts of climate change, including reduced water availability,” Senator Wong said.

“We know from the Bureau of Meteorology's 2009 Annual Climate Statement that 2009 was the second hottest year in Australia on record and finished off the hottest decade in Australian history.

“The project findings will provide critical information needed to underpin statutory water management planning in Tasmania and to assist in developing sustainable irrigation proposals.”

The report is one in a series of sustainable yields projects commissioned by the Australian Government, following on from the Murray-Darling Basin Sustainable Yields project. The Australian Government provided \$4.2 million under its *Water for the Future* plan for the project. .

Regional briefings on the report will be held in Hobart (Jan 20), Burnie (Jan 21) and Launceston (Jan 22). The full report is available at: www.csiro.au/partnerships/TasSY.html.