

“Snippets Plus”

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Adelaide Advertiser

## **DRIVEN BY SCIENCE: Hydrogen fuel the challenge**

South Australian school students are building the Southern Hemisphere's first hydrogen fuelled car.

## **Uranium sale to India not on: Rudd**

### Revised Murray water deal passes Senate

The revised version of the Federal Government's \$10 billion plan to take management of Australia's food bowl will go ahead after passing Federal Parliament yesterday.

**News.com.au**

## **Hundreds get naked on shrinking glacier**

Hundreds of people posed naked on Switzerland's shrinking Aletsch glacier today for US photographer Spencer Tunick as part of a Greenpeace campaign to raise awareness of global warming.

Tunick, perched on a ladder and using a megaphone, directed nearly 600 volunteers from all over Europe and photographed them on a rocky outcrop overlooking the glacier, which is the largest in the Alps.

Later he took pictures of them standing in groups on the mass of ice and lying down. Camera crews were staged at five different points on the glacier to take photographs.

Glaciers are sensitive to climate change and have been receding since the start of the industrial age but the pace of shrinkage has accelerated in recent years. The environmental group Greenpeace, which organised the shoot, said the aim was to “establish a symbolic relationship between the vulnerability of the melting glacier and the human body”.

The Aletsch descends around the south side of the Jungfrau mountain in the Upper Rhone Valley. Alpine glaciers have lost about one-third of their length and half their volume over the past 150 years. The Aletsch ice mass has retreated by 115m in the last two years alone, said Greenpeace.

Tunick has staged mass nude photo shoots in cities across the world, from Newcastle, Britain, to Mexico City, where a record 18,000 people took off their clothes in the Mexican capital's Zocalo square in May.

Speaking to Geneva's *Le Temps* newspaper in an interview published before the shoot, Tunick said his

photographs were both works of art and political statements.

“I will try to treat the body on two levels. On an abstract level, as if they were flowers or stones. "And on a more social level, to represent their vulnerability and humanity with regard to nature and the city and to remind people where we come from.”

Switzerland has about 1800 glaciers and almost of them are losing ground.

Greenpeace said if global warming continued unabated, most glaciers would disappear from the Earth by 2080.

### **Typhoon hits China after mass evacuation**

The powerful typhoon Sepat hammered into south-eastern China early today after officials had relocated nearly a million people to safer areas.

Sepat landed in Quanzhou city east of Fujian province at 2am (0400 AEST), the Xinhua news agency said, after pounding Taiwan yesterday with torrential rain, powerful winds and mudslides.

More than 900,000 people in southern and eastern Chinese provinces had earlier been relocated, including more than 540,000 people in Fujian, Xinhua said.

In Zhejiang province, nearly 300,000 people had been evacuated to safety and 27,704 vessels called back to harbour. In Guangdong, around 70,000 people, including fishermen and residents in low-lying areas, had been evacuated.

Chinese meteorologists have issued the highest-level warnings for Sepat, which was moving north-west at a speed of 15 kph to 20 kph.

All the entries of expressways in Fuzhou, capital of Fujian, were closed, while 109 domestic and international flights at Fuzhou airport were cancelled yesterday.

Xiamen and Jinjiang cities also cancelled outbound flights, Xinhua said.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs has sent 3000 tents to evacuated people in Fujian. Downpours have been forecast to hit the coastal areas of Fujian and neighbouring Zhejiang province.

### **Hurricane close to Category 5**

Hurricane Dean is expected to grow into a ferocious Category 5 storm as it passes Jamaica and nears Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and the oil and gas rigs of the Gulf of Mexico after it smashed into several Caribbean islands, the US National Hurricane Centre said.

With top sustained winds of 240km/h early today, the hurricane centre said Dean was a Category 4 storm, the second-highest level on the five-step Saffir-Simpson scale and capable of widespread destruction.

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The hurricane centre said it was expected to strengthen to Category 5, with top sustained winds in excess of 250km/h, before plowing directly over Jamaica toward the Gulf, home to a third of US domestic crude oil and 15 per cent of natural gas production.

At 5am EDT (19:00 AEST) yesterday, the hurricane centre said several consensus models saw the storm moving toward the northern Yucatan and northeastern Mexico, and the projected track was “nudged a little south of the previous forecast in best agreement with consensus models”.

A hurricane warning likely will be posted for Jamaica later today, it said. The core of the storm will pass south of the Dominican Republic later today and south of Haiti in the evening, it said. Dean roared through the narrow channel between the Lesser Antilles islands of St Lucia and Martinique early on Friday, crossing from the Atlantic Ocean to the warm Caribbean Sea.

Dean's projected path would put it directly over Jamaica tomorrow and near Mexico's Yucatan

Peninsula or straight into the Gulf of Mexico through the Yucatan Channel by Tuesday.

If it crosses the Yucatan, it is projected to emerge in the southern Gulf and could disrupt operations in the Cantarell Complex of Mexican oil fields, which is one of the world's most productive and supplies two-thirds of Mexico's crude oil output.

Computer models have fluctuated between an eventual landing as far north as Louisiana, and Belize, at the southern end of the Yucatan, but began to shift generally more to the south late on Friday.

Forecasters have predicted the six-month 2007 hurricane season would be more active than average with up to 16 named storms.

An average year historically has 10 or 11 storms.

*Additional reporting by Michael Christie in Miami, Linda Hutchinson-Jafar in Port of Spain, Laure Bretton, Kerstin Gehmlich and Thierry Leveque in Paris*

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## **FarmOnline**

### **Make or break time for winter crop as rain arrives**

Rain may be arriving just in the nick of time to save the Australian winter wheat crop, which has suffered a dry spell after the good planting rains of April (southern Australia) and June (northern NSW and Queensland).

According to The Weather Company, thick cloud is spreading across Queensland and northeast NSW ahead of an upper trough, generating rain in the northern grain growing areas of Central Queensland, the Darling Downs and northern NSW.

And according to the Bureau of Meteorology, falls of up to 50mm have been recorded in parts of rural Queensland and NSW (see map).

A weakening low has also delivered some rain to Victoria and South Australian, while a new low has arrived on the West Australian coast.

In the north Bureau of Meteorology senior forecaster, Gavin Holcombe, says the upper trough system will linger for most of the week on the NSW/Queensland border region.

"For next week it will break into a few showers and the models are starting to indicate it now that we may see some rain develop by mid-week," Mr Holcombe said.

"We won't see a great deal of rain, if we can pickup 5-10mm then I think we'll be doing pretty well," Mr Holcombe said.

In June ABARE was forecasting a national crop covering 580,000 hectares, but after a very dry July in northern NSW and Queensland, the chances of all of that area being harvested have now been slashed.

The outlook for the southern grain-growing region, however, remains positive.

SOURCES: *FarmOnline* and *The Brisbane Times*.

## **Murray irrigation allocations open at just 5pc**

Goulburn irrigators start the irrigation season this week with access to 15pc of their high reliability share water, but Murray irrigators will receive just 5pc.

The decision for the Murray was contrary to expectations and in spite of there still being insufficient water available to cover losses. But channels, which would traditionally be filled from this week, will not run on the system until there is widespread demand.

The allocations are based on both the Murray and Goulburn closing early on March 15, 2008.

There is no water on the Broken, Campaspe, Loddon and Bullarook Creek systems, and the Goulburn Murray Water authority says low inflows during August have resulted in a downgrade of seasonal outlooks.

The outlook for mid September on the Goulburn is 46pc under average conditions (down from 56pc), 25pc under dry, while on the Murray it is 4pc (down from 21pc), under average, and zero if it remains dry.

Under dry conditions the Broken will not receive an allocation until October and the Campaspe and Loddon will receive nothing unless there is average rainfall.

SOURCE: *Stock & Land*, weekly rural newspaper, Victoria.

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### **New rural climate change alliance launched**

Seven leading business and community organisations have joined forces to form the Agricultural Alliance on Climate Change.

The Country Women's Association of Australia, Westpac, South Australian Farmers' Federation, AgForce, Visy, Australian Conservation Foundation and The Climate Institute have all come together under the new banner.

The alliance will commission research to investigate how rural communities can create climate change resilient communities and prosper from harvesting clean energy and farming carbon.

The group says it will focus on solutions to rural Australia which will help it to prosper, strengthen and adapt in the face of climate change.

SOURCE: Rural Press National News Service, Parliament House Bureau, Canberra.

## **news.com.au**

### **Drought worsens in NSW**

More than three quarters of NSW is now in the grip of drought, latest figures show.

The percentage of the state in drought went up last month from 69.9 per cent to 75.8 per cent.

The area of NSW experiencing marginal drought conditions has increased from 10.8 per cent to 14.6 per cent since June while the area experiencing satisfactory conditions plummeted to 9.6 per cent from 19.6 per cent.

Areas that moved back into drought include parts of Armidale, Casino and Kempsey and the whole of Tweed-Lismore, Condobolin and Coonabarabran, in the north and north-west of the state.

NSW Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said farmers needed a repeat of rains that fell in late June and early July.

"Unfortunately, last month's drop in drought figures has not lasted so our farmers are pinning their hopes on good rains in a matter of days not weeks," Mr Macdonald said.

"Basically we need rain and we need it now to ensure decent yields are received from winter crops."

Mr Macdonald said about two-thirds of NSW received little rainfall in July with only the southern third getting average rain.

Severe frosts were also reported in some parts of the winter cropping belt which have contributed to the stress placed on crop growth, he added.

"For crops to achieve reasonable yields, significant rain will be required across most parts of the grain belt before temperatures rise in spring," he said.

Mr Macdonald said stock condition was being maintained in most areas due to careful management of numbers and feeding regimes.

AWA

The Australian government's \$10billion takeover of water management in the Murray Darling Basin passed parliament on Friday 17th with bipartisan support. The Nationals claimed to have secured

amendments to protect irrigators, but the Victorian Government still has concerns about the plan.

One of the water industry's greatest challenges over the next five years will be maintaining and growing a skilled workforce, according to many stakeholders who completed the 2007 AWA Member/Stakeholder.

WSAA'S report card 'Performance of the Australian urban water industry and projections for the future' was released last week. The report forecasts that urban water prices will increase substantially, to fund capital investment of \$30 billion in water infrastructure of the next 5-10 years, as urban areas diversify water sources to counter climate change risks.

Victorian Premier John Brumby announced today that the Government would review the structure of the retail water industry in Melbourne to meet the challenges which are facing the industry, achieve equity pricing across the city and to ensure price increases are consistent with government forecasts of a doubling by 2012.

The National Water Commission's Fellowship Programme has been established to develop future leaders for Australia's water sector by advancing knowledge, building capacity and helping to fill skills gaps in the sector. Fellowships will be offered in one or more of the priority areas identified by Commissioners namely, groundwater, water recycling, and rural water reform and interception.

Winner of the Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize Robbi Bishop-Taylor last week participated in World Water Week in Sweden. Winners Adriana Alc ntara Ruiz, Dalia Graciela D;az Gómez and Carlos Hern ndez Mej;a from Mexico were awarded the prestigious 2007 STOCKHOLM JUNIOR WATER PRIZE for a project utilising a local bio-organic waste (egg-shells) to adsorb lead in wastewaters.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Water Use on Australian Farms, Preliminary, 2005-06 presents preliminary estimates of agricultural water use, pastures and crops irrigated, and sources of water used for agriculture at a national and state/territory level for the year ended 30 June 2006. Estimates for the previous three years are also included. Final estimates at the national, state/territory and regional level will be released in December 2007.

### 1.1 AGRICULTURAL WATER USE, By State - 2005-06

WATER USE			
Agricultural establishments	Irrigation	Other agricultural uses	Total
no.	ML	ML	ML

NSW(a)	48 550	4 472 617	284 166	4 756 784
Vic.	36 993	2 470 542	217 874	2 688 415
Qld	32 871	2 435 215	279 654	2 714 868
SA	16 457	927 264	93 342	1 020 606
WA	14 816	317 703	144 860	462 563
Tas.	4 716	201 822	26 643	228 465
NT	648	19 546	13 621	33 167
<b>Aust.</b>	<b>155 052</b>	<b>10 844 708</b>	<b>1 060 161</b>	<b>11 904 869</b>

## 1.2 IRRIGATION ACTIVITY, By State - 2002-03 to 2005-06

	<b>Agricultural establishments</b>	<b>Agricultural establishments irrigating</b>	<b>Area of agricultural holding</b>	<b>Area irrigated</b>	<b>Volume applied</b>	<b>Application rate</b>
	no.	no.	'000 ha	'000 ha	ML	ML/ha
Australia						
Old basis(a)						
2002-03	132 983	43 774	439 531	2 378	10 403 759	4.4
2003-04	130 526	40 400	440 110	2 402	10 441 515	4.3
2004-05	129 934	35 244	445 149	2 405	10 084 596	4.2
New basis(b)						
2005-06	155 052	45 130	444 077	2 583	10 844 708	4.2
2005-06						

New basis(b)						
NSW(c)	48 550	11 413	61 180	986	4 472 617	4.5
Vic.	36 993	11 658	13 364	657	2 470 542	3.8
Qld	32 871	10 220	155 571	572	2 435 215	4.3
SA	16 457	6 322	55 526	219	927 264	4.2
WA	14 816	3 249	99 096	62	317 703	5.1
Tas.	4 716	1 917	1 764	80	201 822	2.5
NT	648	352	57 574	6	19 546	3.3

(a) Derived using old ABS-maintained frame. See Technical Note for detail.

