MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

PW 45/09 26 February, 2009

$600,000 FOR IRRIGATORS TO PLAN UPDATED INFRASTRUCTURE

Grants totalling $604,000 have been awarded to five irrigation water providers operating in the Murray-Darling Basin to help them develop plans to modernise their water delivery infrastructure.

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, said the water providers were being helped to identify and consider the range of options available to modernise their infrastructure.

"Among the main priorities of the Rudd Government's long-term plan *Water for the Future* are using water wisely, securing our water supplies and supporting healthy rivers," Senator Wong said.

"These grants help us deliver on these priorities by helping irrigators deal with the effects of climate change and drought and make their businesses more sustainable.

"The water saved by modernising delivery infrastructure will be returned to the stressed rivers and waterways of the Murray-Darling Basin."

The grants will allow the five water providers to obtain independent professional advice and to conduct workshops to help develop their modernisation plans.

Bringan Irrigation Trust near Barham in southern NSW will receive $44,000 to develop a plan to upgrade its 50-year-old structures to provide a more efficient delivery system.

Western Murray Irrigation Limited, in the Lower Murray region, will receive $80,000 to develop a plan that takes into consideration various climate change scenarios.

West Corurgan Private Irrigation District, near Berrigan in NSW's Riverina, will receive $80,000 to undertake a comprehensive review of the company's irrigation infrastructure.

Marthaguy Irrigation Scheme, on the Western Plains at Warren, NSW will receive $80,000 to complete a three-phase project, culminating in a detailed engineering design and costing of the selected option to reduce transmission losses in its system.

Coliban Regional Water Corporation, at Bendigo, Victoria will receive $320,000 for a modernisation plan that will capture savings in the delivery and the on-farm parts of its system.

Successfully obtaining Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance does not guarantee funding for on-ground infrastructure work.

These grants are in addition to more than $4 million in funding the Australian Government is currently providing to 13 irrigation water providers in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and NSW.

A forum will be held in the first half of 2009 for participants in the program to discuss options for modernising their irrigation systems and to exchange ideas about working collaboratively.

A list of all the successful grant applicants is attached.

Attachment to media release

Irrigation Modernisation Planning Assistance Round 2 - successful applicants

Applicant	Location	Funding Recommended	Proposed modernisation activity
Bringan Irrigation Trust	Barham, NSW	**$44,000**	To develop a plan that considers flow control, flow metering and reconfiguration options, to provide a more efficient distribution system.
West Corurgan Private Irrigation District	Berrigan, NSW	**$80,000**	Undertake a comprehensive review of the company's irrigation infrastructure and overall business, to consider future reconfiguration options and business strategies.
Western Murray Irrigation Limited	Dareton, NSW	**$80,000**	A plan to secure the organisation's long-term future, in light of a rapidly changing water industry and climate change predictions. The modernisation plan will consider the impact of various scenarios, including dry, wet and average climatic outlooks and the do-nothing or change options.
Marthaguy Irrigation Scheme	Warren, NSW	**$80,000**	A three-phase project, describing the scheme, evaluating the impact of options, and detailing engineering design and costing of the selected option to reduce transmission losses.
Coliban Regional Water Corporation	Bendigo, Victoria	**$320,000**	The proposed modernisation plan that will capture savings in the delivery and on-farm parts of its system.