



Australian Government

# WATER for the FUTURE

## Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder

A key priority under the Government's *Water for the Future* policy is the acquisition of water entitlements and the use of this water for the environment.

This priority will be achieved through direct purchases of water entitlements and water savings from making irrigation systems more efficient. The Government will spend \$3.1 billion purchasing water under the *Restoring the Balance in the Murray-Darling Basin* initiative. \$5.8 billion will be spent on infrastructure and other projects that enable an early adjustment to a new Murray-Darling cap under the *Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure* program.

The position of Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder has been established under legislation to manage the Government's environmental water holdings. Mr Ian Robinson, a First Assistant Secretary in the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, has been appointed as the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder.

The role of the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder is to protect and restore the environmental assets of the Murray-Darling Basin or assets outside the Basin where water is held for that area.

Environmental water will be used in accordance with the environmental watering plan that is to be prepared by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. The environmental watering plan will be developed in consultation with state governments and other interested stakeholders.



Wetland in poor condition at Bottle Bend Lagoon, NSW. (J Baker & DEWHA)



Murray River at the Gulf, Barmah State Forest, Vic. (J Baker & DEWHA)

The water will be used to protect and restore wetlands of international importance as well as rivers and wetlands which support listed migratory and threatened species.

A panel of scientific experts has been appointed to advise the Australian Government on the use of water purchased. The Environmental Water Scientific Advisory Committee comprises seven prominent scientists in fields such as hydrology, limnology, river and floodplain ecology and the management of aquatic ecosystems.

Committee members will provide advice on:

- Methods for determining relative priorities for environmental watering;
- Areas which merit additional investigation, including additional research; and
- Assessing the benefits of the environmental watering.

### MORE INFORMATION

For more information visit:

[www.environment.gov.au/water/environmental/cewh](http://www.environment.gov.au/water/environmental/cewh)

You can also call the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts on **1800 218 478** or send an email to:

[cewh@environment.gov.au](mailto:cewh@environment.gov.au).

Published by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2008.

*Water for the Future* is a long-term plan to secure the water supply for all Australians. The Government is investing \$12.9 billion over 10 years to address four key priorities:

- Taking action on climate change
- Using water wisely
- Securing water supplies
- Supporting healthy rivers