(b) Derived using new ABR-based register. See Technical Note for detail.

(c) Includes ACT.

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The agriculture industry is a major consumer of water in the Australian economy. The Water Account, Australia 2004-05 (cat. no. 4610.0) showed agriculture to account for 65% of all water consumed in 2004-05.

This publication presents preliminary estimates of agricultural water use, pastures and crops irrigated, and sources of water used for agriculture at a national and state/territory level compiled from data collected as part of the Agricultural Census for the year ended 30 June 2006. Estimates for 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 are also included in this publication of total water use for Australia and states/territories.

Final estimates at the national, state/territory and regional level will be released in December 2007.

Climatic conditions affect both the availability of water for irrigation and the need to irrigate in order to supplement rainfall. Information from the Bureau of Meteorology outlining climatic conditions over key agricultural areas between July 2005 and June 2006 are presented as an appendix.

At the Australian level, 45,130 or 29.1% of agricultural establishments reported using water for irrigation purposes. Increases in the number of agricultural establishments using water for irrigation purposes, and the increase in total number of agricultural establishments to 155,052, reflects the inclusion of additional agricultural establishments in the new ABR-based register of agricultural establishments.

At the state/territory level, the Northern Territory reported the highest proportion of farms irrigating (54.3%), followed by Tasmania (40.6%) and South Australia (38.4%). Western Australia reported the smallest percentage of farms irrigating (21.9%).

Victoria had 25.8% of the nations irrigating establishments, followed by New South Wales (25.3%) and Queensland (22.6%).

New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland continued to be the major users of water for irrigation, accounting for 86.5% of all water used for irrigation purposes nationally. New South Wales used 4,473 gigalitres (41.2% of all water used for irrigation purposes nationally) followed by Victoria with 2,471 gigalitres (22.8%) and

Queensland with 2,435 gigalitres (22.5%). Across Australia, 2,583,000 hectares of agricultural land was irrigated at an average application rate of 4.2 ML/ha. This application rate was unchanged from the previous year.

In New South Wales, 986,000 hectares of agricultural land was irrigated (38.2%% of irrigated agricultural land nationally), followed by Victoria with 657,000 hectares (25.4%) and Queensland with 572,000 hectares (22.1%). Combined, these three eastern states accounted for 85.7% of irrigated agricultural land nationally.

Western Australia had the highest application rate for irrigated agricultural land at 5.1 ML/ha followed by New South Wales (4.5 ML/ha) and Queensland (4.3 ML/ha). Tasmania had the lowest application rate at 2.5 ML/ha, followed by the Northern Territory (3.3 ML/ha).

Back to [AWA](#)

SA Premier Mike Rann says he remains committed to the River Murray Rescue Plan, including the establishment of an independent authority to oversee the River as long as it reflects the principles agreed at a summit in February, despite murmurs from other previously committed state governments.

Brisbane and Maroochydore Councils will join a regional program managed by Local Government Infrastructure Services, a joint Queensland Treasury Corporation venture with the Local Government Association of Queensland that gives high-level advice on asset management, in order to fast-track repairs to leaking water distribution networks.

Proserpine district cane grower Lui Raiteri is the first irrigator in the region to obtain a Land & Water Management Plan (LWMP), which he prepared to help reduce contaminated run-off into waterways and improve water use efficiency on his farm.

Tasmanian engineering consultants Pitt and Sherry and the University of New South Wales Water Research Laboratory researchers last week organised a Forum on Climate Change - Coastal Impact Adaptation Strategies in Tasmania, opened by the Minister for Primary Industry and Water. Further work of this nature can be expected in Tasmania, as the two organisations have recently signed a memorandum of understanding.

Sydney Water has reduced leakage from its distribution system by one third since 2002/03, having inspected more than 60,000km of pipelines and spending about \$100 million a year.

A Drinking Water Quality Management System Auditor Certification Scheme has been developed by RABQSA International in collaboration with the Victorian Department of Human Services, VicWater and WSAA. Certification under this scheme is mandatory to conduct regulatory audits in Victoria, and is applicable nationally. The next certification course will be held at RMIT in Melbourne on 31st August.



Worley Parsons has acquired water and environmental consultants Patterson Britton and Partners in Sydney and John Wilson and Partners in Brisbane.

Rodney District Council's newly upgraded Army Bay Sewage Treatment Plant won a Silver Award for project delivery firm, Sinclair Knight Merz at the recent Association of Consulting Engineers New Zealand meeting.

The International Water Association (IWA) launched a Professional Development Award in 2006 presented in association with the website

In the world's biggest river expedition of its kind in 2007, three ships will travel from Regensburg, Germany down the 2,375 km length of the Danube River and its main tributaries to test pollution and water quality. Costing over one million euros, the entire expedition will last until late September.

Australians' love affair with bottled water is costing the planet 314,000 barrels of oil a year.

Victoria's new Premier John Brumby is looking to increase the water supply but his solution to the problem may cost billions.

National Queensland Senator Barnaby Joyce remains concerned about the gap between the state's water plan ending in September 2014 and the commonwealth assuming liability for reduced water availability from January 2015.

Up to \$31 billion worth of coal buried under Sydney's water catchment may never be extracted unless it can be mined without disrupting the city's future water supply.

Water projects are expected to increase the price of water in the cities. For NSW, this would bring consistency as IPART has already increased the price of farm water use.

Water restrictions in Sydney could be eased as early next month if the recent heavy rain leaves the city's dams more than 60 % full.

### **FarmOnLine**

#### **Drought claims more of NSW but rain arrives just in time**

The NSW Government may have expanded its drought-declared area to now cover 75pc of the State, but many of its farmers are today celebrating excellent falls of up to 100mm for the week.

NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald, yesterday detailed how the area of the State now affected by drought has increased from 69.9pc to 75.8pc.

"We need follow up to the rains that fell in late June and July," Mr Macdonald said.

"The area of NSW experiencing marginal conditions has increased from 10.8pc to 14.6pc, while only 9.6pc of NSW is experiencing satisfactory conditions (down from 19.6pc)."

Areas that have officially moved back into drought include parts of Armidale, Casino and Kempsey, and the whole of Tweed-Lismore, Condobolin and Coonabarabran.

However, many of those areas on the NSW North Coast and Northern Tablelands have received good rain in the past week, receiving falls of up to 100mm (see map) in the seven days to today. The rain is still falling in Gunnedah, making tomorrow's start to the AgQuip field days likely to be wet and muddy. The rain began on Thursday in Queensland and has spread south, bringing very good falls to Central and Southern Queensland and Northern NSW, while most of the rest of agricultural Australia has received at least modest rain of up to 10mm.

However, more will be needed, particularly in the grain growing parts of NSW and Queensland.

NSW planted one of its biggest crops ever after good rain earlier in the year, but the follow up has been lacking.

"Basically we need rain and we need it now to ensure decent yields are received from winter crops," Mr Macdonald said.

"About two-thirds of the State received little rainfall in July with only the southern third receiving average rain.

"For crops to achieve reasonable yields, significant rain will be required across most parts of the grain belt before temperatures rise in spring."

SOURCE: *The Land*, NSW's weekly rural newspaper, posting news updates daily on *FarmOnline*.

### **Effects of drought draining family resources**

The drought is still being felt in households across NSW struggling to keep up with the cost of bills and essentials.

"Living on hope" is how NSW Farmers Association Central West regional services manager, Graham Blatch, described the situation, as rural families hold on for some rain in the next fortnight to promote spring growth.

"The forecast is fairly ordinary in the short term," Mr Blatch said. "There's a fair bit of concern and a fair bit of unsaid stress.

"People are hardly game to think about what would happen if it doesn't rain."

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Rising interest rates are also a concern for families who, after several tough years, have mounting debts to pay off.

The Country Women's Association of NSW is still distributing Emergency Drought Aid Funding to families in NSW on behalf of the Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Households can apply for a maximum of \$2000 for essential items including electricity and medical bills, food and school fees, with community grants also available.

More than half of the \$3.2 million allocated to NSW in July this year has already been spent, but the CWA is still encouraging more families to apply.

The Federal Government announced an additional \$8m of the funding in May for the CWA to distribute after funds dried up in April due to demand for assistance.

Mr Blatch said funds distributed by the CWA had been gratefully received by rural families and communities.

"It has been good for people to get some high-priority bills paid," Mr Blatch said.

"At this stage there has been no improvement in cash flow.

"Most people are waiting for a crop of some sort and looking for a spring so they know how much stock they can carry through summer and winter."

Application forms and criteria for the CWA's funding are available from the [CWA website](#), by emailing [drought@cwaofnsw.org.au](mailto:drought@cwaofnsw.org.au), or by phoning 9358-2923.

SOURCE: [Central Western Daily](#), Orange, NSW, a Rural Press publication.

### **Water scientists worry about biofuel side effects**

Water availability could be further limited by an expansion of the biofuel industry, an international meeting on the world's water supply has heard.

Many of the experts at World Water Week, a weeklong meeting in Stockholm, say policy makers should prioritise food over fuel.

"You can live with less energy but not with less food," Suhas Wani, an Indian scientist, says.

With the world's population expected to reach 9 billion by 2050, the International Water Management Institute projects the water needed for food production will grow by up to 90pc by then, unless water is used more efficiently.

However, others say surging demand for biofuels is actually helping poor agricultural countries by boosting the prices of farm goods.

"Decades of declining agricultural prices have been reversed thanks to the growing use of biofuels," says Christopher Flavin, head of the Worldwatch Institute, a Washington-based environmental research agency.

SOURCE: [FarmProgress](#), a Rural Press USA publication.

## Govt funds major water projects for cotton industry

A \$12 million funding package from the Australian Government will be used to improve floodwater management and irrigation efficiency in the cotton industry.

The package, announced by Assistant Water Minister John Cobb today, will also be put towards improved groundwater monitoring and management.

Combined with private investment, the projects in NSW and Queensland will be worth almost \$40.5 million.

"The centrepiece of today's announcement is funding of more than \$8.8m from the Water Smart Australia Programme to improve water metering and measurement of flood water in the Condamine-Balonne region in Queensland," Mr Cobb said.

That region has regularly been the brunt of complaints from NSW floodplain graziers who claim the cotton industry in Queensland is allowed to harvest an excessive amount of floodwater.

Mr Cobb says the project will contribute to better data and real time monitoring of water use in the region.

"The project will see telemetry fitted to stream gauging stations and individual meters on water harvesters to provide real time data on water usage on a catchment-wide basis," Mr Cobb said.

"This information will provide security for water users and the environment in the region and provide for better overall water modelling and management in this sensitive area."

The Federal funds are conditional upon the Queensland Government contributing \$17.8m and the water users a further \$4.5m.

Mr Cobb also announced funding for a further four projects in NSW, two of which will aid the cotton industry.

The Government will chip in \$995,600 to measure and monitor the evaporation and seepage losses from at least 270 on-farm storages across the cotton industry and monitor the impact of works to reduce evaporation and seepage on 135 storages.

The project will develop best practice in the management of on-farm storages.

And \$489,000 will be spent to lift water use efficiency in the Gwydir Valley by 10pc through a combination of

new on-farm technology and education activities.

SOURCE: Rural Press National News Bureau, Parliament House, Canberra.

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**adelaidenow.com.au**

### **\$30m pipeline to flush Torrens**

A NEW pipeline project designed to deliver recycled water to Adelaide's CBD and flush the River Torrens, was announced by the State Government this afternoon.

A 30km pipeline network – that will run past Adelaide Airport, into the city centre to North Adelaide – will be laid from the Glenelg Wastewater Treatment Plant as a part of the project worth a total \$60 million.

The state government will put \$30 million into the project, with the federal government expected to add another \$30 million.

The project that will also see the expansion of the Glenelg Waste Water Treatment Plant is designed to:

DELIVER recycled water to Adelaide's parklands.

POTENTIALLY enable environmental flows down the River Torrens.

MAKE available re-used water for 64 commercial development opportunities in the central business district.

Premier Mike Rann said the project would more than triple the annual water reuse at the Glenelg Treatment Plant, up to 28 per cent.

"This will free up stressed ground water resources and River Murray water that is now used to water our parklands and supply commercial development in the city," he said.

The proposal for such a pipeline has been in the spotlight for more than years with the State government rejecting an offer of \$25 million in Federal funds in 2004.

The policy was also announced by the State Government in 2005.

Opposition Leader Martin Hamilton Smith said the announcement was too little too late.

"This project is about as old as the River Murray," he said.

