



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

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I.T. PARTNER SELECTED FOR ONLINE WATER INFORMATION SYSTEM

Australia is less than a year away from having a national water information system online, following the selection of an information technology partner for the Australian Water Resources Information System project.

The project's IT component will be supplied by SMS Management and Technology. Following a detailed design process over the past year, the work of building the system will begin immediately. The first stage of the project is valued at approximately \$2.5 million.

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, said building the IT infrastructure was an important step in the Bureau of Meteorology's development of the system as part of the Australian Government's *Water for the Future* strategy.

"*Water for the Future* has four priorities: taking action on climate change, using water wisely, securing our water supplies and supporting healthy rivers," Senator Wong said.

"To deliver on these priorities, we need robust, consistent and easily-accessible information – like that to be provided by the Australian Water Resources Information System.

"On completion, this system will provide up-to-date information on water resource availability and use, water trading, and forecasts of water availability months ahead."

The project involves compiling water data from more than 240 organisations into a single national repository for water information.

"From early next year, Australians will be able to go to the Bureau's website to view, search and download water data.

"This information will be invaluable for water corporations, government agencies, irrigators and the wider community, and will inform much better decision-making about storing, allocating and using our water resources.

"The Bureau of Meteorology is working closely with State and Territory agencies to ensure that all water data that is fed into the system is as accurate, comprehensive, consistent and up-to-date as possible."

Almost \$30 million in Commonwealth funding has already been allocated by the Bureau to help States and Territories to improve their data management capabilities, with \$20 million available in 2009-10 to support further work.

Construction will take several years to complete but a phased introduction is planned with updates roughly every six months after next year's start. The National Water Commission is supporting this project through its Raising National Water Standards program.