



# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Senator the Hon Penny Wong**

*Minister for Climate Change and Water*

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PW 167/08

8 September 2008

## **NEXT WATER BUYBACK TENDER TO OPEN 15 SEPTEMBER**

A new tender to purchase water entitlements to help restore the health of Murray-Darling Basin rivers and wetlands will open next Monday, Minister for Climate Change and Water, Penny Wong, announced today.

“Willing sellers of water entitlements in the Queensland and northern New South Wales areas of the Basin are invited to respond to the tender,” Senator Wong said.

“This tender is the first step in the Rudd’s Government’s \$400 million program to purchase water entitlements in the northern section of the Murray-Darling Basin.”

Today’s announcement of the next water purchasing tender coincides with the first day of business for the head of the new Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

Former chief executive of the South Australian Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, Robert Freeman, starts work today as the chief executive of the independent authority.

“We are delivering on our election commitments to purchase water for the rivers and to establish a new, independent authority to manage the Murray-Darling Basin in the national interest,” Senator Wong said.

The Rudd Government has committed a total of \$3.1 billion to buying back water entitlements to give Murray-Darling Basin rivers and wetlands a greater share of water when it becomes available.

“We are facing a critical situation in the Murray-Basin which is the result of years of over-allocation, drought and climate change,” Senator Wong said.

“The tender being announced today will help us move towards restoring Basin rivers and wetlands to health.

“The Government looks forward to receiving offers from willing sellers that can deliver water to high value environmental assets and represent good value for money.”

With a process currently underway in some parts of Queensland to separate water entitlements from land, conditional contracts will be struck as necessary with sellers ahead of that process being finalised.

Senator Wong said the new tender would be informed by feedback from a Stakeholder Consultative Committee established to assess the Government’s first water buyback tender, conducted earlier this year.

“We expect this new tender will build significantly on the first ever Federal Government water tender that secured around 35 billion litres of extra water entitlement for Basin rivers and wetlands,” Senator Wong said.

Detailed program guidelines will be available from next Monday 15 September at [www.environment.gov.au/water](http://www.environment.gov.au/water) or by calling 1800 218 478.

The tender will remain open until 19 December 2008 and the outcomes will be made available on the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts website once trades are completed.