



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

23 April 2009

NEW WEBSITE TO TRACK MURRAY-DARLING BASIN WATER STORAGE

A new interactive website will be updated weekly to show water availability in public water storages across the Murray-Darling Basin, Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, said today.

“The new website, going live today, provides easily-accessible information on water held in public storages right across the Murray-Darling Basin,” Senator Wong said.

Senator Wong said the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) had developed the new site, which includes data collated from water management sources in the four Basin states.

“Water managers, irrigators, community and environment groups, students, and anyone else with an interest can just click on an interactive map of the Basin for the latest data on water held in public storage anywhere in the Basin.

“They can also check the current volume of water in each storage facility expressed as a figure and a percentage. And for the River Murray, current storage levels can be compared against historical comparisons at the click of a mouse.

“Visitors will also be able to access information on the latest seasonal water allocations via links to each relevant State water agency.”

In response to public interest, the water volume and level of South Australia’s Lower Lakes will also be viewable on the website and updated weekly.

“People visiting the site can also download a detailed quarterly Basin-wide water resource spreadsheet, which includes estimates of water held in private storages in the northern Basin, and commitments in each river system.”

Senator Wong said the quarterly spreadsheet builds on a version that first went online in September last year, and was most recently updated to February 2009.

With the MDBA’s recent drought report stating that inflows into the Basin were the worst on record for this time of year, accurate information about water storages was vital, Senator Wong said.

“There is no doubt we are facing a critical situation in the Murray-Darling Basin after years of drought and over-allocation, and in the face of climate change,” Senator Wong said.

“The Rudd Government is taking action to tackle this crisis by committing \$3.1 billion to buy water to return to Basin rivers and wetlands. And \$3.7 billion is already allocated to specific projects in the Basin to improve irrigation infrastructure and help communities deal with a future with less water.”

The new “Water in Storages” site is available at www.mdba.gov.au/water/waterinstorage