"Mike Rann is now running this State as a convenient platform for Kevin Rudd's election campaign.

"On the weekend he rejected Prime Minister John Howard's offer of \$100 million for the Southern Expressway – yet today he's dusting off an old offer to suit federal election campaign strategies."

## **The Australian**

# **ALP to phase out electric hot water**

Labor plans to rid Australian homes of off-peak electric hot water systems, in a move it claims will cut Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by 7.5million tonnes each year.

Half of all systems currently sold are the off-peak electric variety and Labor believes their removal from the market would be equivalent to taking almost two million cars off Australian roads.

The federal Opposition announced yesterday that in government it would work with the states to implement tough new greenhouse and energy minimum standards for hot water heaters.

Labor's climate change spokesman, Peter Garrett, said greenhouse-intensive electric hot water systems

accounted for 28 per cent of the average home's greenhouse gas emissions and produced three times the pollution of solar, heat-pump or gas systems.

At a housing project in Adelaide, Mr Garrett said Labor's aim was to phase out installation of the off-peak "greenhouse intensive" electric systems from 2010 in new homes or those with access to reticulated gas. By 2012, it would not allow them to be installed in new or existing homes.

Off-peak systems already in use will not be affected until they need to be replaced.

Mr Garrett pledged to work with industry to make the policy work. "It will be a phase-out over time, which will allow industry to plan for that phase-out," he said.

Mr Garrett said the current federal rebate of \$1000 a unit announced last month by the Howard Government would be continued to be offset by the higher cost of solar hot water systems.

The Energy Supply Association of Australia yesterday reported increased energy demand last year equal to a new power station, with the biggest growth in demand tracking population and resource booms in Western Australia and Queensland at 4.8 and 4.5 per cent respectively.

South Australia also reported a 4 per cent increase in residential demand fuelled by increased installation of air conditioners.

Australia's largest hot water system manufacturer, Rheem Australia, said there would be substantial impact from the move.

Rheem national marketing manager Gareth Jennings said the company was digesting the plan, but "understands these sorts of measures need to be taken".

Labor will keep existing rebates to encourage take-up of alternatives and believes its plan can save households \$300 a year.

### Extreme disasters on the rise

Extreme natural disasters have become more frequent and their impact more severe, affecting about 250 million people around the world and costing more than \$67 billion a year.

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Nine in 10 people affected by natural disasters and seven in 10 of those killed by natural disasters since 2000 lived in the APEC region, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' Asia and Pacific regional chief, Terje Skavdal, said yesterday.

In an address to an APEC Emergency Management chief executives seminar in Cairns, Mr Skavdal said savage flooding across Asia and parts of South America, Africa and Europe served as a reminder that recent decades had brought a higher rate of extreme disasters. "This was also brought home by the 2004 tsunami and the series of several record storm seasons in the Atlantic and Caribbean," he said.

The Boxing Day 2004 tsunami, which hit 14 countries on two continents, accounted for 37 per cent of all recorded fatalities from natural disasters since 2000, with most of the deaths in APEC states. "Wars, poverty, and disease ... continue to spread human suffering, and there are new risks of mass terrorism and pandemics," Mr Skavdal said. "Nonetheless, the destructiveness of natural phenomena has grown disproportionately."

He said disaster response collaboration had accelerated after the tsunami, particularly in the directly affected region, with strong and growing networks for civil-military collaboration. Even so, he said, the increased danger of natural disasters required an increased investment in risk reduction, which to date was falling short of agreed targets. Climate change, population growth, urbanisation, environmental degradation and the rapid transformation of fertile land into desert had all accelerated the likelihood that natural disasters would have a serious impact on people's lives.

"More and more people around the world live in an urban setting, and in Asia, in particular, many urban centres

are in earthquake zones or areas vulnerable to flooding," Mr Skavdal said. "Risk management in cities is an especially complex endeavour."

Nevertheless, despite the increased frequency and destructiveness of disasters, the death toll had fallen compared with last century. In the past decade, fewer than one million people died in natural disasters worldwide, compared with three million deaths in the same period 40 years ago.

"It is a tribute to the development of early warning systems and other preparedness efforts taken in your countries and on a regional level," Mr Skavdal said.

## Adelaide Advertiser

# Saving planet has rewards

The business sector's heavy ecological footprint can be significantly reduced in ways that can save companies money.

### Big water user turns off taps

A company that this time last year was South Australia's second-largest consumer of mains-water has more than halved its reliance on the public system.

Penrice Soda Chief Executive Guy Roberts said a new \$500,000 desalination plant using salty bore water (**cheaper than sea water**) had supplied the soda-ash maker with one gegalitre since December.

This was 67% of its annual need or enough water for 10,000 Adelaide households a year. **Penrice was a company we had been concerned about, as a high water user, for a number of years.**

22<sup>nd</sup>

FarmOnLine

### NSW rain reaches into eastern wheat-belt

This National Climate Centre map shows the widespread rainfall across the eastern states so far this week.

For the week ended 9am Tuesday, falls of 150mm and more are shown as deep blue.

On the NSW coast north from Newcastle to Grafton, one big patch in the coastal ranges, in purple, has received 200-300mm.

Other colour codes indicate:

- Blue: 100-150mm.
- Blue-green: 50-100mm - widespread falls across most of the NSW northern Tablelands, including Tamworth, and into the wheatbelt west of Tamworth.
- Green: 25-50mm - the eastern northern NSW wheatbelt, and across a big area of south-east Qld, including Brisbane.

But farther west, in the wheatbelt around Dubbo, NSW, the map shows how the rain has tapered off sharply, with falls of 15mm or less.

The Bureau of Meteorology has recorded winds of over 100km/h in northern NSW, while on the Gold Coast gusts reached just over 90km/h.

Late on Tuesday, a severe weather warning remains current between Coolangatta and Fraser Island, with strong winds expected to carry west to the Darling Downs and Granite Belt districts.

The Gold Coast on Tuesday was battered by rain and winds, driven by a 'mini-cyclone' at sea off the far south Qld coast. The full force of this weather cell is yet to reach Brisbane, where light rain has been falling for two days.

SOURCE: National Climate Centre, Bureau of Meteorology.

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### SA commits to \$60m wastewater scheme

Adelaide's wastewater could soon be used to water the city's parklands and boost River Murray flows with the creation of a \$60 million pipeline network.

SA Premier Mike Rann has committed the state government to paying half the construction costs of a 30km pipeline network that will carry treated recycled water from the Glenelg Wastewater Treatment Plant, south of Adelaide, to the city.

Under the project, entitled the Glenelg Reuse Scheme, more than 5.5 billion litres of water will be pumped into a network of pipes to be laid under the Adelaide central business district for use commercially, on parks, and the river.

The federal government offered to pay half of costs during the 2004 election campaign and Mr Rann said he hoped the prime minister would deliver on the promise.

Mr Rann said construction could start as soon as next year and if the commonwealth money was made available, the pipelines could be online by late 2010.

SOURCE: AAP

### North Coast NSW flash floods: rain in South-East Qld

More than 100mm has fallen on most North Coast centres, NSW, overnight, causing flash flooding and widespread power cuts.

Half a dozen roads around Lismore and Grafton are currently cut, with the Nymboida River, west of Grafton, is still rising.

Goonellabah, east of Lismore, and areas around Byron Bay have lost electricity, due to fallen trees cutting power lines while trees have also blocked roads.

Country Energy representatives said the situation was likely to be rectified quickly but has urged anyone coming across a line that is down not to touch it and report the incident, immediately.

Rain and winds are forecast to continue today (Tues) across the North Coast.

A low pressure area off the Gold Coast, deepened overnight Monday and the Bureau of Meteorology says it's now equivalent to a category 1 cyclone, with winds up to 90km an hour in the region.

Good rain during Monday over much of South-East Queensland is continuing on Tuesday.

Falls of 30-40mm have been widespread in what is normally the driest month of the year in the region.

SOURCE: Breaking news from *The Land*, NSW, weekly rural newspaper, with its news updates daily on FarmOnline.

23<sup>rd</sup>

**FarmOnLine**

### Rain lifts the mood at 35th annual AgQuip

It couldn't have been a better start to Commonwealth Bank Ag-Quip 2007 farm machinery field days.

Two prior days of rain that blew away for the opening day, leaving only strongly running streams, full dams and

water, water, everywhere.

While the crowds appeared relatively light on the blustery first day of Ag-Quip's 35th year, the mood among exhibitors was bullish on the promise that much of the State's northern winter crop was secure for a few more weeks.

With that reprieve, is the hope that farmers and their suppliers are going to be spared from more of the horror run that has gripped the sector for the past couple of years.

"It's been ugly," said Brendan Deck, general manager for Croplands Australasia.

"From a product planning point of view, we've been down to weeks of work, not months.

"But now it's green, the dollar has come back.

"We're hoping that this is the turnaround."

Michael Sherratt, AGCO's northern NSW sales manager, agreed that market conditions have been "pretty tight", but said the rain should boost sales for the lower horsepower end of the tractor market.

"For the higher horsepower items, it's not going to change that much in the near future," Mr Sherratt said.

"A lot of that market depends on irrigation.

"This rain isn't going to help there a lot."

But one equipment category assured of doing well, and which has sold strongly throughout the years of intermittent drought, is hay and silage gear, Mr Sherratt said.

Ag-Quip was described as "an event that binds the rural community" during an on-site luncheon addressed by Australia's Governor-General, Major-General Michael Jeffrey, who visited the event to celebrate a milestone for drumMUSTER, the chemical container collection scheme.

Major-General Jeffrey attended the first day of Ag-Quip 2007 to celebrate the collection of the 10 millionth container since drumMUSTER began in 1999.

## 11

The first day of Ag-Quip also saw the conclusion of judging on *The Land* and NSW Farmers Association Farm Inventor of the Year competition.

A cleverly designed clamp for securing a ladder safely to a gutter or fascia board topped the under \$1,000 division of the competition.

Developed by mid-North Coast father and son team, Cecil and Chris Wiseman, Wards River, the device features a ratchet clamp that can be fixed to the gutter from the ground before the operator climbs the ladder.

Topping the Over \$1,000 category was a versatile baulk gate and drafting system for cattle races developed by another North Coast innovator, Gerald Hicks, Nana Glen.

SOURCE: Extract from *The Land*, NSW, August 23 issue.

### **Satellite images to snare Murray water thieves**

Late-night boat patrols and special surveillance flights will be used in the driest areas of NSW to investigate water theft from the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers and from one of Australia's most important waterbird breeding sites, also.

The NSW Minister for Water, Phil Koperberg, warns that water theft is a serious offence.

He says officers will be deployed to carry out random checks.

Satellite imagery will be used to crack down on farmers stealing water to top up their allocations.

Boat patrols will check if river pumps are being illegally operated in the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers, and



charter aircraft will fly over areas difficult to access, to see if crops are being irrigated illegally, he says.

"Illegal water use is effectively stealing from your neighbours, the broader community and the environment," Mr Koperberg said, before a cabinet meeting in Orange today.

"You wouldn't steal livestock so don't steal water," Mr Koperberg said the investigation would also target the Macquarie Marshes, regarded as one of the most significant breeding sites for colonial nesting waterbirds, amid concerns that illegal banks and channels had been used there to divert water.

The Macquarie Marshes, in the central west, is a semi-permanent wetland owned by graziers and the State Government.

Mr Koperberg said, "In the last financial year, the Department of Water and Energy has heard 68 allegations of water theft from the Murray and Murrumbidgee area - that's more than one a week.

"Forty-four of those matters are under further investigation."

Anyone found deliberately stealing water, faced fines of up to \$132,000 for an individual or \$275,000 for corporations.

"Our focus is on protecting the rights of licensed water users and the health of the natural environment - that's why we have stiff penalties in place," he said.

SOURCE: *Sydney Morning Herald*

### **Water bill passed, but debate continues**

Even though the Federal Government's plans to reform water use in the Murray Darling Basin have finally been made law, tensions between the States and the Commonwealth, regarding the transfer of water powers, is far from over.

The Senate was held back to sit an extra day on Friday to ensure the bill was passed before Parliament rose for three weeks.

All eyes will now be on the inter-governmental agreement (IGA) the States will be asked to sign, but still have not seen.

Victoria and NSW already indicate they will not jump on board unless Prime Minister John Howard agrees to meet their demands.

The Victorian Farmers Federation this week made it clear, once again, that it would not support an IGA that assumes a full referral of powers from the States to the Commonwealth.

VFF president, Simon Ramsay, acknowledged all States would have to sign the IGA to achieve:

- Access to off-farm funding and
- Commonwealth takeover of State commitments to compensate water users for loss of water rights.

NSW Premier, Morris Iemma, is also sticking to his guns.

He vows not to sign up to the IGA unless the full risk of compensation is worn by the Federal Government - something the Federal Government says will only happen if all States are signatory to the deal.

"NSW's position remains unchanged," Mr Iemma said.

"We had a deal. The Prime Minister needs to stick to that deal.

