



# MEDIA RELEASE

**Senator the Hon Penny Wong**

*Minister for Climate Change and Water*

---

PW 301/09

12 October 2009

## **EXPERT PANEL TO ADVISE ON COORONG AND LOWER LAKES**

The Australian Government has appointed a new expert scientific panel to provide advice on the long-term management of the Coorong and Lower Lakes, Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, announced today.

“The Rudd Government has committed \$330 million to support the South Australian Government in addressing the many challenges facing the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth,” Senator Wong said.

“As part of this commitment, the Australian Government has advanced funds to South Australia for feasibility work on a long-term solution to the environmental problems facing this icon site.

“The number one priority is to avoid acidification.”

The Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts has engaged a panel of experts with hydrological and ecological expertise to advise the Federal Government on management options now under development in South Australia.

“The panel will provide expert advice to inform the Commonwealth’s contribution to South Australia’s long-term planning process – helping to ensure that the final plan is well grounded in science, and strives for the best and most practical outcomes,” Senator Wong said.

Members of the expert group are:

- Don Blackmore – former Chief Executive of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission
- Dr Andrew Herzceg – CSIRO Land and Water Hydrology Research Program
- Prof Gary Jones – Chief Executive of the eWater CRC
- Prof Richard Kingsford – School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of New South Wales
- Assoc Prof David Paton – Head of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Adelaide
- Adjunct Assoc Prof Keith Walker – School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Adelaide.

The \$330 million provided to support South Australia in meeting the challenges faced in the Lower Lakes area include:

- \$200 million towards a long-term plan for the Lower Lakes and Coorong;
- up to \$120 million towards the cost of irrigation and drinking water pipelines for communities dependent on the Lower Lakes; and
- up to \$10 million for bioremediation and revegetation to help address the risk of acidification.

Other Rudd Government commitments to South Australian water projects include \$328 million towards the Adelaide desalination plant and \$137 million for eight stormwater harvesting and wastewater recycling projects across South Australia.