



# MEDIA RELEASE

**Senator the Hon Penny Wong**

*Minister for Climate Change and Water*

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## **GROUND-BREAKING REPORT RELEASED ON MURRAY-DARLING BASIN**

The final report for the Murray-Darling Basin Sustainable Yields project will be an invaluable resource in helping restore the system to health, Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, said today.

Senator Wong launched the report, the culmination of 18 months of research by CSIRO, on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River today.

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

“The Rudd Government is taking action to address these challenges, including committing \$3.1 billion towards buying back water to return to the Basin’s rivers and wetlands.

“So far, we have also committed \$3.7 billion towards Basin projects that improve water efficiency and use, and assist irrigation communities to adjust to a future with less water.

“As we continue this work, the Sustainable Yields project will provide an invaluable, objective overview of current and future water availability across the whole Murray-Darling Basin taking into account climate change and other risks.

“This final report will be a critical resource in the Rudd Government’s work to restore the balance in the Murray-Darling Basin and will be essential to informing the development of the new Basin Plan.”

Key findings of the report are:

- Total flow at the Murray mouth has been reduced by 61 per cent and the river now ceases to flow through the mouth 40 per cent of the time, compared with one per cent in the absence of water resource development;
- The median decline for the entire Basin is projected to be 11 per cent by 2030 – nine per cent in the north and 13 per cent in the south;
- Under the median 2030 climate, diversions in driest years would fall by more than 10 per cent in most New South Wales regions, 20 per cent in the Murrumbidgee and Murray regions, and from around 35 per cent to 50 per cent in the Victorian regions;
- Under the dry extreme 2030 climate, diversions in driest years would fall by around 40-50 per cent in New South Wales regions, over 70 per cent in the Murray, and 80-90 per cent in major Victorian regions;
- By 2070 the median climate under high global warming is expected to be broadly similar to the dry extreme 2030 climate; and
- Current groundwater use is unsustainable in seven of the 20 high-use groundwater areas in the Basin and will lead to major drawdowns in groundwater levels in the absence of management intervention.

The report can be found at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/water/mdb/yields.html>