"The fact that the Prime Minister has been unable to get national agreement shouldn't mean he now reneges on the deal, to the detriment of NSW taxpayers."

NSW Liberal Senator, Bill Heffernan, spoke to the Bill as it was being moved through the Senate on Friday, using the opportunity to call for real powers to be given to the new authority which will manage the basin.

He fears that without proper powers, the new authority risked becoming a "toothless tiger".

"If we do not want this new body to turn into another Wheat Export Authority, which is a complete bloody failure, we need to give it some teeth," Senator Heffernan said.

SOURCE: Rural Press National Agricultural News Bureau, Canberra.

### **Irrigators charged with water theft on Murray**

Two Murray Valley landholders have been fined for taking water from an unlicensed bore and constructing an illegal embankment in the drought-stricken Wakool region, NSW, where water allocations for irrigators remain at zero.

Compliance Director Garry Wills said one Wakool dairy farmer was fined \$800 by the Deniliquin Local Court this week and ordered to pay \$1070 in legal fees and court costs for taking water from an unlicensed bore on his property.

Mr Wills said that the Department's compliance staff inspected the property in December last year after noticing the dairy farm was significantly greener than neighbouring properties.

"When a property is lush and green while those around it are parched and dry, it's often a sign that water is being used illegally," he said.

"In this case we found that the landholder had constructed a large gravel pit with 18 bores connected to a pumping system, and was using the groundwater to irrigate his property.

"No licence had been issued for the bores, so the farmer was taking this water illegally."

Mr Willis said the Wakool area was still in severe drought, and over-pumping the groundwater system could increase salinity and reduce water availability to licensed bore water users who depend on the supply.

In a separate case, a Wakool landholder has been fined \$750 by the Department of Water and Energy for constructing an illegal embankment on the Wakool River.

On inspecting the property the department found the landholder had illegally constructed a low level cattle crossing, which was impeding the Wakool River's flow downstream.

"We hope these cases will deter others from stealing water from our groundwater systems, lakes, rivers, and streams," Mr Willis said.

Mr Wills said that compliance officers from the Department of Water and Energy were actively monitoring water use in the Murray Valley to ensure that all licence holders are operating within the law.

\* For more information on the rules regarding water access and trade visit <http://www.dnr.nsw.gov.au/water/licensing.shtml>.

SOURCE: Extract from report in *The Land*, NSW, August 23.

### **Rain, gales continue in South-east Qld**

Strong winds and rain continue to batter Queensland's Sunshine Coast, toppling trees and powerlines while more than 22,000 homes remain without power in the state's south-east.

Around 60mm have fallen over the major southeast Queensland dam catchment region northwest of Brisbane.

A Bureau of Meteorology spokesman said the weather cell that dumped rain across southeast Queensland during Tuesday, had moved north to Cape Moreton and the Sunshine Coast.

"Gale force winds of 120kmh have been recorded off the coast at Cape Moreton, while winds in Brisbane are at 70 to 80kmh," the spokesman said.

A Brisbane SES spokesman said minor damage had been recorded in the capital.

Strong winds are expected to move farther up the coast toward Fraser Island on Wednesday, with strong winds persisting in the region into Thursday and Friday.

SOURCE: AAP

**Adelaidenow.com.au**

## **SA's second desal plant opens**

A \$500,000 desalination plant opened today at Marion Bay on Yorke Peninsula, a tiny town that has campaigned for years to secure a source of fresh water.

It comes a day after Water Security Minister Karlene Maywald said that as SA struggled through dry conditions, the Government had been forced to continue the enhanced [level-3 water restrictions](#).

It is only the second seawater desalination plant in South Australia, after one at Penneshaw on Kangaroo Island. The new plant promises a brighter future for the town, which is expected to grow substantially in future years.

The reverse osmosis desalination plant built by world leading Adelaide company Osmoflo will initially supply 46,000 litres of water a day to the town.

It uses seawater from an underground bore metres away from the sea at Marion Bay, which is pumped to the desalination plant and fed into large storage tanks. The Marion Bay community eagerly welcomed the new water supply today, which is expected to cut costs and provide a much better supply of water to local homes and businesses. Opening the new water supply, Senator Alan Ferguson said it was a wonderful day for Yorke Peninsula and South Australia because it showed what could be done to overcome a lack of water.

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Osmoflo owner Marc Fabig, who operates desalination plants around Australia and the world, said it was the same design as a large desalination plant.

"We put extra effort into it and it includes an energy efficient system which reduces the power requirement and the running cost," he said.

District Council of Yorke Peninsula Mayor Ray Agnew said desalination was being considered for the fast-growing Point Turton community and it offered an option for about 15 communities on the southern Yorke Peninsula which don't have a water supply. Mr Agnew said repeated requests to the SA Government for support had been ignored and the system had been funded by borrowings, a \$45,000 Federal Government grant and \$10,000 from the South Australian Tourism Commission.

"We wrote to the Premier and the Minister for Water early this year about the lack of water infrastructure on Yorke Peninsula and asking for help," he said.

"We got no response from them, we've been extremely disappointed by the lack of a reply in writing or verbally."

26<sup>th</sup>

**Adelaide Advertiser**

## **Seeing red in water saving**

Government red tape is deterring South Australian's by saving water by using grey water diversion and recycling systems, the inventor of one of the systems says. Diversion systems like the Greywater Saver invented by Western Australian Jim Bertam, take greywater from the laundry and bathroom and divert it to the garden.

# Heat on cheats

The State Government has told Adelaide householders to search their consciences if tempted to cheat on water bans.

27<sup>th</sup>

FarmOnLine

## Irrigation restrictions continue at 13pc in SA

Annual irrigation allocations will continue to be restricted to 13pc on the Murray River in South Australia.

State Minister for the Murray, Karlene Maywald, says inflows and storage levels are well below average, leaving the Murray-Darling Basin in an even worse position than this time last year.

"We still need extensive and above-average rainfall before restrictions on River Murray allocations in South Australia can be eased," she said.

"Murray-Darling Basin storages are at only 20pc of capacity, compared with the long-term average of 66pc.

"Total inflows to the River Murray are expected to be about 330 gigalitres for August, which is well below the long-term average of about 1500GL.

"Last month, I flagged that restrictions would remain at 13pc until the total volume of water available for diversion reaches 1500GL under the water-sharing rules agreed to by all State Premiers earlier this year."

The State's irrigators are now praying for good spring rainfall and big inflows from interstate in order for this to happen.

SOURCE: *Stock Journal*, SA's weekly rural newspaper, posting news updates daily on *FarmOnline*.

28<sup>th</sup>

AWA

The Commonwealth will provide up to \$132.5 million to improving sewage discharges at three treatment plants below the Warragamba Dam, improving urban stormwater management, managing agricultural and open space irrigation and for higher treatment to reduce nutrient runoff from local catchments for the Hawkesbury Nepean River, a vital river-way for western Sydney.

Research which underpins water efficient irrigation in Australia and overseas has won the 2007 Land & Water Australia Eureka Prize for Water Research & Innovation. The prize was awarded to Professor Shahbaz Khan and his team from the CSIRO Water for a Healthy Country Flagship, for their exhaustive research into the water flows of the Murrumbidgee River catchment.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics report an Experimental Monetary Water Account for Australia, 2004-05 presents some experimental monetary water accounts that allow some of the physical flows of water to be matched with monetary transactions. This provides information useful for determining efficient water allocation, achieving cost recovery for water infrastructure assets and analysing trade-offs between alternative water and economic policies.

\$2.76M funding from the Raising National Water Standards Programme will be put towards a study into Evapotranspiration, examining losses through plant use and evaporation at plant, catchment and regional levels. The projects aim to better estimate the availability of water across a range of land uses and environments to improve water productivity.

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The Bundamba Advanced Water Treatment Plant is now on line, transporting purified recycled water 7.3km to the Swanbank Power Station. This could ease pressure on electricity prices which have increased over the year due to restrictions imposed on power plant water allocations. As this stage of the Water Grid comes on line, 15ML of drinking quality water becomes available for other uses in SE Queensland.

Freak rainfall has drenched SE Queensland which has been suffering its worst dry period ever.

Improvements in Water Quality and a fisheries re-stocking program means that there are now good numbers of young Murray cod entering the lower Goulburn River indicating an improvement in environmental conditions.

Flood warnings are in place for the Mary River, Tinana Creek and Noosa River after some areas of South East Queensland received over 500mm of rainfall in the past week. Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine dams have received their best winter rainfall in eight years, adding an additional one month's supply.

A project to shade water basins in Victoria to prevent toxic algal blooms has also resulted in dramatic decrease in evaporation. Conducted by CSIRO, East Gippsland Water, Gale Pacific (shade-cloth manufacturer) and Superspan (structure manufacturer), the trial resulted in a 10-fold cut to evaporation in all basins covered, including

Mallacoota, where evaporation losses fell from 10ML to one ML per year.

Professor Perry L. McCarty from Stanford University, California received the 2007 Stockholm Water Prize during World Water Week. Prof. McCarty is a pioneer in the development of the understanding of biological and chemical processes for the safe supply and treatment of water.

Independent research for the Queensland Water Commission found high levels of support for purified recycled water, with 71% of people surveyed saying they were comfortable drinking it and 74% supportive of it being added to their drinking supply. The survey was conducted in the 12 South East Queensland council areas under Level 5 restriction in late July.

This year, National Water Week will be held from 21-27 October 2007. The official National Water Week event calendar is now open. Organisers may list their events about water in celebration of National Water Week held anytime during October. This year, National Water Week is proudly sponsored by SmartApproved WaterMark.

Water from the Aquifer Storage, Transfer & Recovery (ASTR) scheme in the Salisbury, South Australia has been collected and bottled by the CSIRO Land and Water and Water for a Healthy Country Flagship, to demonstrate the effectiveness of the ASTR project. The bottled water comprised 93% stormwater from 2005 and 7% brackish native groundwater, and met all drinking water criteria.

Domestic water restrictions will remain in place in South Australia as the drought continues throughout the Murray Darling Basin. Annual irrigation allocations will also continue to be restricted to 13 percent, while water storages are at only 20 percent of capacity.

Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS) is a new, effective approach the Village Education Resource Centre (VERC) is using to improve sanitation in Bangladesh. The key to its success is convincing communities to take action themselves, which has a flow-on effect as neighbouring communities see the differences sanitation makes to village life. WaterAid is now hoping to replicate the approach in other countries around the world.

Working with different sectors Collaboratively is the key to determining how to best manage water within the UK's water basins, says the Environment Agency and accordingly the Agency has invited farmers, conservation groups and industry to contribute view on how to best tackle significant water management issues in UK.

The Hawkesbury-Nepean river system will not be producing any deliciously fresh prawns for Sydney within 10 years if society continues to treat it as the city's biggest sewer.

**Adelaide Advertiser**

## **One Degree Challenge to Business**

Today The Advertiser launches the online One Degree Challenge to Business, with environmental issues increasingly a high priority at the boardroom table.

To tell us your story, please email [us here](#) - with 'onedegree' in the subject line.

Directors know there are advantages to environmental awareness - cutting input costs, attracting staff and improving the public profile. But there is price to pay, too.

News Limited, publisher of The Advertiser, has created the One Degree campaign, pledging to lower its environmental footprint and to raise awareness.

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The SA Business Journal - the business pullout of The Advertiser on Tuesdays - will profile companies transforming their operation.

### **GREENING A COMPANY**

1. Start with an energy audit. Contact your electricity supplier or work with a consultant to find out how to reduce power demand.

2. Switch to accredited green power.
3. Offset the rest. Plant trees to soak up greenhouse-gas emissions or invest in renewable energy.

### **HANDY CONTACTS**

**Carbon Planet** – born here in Adelaide.

**Exergy Australia** for energy efficiency. Based in Canberra but provides consulting services throughout Australia.

**SMEC**, originally the SnowyMountains Engineering Corporation and one of the world's leading engineering and development consultancies.

**Carbon Neutral**, a not-for-profit body based in WA but affiliated with Trees for Life SA.

**Easy BeingGreen**

**Climate Friendly**

**GreenFleet**

**Elementree**

**Neco**

**Origin Energy**

## **Greener demolitions**

The success rate for recycling building materials from demolition sites has reached new heights in Adelaide.

Developer Hines Property expects to achieve a "recyclable success rate" of about 98 per cent, gauged by the weight of the waste, removed from the former RAA building on the corner of Grenfell St and Hindmarsh Square, city.

The demolition, almost completed, will make way for the \$70 million green residential and office development, the Conservatory. The recycled waste will remain in the construction industry in quarry material and scrap metal with timber combustibles used as alternative fuel at Adelaide Brighton Cement.

Already completed green certified buildings, including The Advertiser's Keith Murdoch House and the new Santos House in Flinders Link, have led the charge by being some of the first projects in SA to recycle record levels of demolition and construction waste.

Hines Property director James Hines said the Conservatory was the third significant development by the company that had achieved a success rate of more than 85 per cent for its demolition sites. "To be able to recycle virtually all of the rubble and building materials from a large demolition site such as this is a significant environmental outcome," he said.

