



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water

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NEW ROUND OF WATER PURCHASING ANNOUNCED FOR THE SOUTHERN MURRAY DARLING BASIN

A new round of water purchasing in the southern Murray Darling Basin worth \$120 million has been announced today by the Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water, Senator Penny Wong.

In December last year, the Australian Government announced a total of \$270 million in new water purchasing initiatives in the southern Murray Darling Basin would be committed in 2009-10 over three tender rounds, as part of the Government's \$3.1 billion *Restoring the Balance in the Murray Darling Basin* program. This is the second of these tenders.

"Across the Murray Darling Basin, extended drought and the effects of climate change have been compounded by decades of mismanagement and over-allocation of water resources," Senator Wong said.

"For too long we have taken too much water out of the Murray Darling Basin. Now the Rudd Government is putting water back, to restore the health of the rivers.

"By purchasing water from willing sellers and investing in irrigation infrastructure, the Australian Government is smoothing the transition for Basin communities as they adjust to new, lower water use limits that we can expect under the Basin Plan."

The second tender round will commence on Tuesday 9 March 2010 and close on Monday 29 March 2010, and follows on from the most recent tender round in January 2010 which attracted considerable interest from irrigators looking to sell their water entitlements.

"Water entitlements secured in the January tender will add to the 797 billion litres of water entitlements worth \$1.3 billion which have already been secured for the environment by the Australian Government," Senator Wong said.

The third tender in the series is expected to commence in late April or early May 2010.

In the March 2010 tender, sell offers will only be accepted from the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lower Darling catchments in NSW, the Murray, Goulburn, Campaspe and Loddon catchments in Victoria, and the South Australian portion of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Information on the average price of offers for each water entitlement type pursued in the January tender is available on the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts website at www.environment.gov.au/waterpurchasing.

There have been some changes to the Program Guidelines and application form for the second tender round. For copies of the revised guidelines and application form, visit the above website or call 1800 218 478. Applications cannot be submitted earlier than 9 March 2010.