

Checklist for Securing Australia's Water Future

- ✓ Establish the National Water Commission (NWC) to implement the National Water Initiative (NWI)
- ✓ States and Territories develop detailed NWI implementation plans by June 2005
- ✓ NWC to review and set national environmental water targets and standards (e.g. water use efficiency, environmental water accounting, environmental water management, biodiversity, water quality, river health targets, water pricing, water trading)
- ✓ NWC to undertake a comprehensive baseline assessment of water resources, water research and information and water governance arrangements across Australia
- ✓ NWC to develop performance indicators in line with National Water Initiative principles and deadlines
- ✓ Benchmark water accounting systems and implement the World's Best Water Resource Accounting (Measuring, Monitoring and Reporting)
- ✓ Implement the NWI Water Entitlement and Planning Framework to set the terms for environmentally sustainable water extraction
 - Review all existing water plans and develop new plans to ensure they meet NWI objectives and requirements
 - Priority planning and action in over-allocated and over-used systems (plans complete by 2007)
- ✓ Statutory recognition of Environmental Water to ensure environmental outcomes are met
 - Environmental Water to be at least as secure as water for consumptive use
 - Ecologically functional system requirements given first priority call on water
- ✓ Manage Environmental Water
 - Identify and specify environmental outcomes in Water Plans
 - Identify and protect High Conservation Value sites in working rivers
 - Establish and resource dedicated Environmental Water Managers
- ✓ Fully account for Environmental Water
 - Develop Environmental Water measuring, monitoring and annual reporting systems compatible with consolidated water accounts by end 2005
 - Develop and apply a comprehensive environmental water register showing where the water is, how much water there is, how reliable the water is and what environmental outcomes it delivers (mid 2006)
- ✓ Cost effective recovery of Environmental Water in over-allocated and over-used systems
 - Identify and prioritise over-allocated and over-used systems
 - Determine the water requirements and actions needed to restore systems to health / sustainable extraction
 - Invest in targeted, cost effective water recovery projects
- ✓ Smart sequencing of projects funded under Australian Water Fund - targeted to meet NWI objectives and deadlines
- ✓ Water Pricing - full cost of water delivery and management, including environmental costs, be incorporated into the price of water.
- ✓ Water Trading that protects and enhances environmental outcomes
 - Recover water for the environment
 - Understand what, when and how much the environment needs before opening up trading
 - Public registration and accounting of all water traded
 - Maximise productive and efficient water use while protecting the environment (e.g. through water use permits)
 - National Water Commission to monitor impacts of water trading
- ✓ Protect water assets - implement a national system of protected freshwater ecosystems
- ✓ A well coordinated Water Knowledge strategy to underpin the NWI
- ✓ Immediate knowledge needs include, for example
 - Understanding total water balance and accounting for water interception across landscapes
 - Impacts of climate and land use change on water availability
 - Interactions between surface and ground water
 - Demonstrating/modelling ecological outcomes from environmental flow management
 - Strategic research into efficient urban and rural water use
 - Understanding Australia's tropical northern rivers
 - Linking local knowledge back to inform the national reform agenda
- ✓ Regular reporting of progress on NWI implementation to the Australian people

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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KEY STEPS TO ACHIEVE WATER SECURITY

Linking national principles to environmental
outcomes and resource security

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AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

Prime Minister
Investing in Australia's Water Security

COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS

Striving for national consistency
Co-operating across borders

NATIONAL WATER COMMISSION

Implementing the National Water Initiative – Eliminating Australia's Water Security Threats

- Advise, inform, coordinate and assess progress in the National Water Initiative (NWI)
- Gatekeeper for the Australian Water Fund – accrediting practical projects to meet NWI objectives
- Build, communicate and streamline water science, knowledge and information

STATE/TERRITORY GOVERNMENTS

- Responsible for water allocation and management (Section 100 of Constitution)
- Amend/Enact Legislation in line with the NWI framework
- Develop action plans to meet NWI objectives and deadlines
 - NWI implementation plans by mid 2005
 - Substantial progress on NWI objectives by 2010
- Oversee Statutory Water Planning
- Cross border cooperation and joint arrangements for shared water resources
 - co-develop planning, joint environmental water managers, seamless water accounting, entitlement and trading registers for linked water resources

CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES / BASIN MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

- Properly resourced to implement the details of the NWI on the ground
- Feeding local knowledge back to the National Water Commission
- Key functions include water and catchment planning and management of environmental water

WATER PLANS - ROADMAPS FOR SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

Set the detailed terms for environmentally sustainable water extraction, broadly providing for:

- **Environmental Water Security** - specify environmental outcomes and water management arrangements needed to meet those outcomes
- **Consumer Resource Security** – shares in the consumptive pool and rules to allocate water in the life of the plan

Plans will:

- Account for all water use in the area of the plan - water in the rivers, water above and below the ground and water intercepted across landscapes
- Define the risks that could impact on future water availability (e.g. limited knowledge of resource, land use change and climate change)

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER SECURITY

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER

- Legally recognised and fully accounted for
- Defined to meet specified environmental outcomes (e.g. water quality, ecosystem function, etc)
- At least as secure as water for consumptive use – with requirements for ecologically functional systems given first priority call on water
- Environmental water held as an access entitlement (this may be tradeable*) and/or provided for according to rules

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER MANAGERS AND/OR TRUSTS

- Manage water to deliver specific environmental outcomes
- Responsible for cost effective water recovery in over-allocated systems

CONSUMER RESOURCE SECURITY

WATER ACCESS ENTITLEMENTS (TITLES)

A perpetual share of the available water resource linked to annual allocation from the consumptive pool as specified in water plan, a tradeable right*

WATER ACCESS/DELIVERY LICENCE

Share in the delivery capacity of infrastructure to property. This may be tradeable*

WATER USE PERMIT/RULES

Conditions for sustainable water use on farm, attached to property (or a specified land management area)

local knowledge

*Water trading rules to protect and enhance environmental outcomes