South Australian company PT Building Services is undertaking the demolition works.

Construction of the Conservatory is expected to be complete by early 2009.

The new SA Water headquarters, at 1 Victoria Square, also aims high on waste recycling.

While there was an aim to recycle more than 80 per cent of demolition materials, developers hope to match that level for construction waste as well.

Previously only about 500,000 tonnes of an estimated four million tonnes of quarry material used on construction sites was recycled. The rest was dumped at landfill sites.

# 'Signs aren't good' for APEC climate breakthrough

Labor environment spokesman Peter Garrett said it is unlikely any significant breakthrough on climate change will be achieved at next month's APEC summit.

Mr Garrett today said if anything strong and positive does come out of the summit, Labor will support it, but that "the signs aren't good".

A draft leaders' declaration, leaked earlier this month, proposes aspirational goals to cut energy use by at least 25 per cent by 2030 and strategies to curb deforestation.

But Labor believes mandatory targets need to be set.

"The prime minister is really exposed on this issue, he talked APEC up big ... and now he is talking about aspirational targets," Mr Garrett said.

"I mean aspirational targets are not going to take us anywhere in meeting the greenhouse challenge, neither will they provide a real platform for any future negotiations."

Mr Garrett said it was better climate change was on the APEC agenda: "But what comes out of it?"

"Is Mr Howard going to use it as an excuse to cover his lack of action here on climate change?"

"He refuses to set a target here in Australia."

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## **Brisbane is best in world at saving water**

Brisbane has become so frugal with its water use that the city is now recognised as the best water saving community in the developed world. Even with a week of welcome rain taking dams to about 20 per cent, the drought and tough water restrictions have prompted residents to cut their water use so dramatically that Brisbane has now overtaken cities in Germany to claim No. 1 spot.

The latest Queensland Water Commission figures show residents are averaging 123 litres of water a day per person – 17 litres below the 140 target. The news comes as the first step of the Queensland Government's major water infrastructure plan came online, with recycled water flowing to Swanbank power station, west of Brisbane. The Bundamba advanced water treatment plant began pumping into a lake at Swanbank power station, reducing the plant's reliance on drinking water from Wivenhoe Dam.

Infrastructure Minister Anna Bligh said the Swanbank recycled water project would free up 20Ml of the region's drinking water a day. Lord Mayor Campbell Newman said Brisbane residents were now using less water per day than people living in water-deprived Israel.

"The challenge for us all now is to keep at those levels," Cr Newman said.

"We use less when it rains, but now our gardens, and most importantly, our trees have had a good watering and we should be able to keep water consumption to this level."

Brisbane's statistics are well below those recorded in the US, where residents use an average of 380 litres a day, and Britain, where the average consumption is 150 litres a person each day.

To help keep the city's water use down, City Hall has agreed to spend \$720,000 to install water tanks at all city council pools.

Water tanks will be installed at 17 pools in a bid to save 8.6 million litres of water each year and cut water consumption by 5 per cent for city pools.

Cr Newman said council was also visiting high-water users to ensure they were complying with water restrictions.

High water users who are yet to return their questionnaires to the Water Commission are expected to receive



letters this week warning they are now banned from outdoor watering.  
Almost 2600 people in Brisbane will be told they are banned until they return their forms.  
Overall dam levels in southeast Queensland are back to what they were in mid-April.

Howard's climate change goals.

Prime Minister John Howard has outlined his hope for "long-term aspiration goals," dealing with climate change at next week's Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Sydney.

Bucket water farcial waste

South Australian's are attacking the State Government for not doing more to prevent "draconian" water restrictions.

Recycling

The first step of the Queensland Government's major water plan came on line yesterday, with recycled water used west of Brisbane.

29<sup>th</sup>

## **FarmOnLine**

### **More funding for fight against feral pests**

Australia's most damaging animal pests, including rabbits, foxes, feral pigs and wild dogs, will be targeted through new funding for 17 feral animal research projects underway across Australia.

Federal Minister for Conservation, Senator Eric Abetz, said the projects would receive \$700,000 from the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust, to be overseen by the Government's National Feral Animal Control Program.

Senator Abetz said pests such as rabbits, foxes and feral pigs cost Australia more than \$500 million a year in lost agricultural production, killing or competing with livestock and native animals, damaging crops and degrading the environment.

Examples of the projects being funded include the development of a new fast-acting toxin for inclusion in manufactured feral pig bait, a test for reducing the impact of birds on the horticultural industry and several projects dealing with rabbits.

SOURCE: Rural Press National Agricultural News Bureau, Canberra.

### **Murray Valley water cuts to be paid back**

NSW Minister for Water, Phil Koperberg, today announced 25pc of the water suspended in 2006-07 for Murray Valley water users would be immediately re-credited. Mr Koperberg said, "Under arrangements endorsed by the Murray Valley Critical Water Advisory Group, survival water in the Murray Valley will continue for basic stock and domestic supply to Murray Irrigation Limited and for critical industries.

"I would like to assure licence holders who have received water for critical plant survival, that water already granted or applied for in September is in addition to this re-credited amount.

"Critical survival water will be debited from licence-holders accounts at some time in the future."

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Mr Koperberg said there was also sufficient water to provide town water supply under continuing Level 4 restrictions.

Town water supply and domestic and stock will remain at 0.5pc share or 50pc until water availability improves significantly.

"All water in accounts, is tradable and survival water to critical industries will be available for the remainder of

the year," he said.

"While there has been some improvement in the Murray Valley, the situation remains grim with inflows well below long term averages.

"I would like to remind water users that we must continue to be conservative with all water use."

Information about water availability in the Murrumbidgee Valley will be made available on the 15th of each month through the Murrumbidgee Critical Water Communiqués.

### **\$9m drought assistance for WA wheatbelt**

WA Premier, Alan Carpenter, has announced a \$9.3 million drought assistance package for farmers in the WA wheatbelt.

Mr Carpenter said the aid would be available immediately and would enable struggling farmers to apply for grants of up to \$8,000 to help minimise impacts of the drought.

Initially, the assistance package will be available to farmers in 14 wheatbelt shires.

Other shires will continue to be monitored as the season progresses and assistance considered if required.

Farmers will be able use the grants to cover one, or a combination of, costs incurred in managing the effects of the drought.

These include costs for

- Freight on agistment
- Fodder or water
- De-stocking
- The improvement of farm water supplies
- Developing feedlot infrastructure
- Access to professional advice or
- Any other essential farm business expense agreed to by the Agriculture Department.

SOURCE: Extract from *Farm Weekly*, WA, August 23.

### **Water-saving cotton initiative**

In response to the continuing drought and questions over access to water, the cotton industry is again using cutting edge science to help find solutions to its next big challenge, and help the environment along the way.

Using biotechnology, work is underway to find new cotton plants that either use less water or that use the same amount of water more efficiently. The Australian cotton industry is already the most efficient in the world, producing three times world average yields.

But this new development will help achieve the industry's ambitious target of doubling water use efficiency in the next 10 years.

"This technology was trailed in the field for the first time last season in a number of small plots," Cotton Australia chief executive," Adam Kay. says.

These tests were to determine:

- How a cotton plant uses and conserves water
- How to identify the genes that improve performance under low moisture conditions.

"Further tests will be done this summer, with the likelihood of commercial release at least 10 years away," Mr Kay said.

“Preliminary trials indicate the potential for greater water use efficiency and yield responses, even under water stress conditions.

“The other important aim is that, in normal water conditions, the plant becomes more efficient and so is using less water per bale of cotton it produces.

“The exciting part is that Australia has been chosen by Monsanto to conduct these trials because our growers have shown they are progressive, responsive and willing to take up technology that helps improve the environment and cotton production.

“With continuing dry conditions, irrigators are more aware than ever that every drop counts, closely measuring and monitoring the crop’s requirements to ensure no water is wasted.

“Our growers also collect and recycle water onto the crop a number of times, line dams and channels to reduce evaporation and are getting excellent results with overhead sprinklers and drip irrigation.

“So the prospect of having water use efficiency built into the plant, on top of this, is very exciting.”

SOURCE: *Australian Cotton Outlook*, updated daily on *FarmOnline*, Rural Press Limited.

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**adelaidenow.com.au**

### **Libs would axe bucket restrictions**

Bucket-only water restrictions would be axed under a State Liberal Government, Opposition Leader Martin Hamilton-Smith announced this morning.

Mr Hamilton-Smith said hand-held hosing of lawns and gardens and the use of drip irrigation would be allowed for up to two hours on two days a week, before 10am and after 4pm, under a Liberal Government.

He made the announcement at Heyne’s Nurseries, Norwood, before a gathering of nursery industry representatives.

To rounds of applause he told them that the State Government’s “extreme and ridiculous” bucket-only restrictions must be axed.

“The Government has failed to produce science or facts to show that Mike Rann’s buckets are saving more water than scheduled drippers and hose use.”

“Gardeners have vented their anger at Water Securities Minister Karlene Maywald while they are watching their expensive gardens die.”

Mr Hamilton-Smith called on the Premier to lift the current bucket-only policy by September 1, otherwise the Liberal Party would “take action” in Parliament when it resumed in two weeks.

Mr Hamilton-Smith will make further announcements on his water policy later today.

Mrs Maywald announced last week that the Government had been forced to continue the enhanced level-3 water restrictions as SA struggled through dry conditions.

Mrs Maywald said only about 260 gigalitres of water had flowed into the Murray River system in August.

“We expect to get another 300 (gigalitres) or so by the end of the month but that means we will have less than half of the average inflow into the system for August,” Mrs Maywald said.

The Advertiser’s gardening writer, Jon Lamb, said the restrictions were disastrous news for gardeners. “Most gardeners around the state are about to plant their tomatoes, but there is absolutely no point in planting anything if there is no water to keep them alive,” he said.

“It’s not possible to keep a large area of garden alive with only a bucket.

## **ADELAIDE HOUSEHOLD WATER RESTRICTIONS**

HOUSEHOLD sprinklers, hoses and watering systems, including drippers and any watering of lawns, are banned.

BUCKETS and watering cans will be allowed only for use on outdoor trees, shrubs and plants.

PEOPLE unable to carry buckets or watering cans because of age or disability can apply for a permit from SA Water to allow the use of a hand-held hose fitted with a trigger nozzle during certain hours.

LEVEL 3 restrictions relating to nurseries, car washing, pools, spas, fountains and ponds will remain unchanged, as will the maximum on-the-spot fine of \$315 for breaking water restrictions.

THE use of water from rainwater tanks remains unregulated and there are no changes to grey water use.

### **Climate change 'betrayal'**

South Australia's most powerful public servant has attacked the Howard Government, accusing it of betraying the states over climate change.

Premier's Department chief executive Warren McCann accused the Commonwealth of stringing SA along to get it to help persuade other states to support a national reporting scheme for greenhouse gases.

"We put hours and weeks of effort into it and, without consultation, we have a piece of legislation that has no bearing on what we negotiated," Mr McCann told the Budget and Finance Committee of State Parliament.

He said SA had used its "good offices" to persuade the other states there were good reasons for being part of the national scheme. He said a series of conditions, including the states being guaranteed access to data, were not in the final legislation. Mr McCann has worked as a senior public servant at state and federal levels, including 20 years in Canberra.

His attack refers to Commonwealth legislation introduced on August 15 establishing a single, national framework for reporting greenhouse gas emissions.

The Commonwealth has set aside \$26.1 million to establish the scheme designed to give effect to a Council of Australian Governments' decision in April this year.

SA has sent a submission to the Commonwealth protesting against aspects of the legislation including sections which deny states the rights to collect their own emissions data.

"I am absolutely outraged by the actions of the Commonwealth," Mr McCann said. He said the legislation went against everything negotiated with SA over the past two years.

"It is a complete betrayal of trust that we have developed with the Commonwealth authorities in this area," he said.

"We support a scheme of national legislation but what has been introduced is a heavy handed use of the power of the corporation to override our interests."

### **Heat, wind pose fire threat**

Severe weather and fire danger warnings have been issued for tomorrow ahead of gale-force winds and high temperatures.

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The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast winds of up to 100km/h in agricultural areas.

Temperatures in Adelaide will climb to 27C before a cold front and isolated showers on Friday.

The SA Country Fire Service said the predicted warm temperatures and strong winds could combine to increase the risk of bushfires. CFS deputy state coordinator Malim Watts said property owners should delay any burn-offs. The possibility of fire bans will be assessed today.

### **City sets neutral goal**

Adelaide City Council has set a target of being carbon neutral by 2020.

The council made the recommendation as part of its Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which is looking at ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Lord Mayor Michael Harbison said the council had already taken significant steps to reduce carbon emissions across the city.

"The objective is to reduce all greenhouse gas emission activities to carbon neutral," he said.

"We've done a lot of good work in the last four years and we're almost greenhouse neutral already."

A carbon neutral organisation is one in which net carbon dioxide emissions from its activities are zero.

