



*Australian Government Minister for
Climate Change and Water*
Senator the Hon Penny Wong



NSW Minister for Primary Industries
The Hon Ian Macdonald MLC

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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\$21.7 MILLION FOR IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY IN THE GWYDIR VALLEY

The Australian Government is providing \$21.7 million to the Gwydir Valley Pilot Project to support more efficient irrigation through on-farm modernisation projects.

The funding is part of the Government's \$3.7 billion commitment to State Priority Projects in the Murray-Darling Basin.

"The Rudd Government is getting on with the job of preparing for a future with less rain because of climate change," Senator Wong said.

"Central to our plan to getting the Murray-Darling Basin back onto a sustainable footing is investing in irrigation infrastructure to help our farmers and regional communities and protect food security."

The project forms part of the Australian Government's in-principle commitment to contribute up to \$708 million, subject to due diligence, to the New South Wales (NSW) Government to implement a suite of programs as part of the NSW State Priority Project.

The Gwydir Valley Pilot Project is the first activity to be funded under a \$300 million Commonwealth commitment towards the NSW Farm Modernisation Program.

"This initial project will help inform the NSW Government's approach in rolling out further on-farm investment under the program," said NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald.

The Australian Government's provision of \$21.7 million to this Project, with \$4.8 million co-investment from irrigators, will support more efficient irrigation through on-farm modernisation projects in the Gwydir Valley.

The Gwydir Valley Pilot Project will return eight billion litres of water entitlement to the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, from total water savings of 16 billion litres. The remaining water savings will stay with irrigators to boost farm productivity.

The Gwydir Valley Pilot Project will be implemented by the NSW Department of Industry and Investment, with support from the Border Rivers-Gwydir Catchment Management Authority.

"This project will provide an opportunity for the Gwydir irrigation community to prepare for a future with reduced water availability, and through a training component, ensure irrigators are skilled to derive the best possible value from these investments," Mr Macdonald said.

Irrigators who operate as direct river diverters in the Gwydir Valley should contact their nearest NSW Department of Industry and Investment Office for more information about the Gwydir Valley Pilot Project.

Irrigators in other NSW regions seeking to improve their on-farm irrigation efficiency may be eligible for funding from other Australian Government programs, or through subsequent opportunities through the NSW Farm Modernisation Program.

For more information visit: www.environment.gov.au/water