



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water

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NEW BASIN WATER PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT CHARGE RULES TO APPLY

New water planning and management charge rules will provide better information to water users throughout the Murray Darling Basin, Minister for Water, Senator Penny Wong, said today.

Senator Wong today announced her intention to make the new Basin water planning and management charge rules apply from 1 July 2011.

“The rules mean greater pricing transparency, which is one of the key objectives of the National Water Initiative and the *Water Act 2007*,” Senator Wong said.

Senator Wong said the decision was made on the basis of advice from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

Under the *Water Act 2007*, the Minister is required to obtain and have regard to advice from the ACCC on water charge rules, which include the water planning and management charge rules.

In developing this advice, the ACCC undertook an extensive consultation process with a range of stakeholders, including irrigators.

The new rules will capture water planning and management charges imposed by, or on behalf of, Basin state governments.

Wherever a Basin state government or agency sets a charge to cover the cost of water planning and management activities, the rules will require:

- publication of detailed information about the charge, and;
- disclosure of the process and basis for setting the charge.

The current transition period to the new rules will be extended until 30 June 2011 to allow governments and agencies further time to adjust to the new requirements.

The *Water Regulations 2008* require the Minister to issue a notice of intention at least four weeks prior to formally making the rules.

Further information about the water planning and management charge rules including a copy and a summary of the rules, and the ACCC’s advice, can be found at: www.environment.gov.au/water.