



# MEDIA RELEASE

## Senator the Hon Penny Wong

*Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water*

PW 63/10

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### **\$100 MILLION INVESTMENT IN ON-FARM IRRIGATION ROLLS OUT**

New and more efficient on-farm irrigation infrastructure will be rolled out to over 550 farms across the Southern-connected Murray Darling Basin and the Lachlan River Catchment, Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water, Senator Penny Wong, announced today.

This is the first round of the Rudd Government's \$300 million *On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency* program. It will be delivered in partnership with organisations including irrigation providers, peak industry groups and catchment management authorities.

This round, worth \$100 million, will save as much as 60 billion litres over a year – savings which will be shared between the environment and irrigation farmers.

“The Rudd Government's *On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency* program is all about helping irrigation farmers do more with less, while also returning water savings to the environment,” Senator Wong said.

“The \$100 million in funding announced today is the first round of the program and will help farmers invest in efficient irrigation systems that deliver long-term economic and environmental benefit.”

The six successful delivery partners were required to submit proposals that help secure a long-term sustainable future for irrigation communities, deliver substantial and lasting returns of water to the environment to secure real improvements in river health, and deliver value for money.

“Each delivery partner will be responsible for selecting and working with individual irrigators who will undertake the on-ground works to improve their irrigation efficiency,” Senator Wong said.

“By encouraging local leadership on projects, we are drawing directly on the expertise of irrigators.

“Over 550 irrigation infrastructure projects will be delivered on-farm and include upgrading flood irrigation to more efficient drip and sprinkler systems, soil moisture monitoring, and covering on-farm storages to reduce evaporation losses.

“The Rudd Government recognises the contribution individual farmers can make by using water wisely, and acknowledges the role that on-farm investment can play in securing a healthy future for irrigated agriculture and the environment.

“We are getting on with the job of preparing rural and regional communities for a future with less water.”

Successful applicants in the Lachlan River Catchment and the southern-connected system of the Murray-Darling Basin will now work with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to finalise the details of their projects.

The \$300 million in funding comes from the \$5.8 billion *Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure* program, a key part of the Australian Government's 10-year, \$12.9 billion *Water for the Future* plan.

A list of successful applicants under Round 1 is attached.

More information on this program and *Water for the Future* is available at [www.environment.gov.au/water](http://www.environment.gov.au/water)

**Successful Applicants that received in-principle approval to proceed to stage 2 under the *On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program – Round 1***

<b>Applicants</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Potential number of Irrigator sub-projects</b>	<b>Funding (\$)</b>
Australian Processing Tomato Research Council Inc.	VIC/NSW	22	\$11,710,000
South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resource Management Board	SA	21	\$1,659,000
Lachlan Catchment Management Authority	NSW	46	\$3,846,000
Ricegrowers Association of Australia Inc.	NSW	52	\$24,179,000
Murray Irrigation Limited	NSW	124	\$32,786,000
Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority	VIC	291	\$25,820,000