



Government
of South Australia

Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Minister for Climate Change and Water

Hon Karlene Maywald
Minister for the River Murray

Media Release

24 March 2009

First Commonwealth environmental water to benefit SA wetlands

The first release of Commonwealth water for the environment will start today at wetlands in South Australia, to be followed by further releases at other sites around the Basin over coming months.

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, and South Australian Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, said the first watering events to commence today marked a new chapter in the restoration of the Murray-Darling Basin.

“These releases of environmental water are the first dividends from the Australian Government’s \$3.1 billion water buyback program under its *Water for the Future* plan,” Senator Wong said.

“The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder has selected these sites based on proposals from Basin states and advice from the Environmental Water Scientific Advisory Committee.”

Minister Maywald said the water would benefit several significant South Australian wetlands.

“South Australia will commence watering this week at four sites, delivering over one billion litres of Commonwealth environmental water over several weeks.”

The sites to be watered are:

- Chowilla Floodplain, an icon site of *The Living Murray* Initiative and part of the Riverland Ramsar site, containing large areas of River Red Gum, Black Box woodland and diverse wetland habitats, will receive 286 million litres to complement 350 million litres provided by the South Australian Government.
- Paiwalla Wetland, between Mannum and Murray Bridge, listed in the Directory of Important Wetlands of Australia, containing rare and nationally listed species and frequented by significant populations of migratory water birds, will receive 475 million litres.

- Carpark Lagoons on the Katarapko floodplain in the River Murray National Park, near Berri. Katarapko, a diverse floodplain and wetland habitat for a range of aquatic and terrestrial animals, will receive 200 million litres targeted at protecting River Red Gums.
- Rocky Gully, also near Murray Bridge, a refuge site for a range of rare and nationally listed species and one of the last remaining refuge sites across the Basin for the Murray Hardyhead, has been allocated 80 million litres.

“These are the first in a number of environmental watering actions planned by the Commonwealth to give priority drought-affected wetlands a much-needed drink,” Senator Wong said.

“The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder is working with Basin states to identify priority sites for environmental watering, with more sites to be watered in other parts of the Basin soon.”

More information about the sites receiving water and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder is available at:

www.environment.gov.au/water/environmental/cewh/index.html