Councillor Anne Moran, a member of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy Reference group, said Adelaide hoped to set an example for other councils.

Mr Harbison said the council's offices were already retro-fitted with energy-saving light fittings, while trucks ran on biofuel. Other measures implemented include the use of low-watt globes in street lights and solar power at the Adelaide Aquatic Centre, Wingfield Waste Management Centre and in Victoria Square.

The initiatives have reduced the council's corporate gas emissions by 35 per cent on 1994 levels.

The council hopes to set an emissions reduction goal of 60 per cent by 2012 and carbon neutrality by 2020.

Conservation Council of SA chief executive Julie Pettet said the ACC was a leader in environmental policies.

"It's a very good initiative and one that needs to be rolled out wider than Adelaide City Council," Ms Pettet said.

## Adelaide Advertiser

# Lift price to ease crisis

Once again Professor Mike is spot on.

Increasing the price of water is the only immediate solution to tackling Adelaide's water crisis this summer, says one of the State's leading water experts. **What do they mean ONE of?** University of Adelaide Professor Mike Young also touted a three-tiered pricing system, which would provide cheap water to low users, and quadruple the price for large volume users. Providing a basic entitlement to house-holds, which could be increased to accommodate for higher usage by larger families, would also encourage a wiser use of water, he said. Excessive use beyond 150kl should be charged at \$5 per kl instead of the current charge of \$1.16 a kl.

## Editorial

# The pain of rationing

One of the curiosities of the current water restrictions is that it is illegal to squirt even a litre of water on to the garden with a hose, but a 30-minute shower is not subject to restriction.

A row of trickling garden drippers are outlawed but it's fine for people to leave the bathroom tap running while cleaning their teeth.

Why are Riverland growers forced to survive on only a fraction of their annual water allocation while big manufacturing industries are allowed unlimited water use?

South Australians generally understand and support the need to conserve water. The majority are acting responsibly.

But the raft of anomalies and inconsistencies are as annoying as they are unfair.

If the State Government decides, for proper reasons, to continue water restrictions into the spring and summer, a more equitable system must be devised.

Everyone must make sacrifices, not just household gardeners and irrigators.

There may be some short-term economic pain, but saving the distressed Murray River and ensuring consistent supplies of potable water must be the critical priorities.

\* Responsibility for all editorial comment is taken by The Editor, Melvin Mansell, 31 Waymouth St, Adelaide, SA 5000

30<sup>th</sup>

adelaide.now.au

## Sack Maywald over bucket order - Libs

The Opposition has called for the immediate resignation of Water Security Minister Karlene Maywald following federal claims there is no agreement aimed at restricting water use in South Australia.

Federal Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull sparked a major political row with the State Government this morning when he claimed there was no agreement which forced SA householders to rely on bucket watering for their gardens.

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Water restrictions have emerged as a major political issue in the past 24 hours with Mr Turnbull rejecting claims by the Rann Government that tough water restrictions were due to an agreement with the Commonwealth.

In other developments:

**FEDERAL** Labor MP Steve Georganas revealed he has written to the Rann Government asking them to reconsider the ban on drippers.

**MS** Maywald said Mr Turnbull was completely wrong.

**OPPOSITION** Leader Martin Hamilton-Smith said it was time for Ms Maywald to go.

## Heat 'savage blow' to cereal farmers

Cereal farmers say they will lose millions of dollars from heat stressed crops as temperatures across the state reached record highs today.

Temperatures had reached 30C by 1.30pm in Adelaide, and considerably higher in about 20 country centres.

The previous Adelaide record was set in 1911.

South Australian Farmers Federation president Wayne Cornish described the hot windy conditions as a "really, really savage blow".

"It's going to wipe millions off the industry and will be a real impost to the SA economy," he said.

"At 12.30pm in Ceduna it was 33C, it really is unprecedented... nobody can predict nor prepare for this sort of damage," he said.

After a promising start to the cropping season with ground soaking rain in April, many farmers are now staring down the barrel at one of the worst years on record.

Callington canola farmer Brett Wegener said he has lost between 20 and 30 per cent of his canola yield recently. "Canola, flour and peas are at the crucial stage, what started out so promising has turned to disaster," he said.

"It's the hot wind that does the damage.

"They're not talking up spring rain and that's really what we're going to need to save it. Everyone's in a similar situation, if we don't get decent rain it's almost a complete crop failure," he said.

His fears were echoed throughout the state.

At Wharminda, 20km north of Port Neill, the forecast is also bleak.

Farmer Anthony Parker, 52, said his 130ha of peas will be "no good at all" by the end of today.

He also holds grave fears for his 450ha of barley and 550ha of wheat.

"It's absolutely devastating, it's just beyond belief," he said.

"We're in desperate need of rain just to salvage something."

The earliest total fire bans in SA history also came into force at midnight.

Michael Schaefer, of Buckleboo, said the farming district near Kimba, on the Eyre Peninsula, are shattered.

"Given a month ago we were looking at fantastic crops now it couldn't be worse, it's hard to believe," he said.

"With weather like this there's going to be a large amount of crop damage and yields are going to go down," he said.

"Having a year like last year was bad enough but to have two years like this is just devastating," he said.

But the Southern Mallee district is fairing reasonably well, according to Pinnaroo grain farmer Corey Blacksell.

"We've had 300mm of rain to the end of July, and that's just below our annual average," he said.

"However we wouldn't want to go too much longer without rain because our yield potential will decrease dramatically," he said.

## **The Australian**

### **Garrett's losing his voice, say allies**

Peter Garrett's friends and allies are turning against him over his failure to take a clear stand on the proposed Tasmanian pulp mill, claiming the former green activist has "lost his voice".

Leaders of the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Tasmanian Wilderness Society and fellow former rocker John Schumann all attacked Labor's environment spokesman for taking virtually the same stance as Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

Their comments came as more interest groups entered the political fray.

The National Association of Forest Industries and the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union marched in lockstep yesterday, issuing similar press releases.

Both hailed the common position of the Government and the Opposition in favouring the development of a world-class pulp mill, and reminded both sides of politics that there were jobs, and by implication votes, at stake.

The CFMEU said it would campaign in marginal seats where the forestry industry was prominent, not for one particular party but for any candidate who supported the mill.

With both Mr Garrett and Mr Turnbull narrowing the gap between them and adopting non-committal positions, the difference in policy on the mill is hardly discernible.

Mr Turnbull says the mill should proceed only after a thorough assessment, which he says will happen through a review led by Chief Scientist Jim Peacock.

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Mr Garrett says Mr Turnbull's approach has not been thorough enough. "His decision to choose a less-rigorous process has undermined public confidence in the review process," he told The Australian.

"Labor's position is clear, and I have said it many many times - any pulp mill in Tasmania must meet world's best environment standards and outcomes."

Asked if Labor would commission new studies, including a federal environmental impact assessment if it came to office with the pulp mill approved, he said: "If the pulp mill is approved by the commonwealth Environment Minister, it will proceed."

Some of those Mr Garrett fought alongside in the forests as ACF president and on the bandstand said this was not good enough. Schumann, of the '80s rock-folk band Redgum, yesterday said while Mr Garrett was a friend and a good man to have in parliament, "I am disappointed that he seems to have lost his voice".

He said Mr Garrett had a real opportunity to secure a "win, win" by backing the shifting of the mill's proposed location from the Tamar Valley to the less sensitive site of Hampshire about 100km to the west, and to insist it source its timber only from plantations.

Asked to respond to the criticisms, Mr Garrett said: "People are entitled to their opinions."

## **Low-emission coal test success**

Australia will have a blueprint for a near-zero-emission coal-fired power plant by the end of next year after drill tests proved the central Queensland coal and gas fields could safely store greenhouse gas underground.

Amid a highly charged political debate over the most appropriate policy response to global warming, the ZeroGen team has shrugged off the controversy of being Labor's favoured clean coal project to reveal a series of successful drill tests in the Northern Denison Trough near Rockhampton.

The drill tests were undertaken at depths of between 1000m and 2000m, with water injected into underground caverns to replicate carbon dioxide released from the production of electricity by burning coal.

An international peer review of the results has now confirmed the tests were successful in determining that the local geology could support the clean coal technology. The ZeroGen team has now mapped out the area for a second round of tests to locate the best saline aquifer for storing large quantities of CO<sub>2</sub> -- a process called geosequestration.

The ZeroGen team will also complete a thorough cost and risk analysis and consult with key stakeholders to have a feasibility study completed by the end of next year.

If ZeroGen gets the green light -- and does not sell its technology and expertise to other players -- the \$1.3 billion project will become a world leader. It plans a 100megawatt coal-fired demonstration power plant fitted with "carbon capture and storage" technology allowing up to 400,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> each year to be piped about 200km and stored underground instead of released into the atmosphere.

The ZeroGen plant could be in use by 2011 and potentially modified at a later stage to produce commercial quantities of hydrogen or ammonia.

Although he was not willing to predict whether the ZeroGen plant would be built, Queensland Premier Peter Beattie said yesterday the team was gathering crucial data, knowledge and experience that would help combat global warming.

Mr Beattie said ZeroGen still faced competition for up to \$900million in state government and industry funding -- the commonwealth may also contribute -- and he was determined that Queensland's next power station would



use clean coal technology. "In the competitive process they (ZeroGen) have still got to win, but it shows they've obviously got the technology to work," he said. "This sends a signal to the world, we've now got to scale it up."

ZeroGen -- owned by the Queensland Government and run by its Stanwell power corporation -- was until earlier this year aggressively promoted by Mr Beattie. This enthusiasm prompted federal Labor leader Kevin Rudd to visit the Stanwell site and promise funds for clean coal research. ZeroGen's commercial partner Shell Development (Australia) has agreed to be part of the next stage and will work in collaboration with Sunshine Gas and MBA Petroleum Consultants. Shell has yet to decide whether to take a 10 per cent equity in the project.

Clean coal technology is considered crucial to addressing global warming, given the continued use of coal-fired power stations, particularly in developing countries. But much depends on whether electricity generated by projects such as ZeroGen would be competitively priced. While there are a number of clean coal technology projects around the world, including geosequestration tests being undertaken in Victoria's Otway Ranges, ZeroGen is unique in that it is designed to produce power and reduce emissions using a series of technologies in Queensland geological conditions which are, most importantly, similar to that of China. Mr Beattie has made no secret of his desire to sell clean coal technology to China in an effort to safeguard Queensland's future as a coal exporter. He has promoted ZeroGen in meetings with Chinese government officials, while the ZeroGen team has also helped China's GreenGen project and held talks with potential Chinese investors.

Graham Reed, program manager for the Centre for Low Emission Technology, yesterday said ZeroGen had made "a very significant step in so far as this project and Queensland are concerned".

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Peter Cook, chief executive of the Co-operative Research Centre for Greenhouse Gas Technologies, also welcomed the ZeroGen development, describing it as "a first, cautious and totally appropriate step in the process".

The ZeroGen plant's critics, including at one point federal Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane, argue that it is too small at 100mw and will not be commercially viable. Mr Macfarlane would not comment yesterday on the status of ZeroGen's application for federal funding.

But ZeroGen remains several years ahead of its comparable rivals, including the US-based FutureGen project, and is starting to be assessed by coal companies, whose financial support is crucial to its success.

### **Ban puts industry in hot water**

Hot water manufacturers are concerned that Labor's proposed ban on electric systems could trigger a switch to low-cost imported systems, putting local industry at risk.

Australia's hot water manufacturing industry yesterday confirmed it had not been consulted before last week's announcement by Labor environment spokesman Peter Garrett effectively banning most electric hot water replacements from 2012 as part of a plan to cut greenhouse emissions.

Rheem Australia chief executive Matt Sexton said he supported any measure that improved sustainability, but Labor's plan could trigger increased imports and affect the cost of domestic solar system production if economies of scale provided by electric systems were lost.

Mr Sexton said there was a risk that some households might switch to imported LPG gas cylinder systems that had a low up-front cost but high operating costs. "If you don't have reticulated gas and you use LPG it's going to cost you an extra \$500 a year to run your water heater," he said.

"I was encouraged to see in their announcement that they planned to consult with industry and I hope when they do that they will see that it's not practical to simply ban electric as a blanket statement. I would have preferred to be consulted but I'm sure we will be consulted on the way."

Australia's hot water manufacturing industry currently supplies about 80 per cent of the domestic market and employs about 2000 people.

While about 40 per cent of Australian households have access to gas, under the Labor plan up to half of remaining households face paying up to a total \$6.5 billion to switch to more expensive solar hot water systems.

Electric hot water replacements cost about \$1100 per unit compared with nearly \$4000 for solar, with Labor offering to extend the \$1000 rebate announced by the Howard Government earlier this year.

While industry sources backed these estimates yesterday, Mr Garrett said it was "simply wrong" to claim that up to half of all Australian households would have to switch to expensive solar hot water systems under his proposed scheme.

Labor claims the announcement was based on "detailed analysis" but has not yet provided its own estimates from this analysis. Mr Garrett said these costs did not include the energy savings delivering lower power bills for households.

