

MEDIA RELEASE

REFLOWS – restoring water to wetlands in the Upper South East



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UPPER SOUTH EAST PROGRAM BOARD

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Wetlands need water! Much of the 70,000 hectares of nationally significant wetlands and watercourses in the Upper South-East of South Australia, need additional fresh water to provide effective natural habitat for supporting species diversity. While drainage in the Lower South-East has enabled successful agriculture and forestry on a large scale, discharging the drainage water to the sea has deprived wetlands to the north of sufficient fresh water flows.

Mr Roger Wickes Chair of the Upper South East Program Board said today, "There is an opportunity to return the historic water flows to the north and help restore and rehabilitate some of these important wetlands".

He said that the REFLOWS project is proposed to improve the historic waterways to deliver water from:

- Mosquito Creek catchment to the Marcollat watercourse; and
- Bakers Range catchment south of Drain M to the northern Bakers Range and West Avenue watercourses.

The REFLOWS project will target key wetland systems in the Marcollat watercourse, the southern, central and northern portions of the Bakers Range watercourse and the West Avenue watercourse. In very high flow periods, the southern lagoon of the Coorong, a Ramsar-listed wetland of International importance will also receive flows.

Mr Wickes today released a scientific and economic study of the proposal for community consideration. The study includes an overview developed by the Board and nine supporting background papers developed by scientific and economic experts. Professor Gary Jones, CEO of the e-Water CRC in Canberra, has carried out an independent review of the proposal and is of the opinion that the proposal has "...very significant scientific merit and is worth pursuing as a program with major national and international ecological benefits".

To assist the community understand the benefits of the REFLOWS Project, the Board will hold two public information meetings as detailed below

Public Information Meetings

Date	Location	Venue	Meeting Time
Thursday 28 February 08	Kingston	Lacepede Bay Motel	7pm to 10pm
Friday 29 February 08	Lucindale	Country Club	2pm to 5pm

The public information meetings will include presentations by authors of background papers and will provide an opportunity to ask questions and gain an insight into restoring water to Upper South East Wetlands.

A number of targeted information sessions with those directly affected by the proposal will also be held during the consultation period.

The Upper South East Program Board has developed the REFLOWS project following research over several years. On 1 February 2007, the Prime Minister announced \$7.7 million from the Australian Government Water Fund to add to the \$6.5 million allocated by the Program Board to the Project, thereby fully funding this \$14.2 million project.

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Mr Wickes encourages people to attend these information meetings saying they provide the opportunity for people to become better informed and to raise any issues.

The Board's nine background papers, a summary of the background papers and the position paper are available from the Board's website at www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/land/programs/use/index.

The Board is also accepting written submissions on the REFLOWS project until 20 March 2008. Submissions should be addressed to:

The Upper South East Program Board
REFLOWS Project Submissions
C/o DWLBC
PO Box 2834
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Following consideration by the Board of the submissions made during the consultation phase, options for delivering the REFLOWS project will be considered by the Minister for Environment and Conservation.

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