



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

PW 66/08

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STAKEHOLDERS TO EVALUATE MURRAY DARLING WATER PURCHASE

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, today announced a Stakeholder Consultative Committee to evaluate the success of the first ever Commonwealth Government water purchase in the Murray Darling Basin.

Senator Wong outlined details of the Stakeholder Consultative Committee at a speech to an Irrigation Australia conference in Melbourne today.

The \$50 million open tender to purchase water across the Murray Darling Basin commenced in February this year and closed last Friday.

Senator Wong said the Committee would comprise 12 people from a broad cross-section of Murray Darling stakeholders.

“We have invited irrigators, community members, environmentalists and water experts onto the committee to look at how we can make best use of water purchasing into the future,” Senator Wong said.

“This Government is tackling a number of major problems relating to water supply in the Basin for the very first time.

“Water purchase by the Government is a relatively new frontier, so we are acutely aware of the need to learn from our first foray into the market.”

Senator Wong said she was aware of concerns being raised by some Basin communities in relation to the water purchase program.

“Basin communities are doing it tough and this situation has been made worse by the failure of the previous government to face up to the realities of climate change, drought and over-allocation.

“The group we are establishing today will provide advice on how the Government can best respond to community concerns as we progress water purchase.”

The Government has allocated \$3.1 billion from the \$12.9 billion *Water for the Future* plan to purchase water for rivers in the Murray Darling Basin.

A further \$5.8 billion will be invested in sustainable irrigation infrastructure and projects to help communities make an early adjustment to a new Basin-wide cap on water use.

Senator Wong said further details on the outcomes of the \$50 million tender would be announced in the near future.

A list of appointees to the Stakeholder Consultative Committee is attached.

MURRAY DARLING BASIN WATER PURCHASE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

<i>Members</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Laurie Arthur	National Farmers Federation Water Task Force
Colin Thomson	Chair, NSW Irrigators Council; Director, Western Murray Irrigation
Ian Johnson	Executive Officer, Queensland Irrigators Council
Sharon Starick	South Australian Natural Resource Management Council; South Australian Farmers Federation
Richard Anderson	Victorian Farmers Federation
Dick Thompson	Chair, Murrumbidgee Irrigation Limited
Mike Logan	Chair, Cotton Research and Development Corporation
Dr Arlene Buchan	Australian Conservation Foundation – Healthy Rivers
Mary Annand	MacIntyre Brook Irrigators Association
Ray Najar	General Manager, Murray Darling Association
Prof. Richard Kingsford	University of New South Wales
Prof. Quentin Grafton	Australian National University