"We expect the price of solar hot water systems to at least stabilise if not decline, as the local industry restructures and transforms to meet this new demand and orientation," he said.

"The truth is, the ALP plans would result in a net economic benefit to Australian households and to the economy overall."

### **\$6.5bn hot water bill**

Households will have to pay up to \$6.5 billion extra from 2012 to replace their electric hot water systems under a Labor plan to impose an effective ban on the appliances as part of its strategy to cut greenhouse emissions.

Under the ban, up to half of all Australian households will have to switch to expensive solar hot water systems when their old electric tanks fail.

Each solar hot water system will cost about \$2800 more than a standard electric system replacement.

Labor will offset this higher cost by extending the \$1000 solar rebate already promised by the Howard Government. It will also offer low-interest loans in the hope that projected energy savings of up to \$300 a year will help households pay for the transition.

But the Master Plumbers Association has warned that the scheme will need to be backed by a rigorous assessment process before each system is changed to ensure households do not simply install the cheapest possible system, which may deliver almost no greenhouse and cost benefit.

Every year there are about 800,000 hot water system replacements in Australia, with about 45,000 of these new solar systems. About 5 per cent of Australian households have solar hot water installed, while about 40 per cent are able to install gas hot water systems that will comply with Labor's new energy efficiency standards.

Taking into account homes exempt from the ban -- such as some apartments -- and the solar rebate, it will still cost households up to \$650 million a year to switch over to solar energy. It will take about 10 years to replace the entire stock of electric water heaters.

The cost to households may be reduced by the extension of existing state and local government rebates for solar systems.

The national solar rebate proposed by Labor could cost the commonwealth up to \$4 billion over the life of the scheme, with other subsidies only transferring more cost from households to taxpayers.

The switch to more expensive solar systems will be more common in NSW and Queensland because of lower rates of gas reticulation, while electric systems in Tasmania may be exempt because the state's high use of hydro electricity means its mains energy supply is likely to meet the required greenhouse emissions standard.

The ban is also likely to affect some property investors who will meet the cost of shifting to solar energy but will be unable to benefit from lower energy bills paid by their tenants.

The national ban announced this week by Labor environment spokesman Peter Garrett goes beyond the phase-out of greenhouse-intensive electric hot water systems in new homes already introduced in South Australia and Queensland, and in Western Australia from September 1 this year. In Victoria, new homes already require either a solar hot water system or a rainwater tank.

Labor's national electric hot water ban will begin in new houses from 2010, with exemptions for multi-storey apartments as part of its Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards that will be applied to a range of household appliances.

Heating water accounts for about 28 per cent of household energy consumption. Shifting from electric to solar or gas hot water is considered one of the best ways of improving energy efficiency in households, although solar systems still require a supplementary gas or electric heating source.

Master Plumbers Association training manager Gary Workman expects the industry will manage the jump in more time-consuming solar installations after 2012, with about 5000 of Australia's 60,000 plumbers already trained under a green plumbers program.

Mr Garrett said the implementation of the new standards would be done in close co-ordination with industry and state and local governments.

"Australians want to embrace climate-friendly solutions and we think that this policy will be well-supported by the public," he said.

Labor has already flagged a more comprehensive energy rating scheme for major household appliances and a tighter review of standards. Its offer of low-interest loans worth up to \$10,000 per household can be used to install water and efficiency measures including insulation, rain tanks and solar panels.

In February, the Howard Government announced it would ban the sale of incandescent lightbulbs from 2009 and in May it doubled the rebate for the installation of rooftop photovoltaic cells.

Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull last night said the Government had already committed \$252 million to help subsidise the replacement of electric hot water systems. He said the Government's existing Minimum Energy Performance standards already apply to hot water heaters, refrigerators, airconditioners and other household appliances.

"This is yet another example of Labor playing catch-up on the federal Government's policies," he said. Mr Workman said the high cost of installing solar systems meant there was a risk a ban on electric systems could see households simply switch to the cheapest compliant system without factoring the longer-term cost or greenhouse benefits.

"The reason 95 per cent of Australians do a like-for-like replacement is because it's the quickest and cheapest to do," Mr Workman said.

He said Labor's proposal needed to take into account specific local conditions that would make the installation of solar systems expensive and inefficient.

### **Rudd: APEC needs climate targets**

A long-term "aspirational" goal for greenhouse gas emissions could address climate change without harming the legitimate ambitions of developing countries, John Howard said today.

The Prime Minister said next week's Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum meeting was likely to create an aspirational goal that could lead international debate.

But Kevin Rudd wants Asia-Pacific leaders to commit to a "target" for greenhouse gas emissions, not just "aspirations".

Kevin Rudd has today held up his target for Australia of 60 per cent reductions in emission by 2050 as guide - ending uncertainty from critics in the green movement that the Labor pledge was just a goal that would be refined after further economic analysis.

The draft communiqué for the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum meeting next week says that “to meet the aspirations of the APEC region any international response to climate change must be flexible, fair and environmentally flexible.

The draft APEC agreement does suggest a 25 per cent reduction by 2030 in "energy intensity" - reducing the amount of energy consumed for each task, such as improving the fuel efficiency of cars.

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Mr Howard said with APEC accounting for 60 per cent of the world’s energy demand, and that demand expected to double by 2030, practical measures to help nation’s develop cleaner energy production was vital.

"We should not deny developing APEC countries their aspirations," he said.

"Indeed, economic growth and prosperity is the best means of tackling the very environmental issues that rich industrialised nations are also tackling."

But with a federal election looming, Mr Rudd said Australia should be taking a lead role.

"Australia must ... embrace an emission target for Australia of 60 per cent against 2000 levels by 2050; argue that equivalent targets be accepted by developed countries and that developing countries agree to graduated targets for action coupled with market-based incentives for technology transfer," he said today.

Mr Rudd said if the meeting failed to embrace real action on climate change, the 21 member forum "has little future".

"APEC’s membership includes six of the top 10 global emitters and a number of countries highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

"“Australia under Paul Keating helped create APEC in 1989. Australia should now be in the business of securing its future. To that end, it is time for APEC to put its shoulder to the wheel in tackling climate change."

Greenpeace climate campaigner Ben Pearson said aspirational targets were just a way for nations to wriggle out of firm commitments that will be debate at the United Nation’s sponsored climate change conference in Bali in December. Green groups are worried that binding targets will no be part of the post-Kyoto framework.

Mr Pearson said it had not been clear whether Labor’s position was itself just an aspiration that might change when noted economist Ross Garnaut delivered the report he was asked to write on climate change next year.

Adelaide Advertiser

## **RESTRICTIONS OUT: Liberals launch 19-point strategy**

### **User-pays plan to ease water crisis**

#### **Would the plan encourage you to vote Liberal?**

A user pays water system pricing system, no water restrictions and less reliance on the River Murray have been under promised a State Liberal Government. **Whilst there are some good points about the previous sentence we must be serious about promises, firstly a user pays system has a great deal of merit as has less reliance on the River Murray. Water proofing Adelaide should be undertaken and it is a failure of the present Government not to carry out what they introduced some time ago. But its not just about water proofing Adelaide. What must occur is a total rethink about water its use and its re-use. Desalination is just one way to produce more usable water but it is expensive and less than 50% of desal water is drinkable and the residue is not re-usable. Indirect Potable Re-use – YES we refine and re-use our black water, up to 60% is consumable and the other 40% is re-useable. Why**

don't we wake up join the twenty first century and just get on with it!

## Climate change plan faces Federal threat

Key State plans to combat climate change, including controls on admissions and electricity generation, are now under threat from new Federal laws.

## RECYCLED WATER: New pipeline to open

A key part on the Queensland Government's water strategy officially will be opened on Sunday. Work has finished on the western corridor recycled water project – a pipeline from the Bundamba Advanced Water Treatment Plant to Swanbank power station, west of Brisbane.

### NO RISK TO HOMES: Algae in water supply

Sydneysiders may once again experience a difference in the taste and odour of tap water, with a 14km stretch of the blue green algae detected on the city's main supply at Warragamba Dam.

31<sup>st</sup>

### FarmOnLine

### Energy giant backs more wind farms, solar

Wind, solar and other forms of renewable energy should make up 20pc of power needs within 12 years if Australia wants to cut the carbon emissions causing climate change, according to the head of the energy giant AGL.

AGL's chief executive, Paul Anthony, is calling on the Prime Minister, John Howard, and the Opposition Leader, Kevin Rudd, to set a renewable energy target of 20pc by 2020, a far more ambitious goal than either side has agreed to so far.

"Look at the rest of the world," Mr Anthony told the *Herald*.

"You can't effectively have a carbon abatement scheme without a very, very strong national obligation for renewable energy."

Mr Anthony's comments come as the major parties are examining targets for renewable energy in the lead-up to the federal election.

For a decade, the Howard Government has resisted raising the mandatory national target for renewable energy above 2pc.

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Labor is expected to release its target soon. Mr Anthony has been appointed chairman of the sustainable energy pressure group which is about to become the Clean Energy Council. His company has one of the largest retail energy businesses in Australia, with 3.6 million customers.

He also criticised the Howard Government approach to a carbon emissions trading scheme, which is supposed to set a price on carbon from fossil fuels that are causing pollution.

While committed to a trading scheme by 2012, neither Mr Howard nor Mr Rudd will set national targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions until after the election.

Without targets, the emissions trading scheme cannot operate.

Mr Anthony said business was concerned that there was still so much confusion over how the scheme would

work.

"The piecemeal disclosure of the Government's thinking worries us," he said.

"We are finding it difficult to understand the logic."

Most concerning, he said, was the plan by the Government to auction some permits to emit greenhouse gases but give permits or exemptions to particular industries.

Questions were raised about AGL's commitment to renewable energy recently, when it dropped its plans to build the Dollar Wind Farm in Victoria.

Mr Anthony insisted this was simply because there were better sites elsewhere.

"We've got a strong appetite for wind," he said, pointing to plans to build a \$600 million wind farm at Macarthur in Victoria.

Mr Anthony said he believed Australia could economically make deep cuts in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

SOURCE: *Sydney Morning Herald*

### **Woody weeds out of control: veg laws blasted**

Australian Environment Foundation chairman, Don Burke, is concerned existing native vegetation legislation discriminates against landholders trying to control woody weeds and prevent further environmental degradation.

Mr Burke will visit Cobar, NSW, and district, later this week for two days to inspect sites being overtaken by woody weeds. Mr Burke has addressed a number of regional forums in the last 12 months and says it is clear the legislation is not working to improve the environment.

Departmental officers attended a forum at Dubbo, NSW, in March and gave an undertaking to report back to landholders on how this process could be improved – something that has not happened.

"Vegetation management and carbon sequestration are two issues that the government should be working co-operatively with landholders to provide better outcomes for the environment and the rural community," Mr Burke said.

"Until the State government addresses the inequities of the native vegetation legislation to allow landholders to properly manage woody weeds and compensate them for carbon sequestration, this issue will continue to fester."

Mr Burke said the legislation should be overhauled in consultation with landholders or scrapped.

SOURCE: Rural Press National News Service, Parliament House Bureau, Canberra.

Adelaide.now.com

## **Vic premier escapes angry crowd**

Victorian Premier John Brumby has been freed after being barricaded by farmers angry at the Government's water plans. Mr Brumby, Rural and Regional Development Minister Jacinta All and a handful of advisers and media representatives had been trapped inside the yard for 30 minutes by about 70 irrigators.

The angry locals are protesting about the Government's move to pipe water from the Goulburn Murray region to regional cities and Melbourne.

The blockade is happening just outside Colbinabbin, east of Bendigo, where Mr Brumby had gone for a media conference to turn the tap on a \$98 million new water pipeline.

Police are negotiating with the protesters, who have formed a ring of tractors around the yard. The blockade started just after 1.30pm.

The protesters, some carrying placards reading "irrigation feeds the nation", screamed and interjected as the premier tried to reason with them over the merits of the plan.

Water begun flowing from the pipeline today, which will pump water south from the Goulburn system to the Bendigo region.

Twenty billion litres of water will flow to the region annually via a 46.5km pipeline.

Mr Brumby said the superpipe would provide water security for the region at a time of unprecedented climate change.

"The Goldfields Superpipe is vital to the future growth of the Bendigo region," Mr Brumby said.

"The superpipe will provide water to Bendigo to successfully manage supplies through the challenges of drought, climate change and population growth."

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## **Turnbull urges SA to find new water sources**

Federal Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull has warned South Australia it must work harder to find additional sources of water and not depend on the River Murray.

Mr Turnbull, for the second day in a row, attacked the State Government over water issues.

On Thursday, it was a denial that the Commonwealth forced SA to adopt much tougher water restrictions while today it was how SA needed to look at issues such as desalination.

He said SA had always fallen back on the Murray as its main source of water.

The attacks brought an angry reply from Premier Mike Rann who said Mr Turnbull was totally at odds with the Prime Minister on the issue of water restrictions and SA was "putting in the hard yards on finding new sources of water.

