



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator Penny Wong
Minister for Climate Change and Water

The Hon Dr Mike Kelly AM MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Water

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WATER MINISTER AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO TOUR SOUTHERN MURRAY-DARLING BASIN

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, and Parliamentary Secretary for Water, Dr Mike Kelly, will visit southern parts of the Murray-Darling Basin this week to meet irrigators, farmers, catchment management authorities and local government representatives to discuss water management issues.

The pair will visit Griffith, Deniliquin and Shepparton tomorrow, and Mildura and Renmark on Thursday.

“I’m looking forward to hearing from a range of people across the southern Basin about how we can build on our work to restore health to the Murray-Darling Basin, as we deal with the continuing drought and the effects of climate change,” Senator Wong said.

“We can’t ignore the recent findings from the South Eastern Australian Climate Change Initiative, which I am advised show there is a clear link between rainfall reduction over south-eastern Australia and observed global warming.

“This highlights the huge challenges ahead of us in the Murray-Darling Basin.

“In particular during this tour, we will be focused on how best to deliver on our vision for a strong and vibrant future for agriculture and industry in the Basin, along with the communities they support.”

Dr Kelly said he was looking forward to meeting local groups and stakeholders and hearing their points of view firsthand.

“Our discussions with various groups across the southern Basin will help us in our critical work of getting the Murray-Darling Basin back on a sustainable footing,” Dr Kelly said.

A major topic for discussion on the tour will be how the Rudd Government can best deliver the range of programs and policies under the \$12.9 billion *Water for the Future* initiative.

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

It includes \$5.8 billion in programs to make irrigation infrastructure more efficient and help Basin communities prepare for a future with less water.

Water for the Future also includes the \$200 million Strengthening Basin Communities program to support the efforts of local governments in the Basin, in partnership with other groups, in planning and implementing initiatives to help secure water supplies.