



# MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon Peter Garrett MP**

*Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts*

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PW 365/09

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## **NEW SOUTHERN BASIN WATER PURCHASING FOR 2009-10**

A total of \$270 million in new water purchasing initiatives in the Murray-Darling Basin has been announced today by the Acting Minister for Water, Peter Garrett.

A series of three short tenders of \$90 million each will be conducted in the southern connected River Murray system in the first half of 2010.

“The first of the tenders in the southern connected Basin will open on 11 January 2010 and close on 29 January 2010,” Mr Garrett said.

“Following this, the two subsequent tenders are scheduled to open for three weeks each commencing in March and April 2010 respectively.”

Mr Garrett said the new tender rounds formed part of the Government’s \$3.1 billion commitment to buy water from the market to put back into the rivers of the Murray Darling Basin.

“By purchasing water from willing sellers and investing in irrigation infrastructure, we are smoothing the transition for irrigation communities as they adjust to new, lower limits on water use that we can expect under the Basin Plan,” Mr Garrett said.

“Across the Murray Darling Basin, the current challenges posed by drought and climate change have been compounded by decades of mismanagement.”

A decision on 2009/10 water purchase tender opportunities elsewhere in the Basin will be made in early 2010.

The 2009/10 tender plan has been designed to improve the transparency of the water purchasing program. At the end of each tender, once the assessment is complete, the Department will publish information about the average price paid in the most recent tender for the various entitlement types.

As at 30 November 2009, the Australian Government had secured the purchase of 651 billion litres of water at a cost of \$1.01 billion.

Guidelines and the application form will be available in January prior to the opening of the tender. For copies of the guidelines and application form call 1800 218 478 or visit [www.environment.gov.au/waterpurchasing](http://www.environment.gov.au/waterpurchasing) . Applications cannot be submitted earlier than 11 January 2010.