



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon. Ian Campbell
Australian Minister for the
Environment and Heritage

Hon. Karlene Maywald
Minister for the River Murray
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Science and Information Economy
Minister for Consumer Affairs

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WATER DONATIONS TO INCREASE MURRAY FLOW

The River Murray is set to receive another boost in South Australia with the Australian and South Australian Governments jointly announcing a package of measures aimed at encouraging private water donations for environmental projects along the river.

The initiative is part of a detailed new strategy, *Environmental Flows for the River Murray*, jointly launched in Mannum today by River Murray Minister, Karlene Maywald and the Presiding Member of the SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board, David Wotton with the Australian Government providing \$150,000 in funding to support the initiative.

“This exciting and progressive initiative will provide the framework for the establishment of Environmental Water Trusts to enable community groups, organizations and individuals to donate water to the environment for specific watering projects,” Minister Maywald said.

“To encourage the donation of water, the state government has also provided for incentives which include removing transaction fees, environmental levy refunds and stamp duty exemptions,” she said.

Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell said that the \$150,000 was one of a number of measures the Australian Government had taken recently to address the declining health of the River Murray.

“The River Murray is an iconic part of the Australian landscape and the Australian Government is committed to preserving it for future generations.

“We have committed up to \$2.5 million this year to undertake environmental watering activities, in addition to the \$1.5 million committed by the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council on 30 September 2005”.

Minister Maywald said South Australian River Murray irrigators are very efficient in their use of water and last year used only 80% of their available allocation.

“This unused irrigation water provided some environmental flow benefit in the river channel, but it could be managed a lot better,” she said

“This scheme will provide opportunities for irrigators to donate some, or all of their unused water, to be used for specific environmental projects,” she said.

“The *Environmental Flows for the River Murray* strategy also provides for the establishment of a River Murray Environmental Manager to be appointed to the SA Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board.

“The Environmental Manager will prioritise the areas needing environmental flows and be responsible for the delivery of those flows to achieve the best possible results for the river’s environment,” Minister Maywald said.

“Under the strategy, the state government will also establish an Environmental Water Register which will account for all water donated to the environment.

“The strategy will assist South Australia to meet its Strategic Plan target of returning 1500GL of water to the River Murray by 2018.

“The state government will implement the strategy in close partnership with the SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board, Murray-Darling Basin Commission, Government agencies, local government, industry, landowners, regional groups and the local community.

“The strategy has been finalised taking into account feedback obtained during extensive public consultation held from October last year,” Minister Maywald said.

Copies of the strategy can be obtained by contacting the South Australian Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC) on (08) 8463 6916, or online at

www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/flows/environmentalflows_report.html