Mr Rann said work had been going on for some considerable time on desalination, including giving a tick to a plant to service the Olympic Dam mine and the Upper Spencer Gulf and Eyre Peninsula.

"We have a group of experts working on a second desal plant for Adelaide or a five-fold expansion of the Mt Bold reservoir," he said.

Mr Turnbull said he had made the point to Mr Rann and (Water Security Minister) Karlene Maywald that Adelaide must look very seriously at a substantial non-climate dependent source of water.

"In terms of a large additional water source, the Government has to decide whether it is going to build a desalination plant like Perth has done and the other states are doing or the other alternative is raising the height of the wall of the Mt Bold reservoir," he said.

Mr Turnbull said he had no specific proposal before him from SA for a desalination plant and said it could perhaps be built as a Commonwealth-state public private partnership.

However, he said, SA Water provided a lot of cash flow for the State Government which could be used to fund additional water infrastructure.

"We would look at a desalination proposal very favourably for Adelaide," Mr Turnbull said.

He said if he were in Karlene Maywald's position that would be a very high priority for him.

Opposition Leader Martin Hamilton-Smith said SA needed to see some action from the Rann Government instead of just talk.

"This is their fundamental weakness, they are still doing reviews and examinations," he said. "I could have had a desal proposal to the Commonwealth within two weeks of becoming leader given the crisis we are facing."

“Snippets Plus”

August 2007 17<sup>th</sup> Edition

17B

18<sup>th</sup>

Adelaide Advertiser

## **DRIVEN BY SCIENCE: Hydrogen fuel the challenge**

South Australian school students are building the Southern Hemisphere’s first hydrogen fuelled car.

## **Uranium sale to India not on: Rudd**

### Revised Murray water deal passes Senate

The revised version of the Federal Government’s \$10 billion plan to take management of Australia’s food bowl will go ahead after passing Federal Parliament yesterday.

**News.com.au**

## **Hundreds get naked on shrinking glacier**

Hundreds of people posed naked on Switzerland's shrinking Aletsch glacier today for US photographer Spencer Tunick as part of a Greenpeace campaign to raise awareness of global warming.

Tunick, perched on a ladder and using a megaphone, directed nearly 600 volunteers from all over Europe and photographed them on a rocky outcrop overlooking the glacier, which is the largest in the Alps.

Later he took pictures of them standing in groups on the mass of ice and lying down. Camera crews were staged at five different points on the glacier to take photographs.

Glaciers are sensitive to climate change and have been receding since the start of the industrial age but the pace of shrinkage has accelerated in recent years. The environmental group Greenpeace, which organised the shoot, said the aim was to “establish a symbolic relationship between the vulnerability of the melting glacier and the human body”.

The Aletsch descends around the south side of the Jungfrau mountain in the Upper Rhone Valley. Alpine glaciers have lost about one-third of their length and half their volume over the past 150 years. The Aletsch ice mass has retreated by 115m in the last two years alone, said Greenpeace.

Tunick has staged mass nude photo shoots in cities across the world, from Newcastle, Britain, to Mexico City, where a record 18,000 people took off their clothes in the Mexican capital's Zocalo square in May.

Speaking to Geneva's *Le Temps* newspaper in an interview published before the shoot, Tunick said his



photographs were both works of art and political statements.

“I will try to treat the body on two levels. On an abstract level, as if they were flowers or stones. "And on a more social level, to represent their vulnerability and humanity with regard to nature and the city and to remind people where we come from.”

Switzerland has about 1800 glaciers and almost of them are losing ground.

Greenpeace said if global warming continued unabated, most glaciers would disappear from the Earth by 2080.

### **Typhoon hits China after mass evacuation**

The powerful typhoon Sepat hammered into south-eastern China early today after officials had relocated nearly a million people to safer areas.

Sepat landed in Quanzhou city east of Fujian province at 2am (0400 AEST), the Xinhua news agency said, after pounding Taiwan yesterday with torrential rain, powerful winds and mudslides.

More than 900,000 people in southern and eastern Chinese provinces had earlier been relocated, including more than 540,000 people in Fujian, Xinhua said.

In Zhejiang province, nearly 300,000 people had been evacuated to safety and 27,704 vessels called back to harbour. In Guangdong, around 70,000 people, including fishermen and residents in low-lying areas, had been evacuated.

Chinese meteorologists have issued the highest-level warnings for Sepat, which was moving north-west at a speed of 15 kph to 20 kph.

All the entries of expressways in Fuzhou, capital of Fujian, were closed, while 109 domestic and international flights at Fuzhou airport were cancelled yesterday.

Xiamen and Jinjiang cities also cancelled outbound flights, Xinhua said.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs has sent 3000 tents to evacuated people in Fujian. Downpours have been forecast to hit the coastal areas of Fujian and neighbouring Zhejiang province.

### **Hurricane close to Category 5**

Hurricane Dean is expected to grow into a ferocious Category 5 storm as it passes Jamaica and nears Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and the oil and gas rigs of the Gulf of Mexico after it smashed into several Caribbean islands, the US National Hurricane Centre said.

With top sustained winds of 240km/h early today, the hurricane centre said Dean was a Category 4 storm, the second-highest level on the five-step Saffir-Simpson scale and capable of widespread destruction.

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The hurricane centre said it was expected to strengthen to Category 5, with top sustained winds in excess of 250km/h, before plowing directly over Jamaica toward the Gulf, home to a third of US domestic crude oil and 15 per cent of natural gas production.

At 5am EDT (19:00 AEST) yesterday, the hurricane centre said several consensus models saw the storm moving toward the northern Yucatan and northeastern Mexico, and the projected track was “nudged a little south of the previous forecast in best agreement with consensus models”.

A hurricane warning likely will be posted for Jamaica later today, it said. The core of the storm will pass south of the Dominican Republic later today and south of Haiti in the evening, it said. Dean roared through the narrow channel between the Lesser Antilles islands of St Lucia and Martinique early on Friday, crossing from the Atlantic Ocean to the warm Caribbean Sea.

Dean's projected path would put it directly over Jamaica tomorrow and near Mexico's Yucatan

Peninsula or straight into the Gulf of Mexico through the Yucatan Channel by Tuesday.

If it crosses the Yucatan, it is projected to emerge in the southern Gulf and could disrupt operations in the Cantarell Complex of Mexican oil fields, which is one of the world's most productive and supplies two-thirds of Mexico's crude oil output.

Computer models have fluctuated between an eventual landing as far north as Louisiana, and Belize, at the southern end of the Yucatan, but began to shift generally more to the south late on Friday.

Forecasters have predicted the six-month 2007 hurricane season would be more active than average with up to 16 named storms.

An average year historically has 10 or 11 storms.

*Additional reporting by Michael Christie in Miami, Linda Hutchinson-Jafar in Port of Spain, Laure Bretton, Kerstin Gehmlich and Thierry Leveque in Paris*

20<sup>th</sup>

## FarmOnLine

### Make or break time for winter crop as rain arrives

Rain may be arriving just in the nick of time to save the Australian winter wheat crop, which has suffered a dry spell after the good planting rains of April (southern Australia) and June (northern NSW and Queensland).

According to The Weather Company, thick cloud is spreading across Queensland and northeast NSW ahead of an upper trough, generating rain in the northern grain growing areas of Central Queensland, the Darling Downs and northern NSW.

And according to the Bureau of Meteorology, falls of up to 50mm have been recorded in parts of rural Queensland and NSW (see map).

A weakening low has also delivered some rain to Victoria and South Australian, while a new low has arrived on the West Australian coast.

In the north Bureau of Meteorology senior forecaster, Gavin Holcombe, says the upper trough system will linger for most of the week on the NSW/Queensland border region.

"For next week it will break into a few showers and the models are starting to indicate it now that we may see some rain develop by mid-week," Mr Holcombe said.

"We won't see a great deal of rain, if we can pickup 5-10mm then I think we'll be doing pretty well," Mr Holcombe said.

In June ABARE was forecasting a national crop covering 580,000 hectares, but after a very dry July in northern NSW and Queensland, the chances of all of that area being harvested have now been slashed.

The outlook for the southern grain-growing region, however, remains positive.

SOURCES: *FarmOnline* and *The Brisbane Times*.

## Murray irrigation allocations open at just 5pc

Goulburn irrigators start the irrigation season this week with access to 15pc of their high reliability share water, but Murray irrigators will receive just 5pc.

The decision for the Murray was contrary to expectations and in spite of there still being insufficient water available to cover losses. But channels, which would traditionally be filled from this week, will not run on the system until there is widespread demand.

The allocations are based on both the Murray and Goulburn closing early on March 15, 2008.

There is no water on the Broken, Campaspe, Loddon and Bullarook Creek systems, and the Goulburn Murray Water authority says low inflows during August have resulted in a downgrade of seasonal outlooks.

The outlook for mid September on the Goulburn is 46pc under average conditions (down from 56pc), 25pc under dry, while on the Murray it is 4pc (down from 21pc), under average, and zero if it remains dry.

Under dry conditions the Broken will not receive an allocation until October and the Campaspe and Loddon will receive nothing unless there is average rainfall.

SOURCE: *Stock & Land*, weekly rural newspaper, Victoria.

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### **New rural climate change alliance launched**

Seven leading business and community organisations have joined forces to form the Agricultural Alliance on Climate Change.

The Country Women's Association of Australia, Westpac, South Australian Farmers' Federation, AgForce, Visy, Australian Conservation Foundation and The Climate Institute have all come together under the new banner.

The alliance will commission research to investigate how rural communities can create climate change resilient communities and prosper from harvesting clean energy and farming carbon.

The group says it will focus on solutions to rural Australia which will help it to prosper, strengthen and adapt in the face of climate change.

SOURCE: Rural Press National News Service, Parliament House Bureau, Canberra.

## **news.com.au**

### **Drought worsens in NSW**

More than three quarters of NSW is now in the grip of drought, latest figures show.

The percentage of the state in drought went up last month from 69.9 per cent to 75.8 per cent.

The area of NSW experiencing marginal drought conditions has increased from 10.8 per cent to 14.6 per cent since June while the area experiencing satisfactory conditions plummeted to 9.6 per cent from 19.6 per cent.

Areas that moved back into drought include parts of Armidale, Casino and Kempsey and the whole of Tweed-Lismore, Condobolin and Coonabarabran, in the north and north-west of the state.

NSW Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said farmers needed a repeat of rains that fell in late June and early July.

"Unfortunately, last month's drop in drought figures has not lasted so our farmers are pinning their hopes on good rains in a matter of days not weeks," Mr Macdonald said.

"Basically we need rain and we need it now to ensure decent yields are received from winter crops."

Mr Macdonald said about two-thirds of NSW received little rainfall in July with only the southern third getting average rain.

Severe frosts were also reported in some parts of the winter cropping belt which have contributed to the stress placed on crop growth, he added.

"For crops to achieve reasonable yields, significant rain will be required across most parts of the grain belt before temperatures rise in spring," he said.

Mr Macdonald said stock condition was being maintained in most areas due to careful management of numbers and feeding regimes.

AWA

The Australian government's \$10billion takeover of water management in the Murray Darling Basin

passed parliament on Friday 17th with bipartisan support. The Nationals claimed to have secured amendments to protect irrigators, but the Victorian Government still has concerns about the plan.

One of the water industry's greatest challenges over the next five years will be maintaining and growing a skilled workforce, according to many stakeholders who completed the 2007 AWA Member/Stakeholder.

WSAA'S report card 'Performance of the Australian urban water industry and projections for the future' was released last week. The report forecasts that urban water prices will increase substantially, to fund capital investment of \$30 billion in water infrastructure of the next 5-10 years, as urban areas diversify water sources to counter climate change risks.

Victorian Premier John Brumby announced today that the Government would review the structure of the retail water industry in Melbourne to meet the challenges which are facing the industry, achieve equity pricing across the city and to ensure price increases are consistent with government forecasts of a doubling by 2012.

The National Water Commission's Fellowship Programme has been established to develop future leaders for Australia's water sector by advancing knowledge, building capacity and helping to fill skills gaps in the sector. Fellowships will be offered in one or more of the priority areas identified by Commissioners namely, groundwater, water recycling, and rural water reform and interception.

Winner of the Australian Stockholm Junior Water Prize Robbi Bishop-Taylor last week participated in World Water Week in Sweden. Winners Adriana Alc ntara Ruiz, Dalia Graciela Djaz Gomez and Carlos Hernandez Mejja from Mexico were awarded the prestigious 2007 STOCKHOLM JUNIOR WATER PRIZE for a project utilising a local bio-organic waste (egg-shells) to adsorb lead in wastewaters.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Water Use on Australian Farms, Preliminary, 2005-06 presents preliminary estimates of agricultural water use, pastures and crops irrigated, and sources of water used for agriculture at a national and state/territory level for the year ended 30 June 2006. Estimates for the previous three years are also included. Final estimates at the national, state/territory and regional level will be released in December 2007.

### 1.1 AGRICULTURAL WATER USE, By State - 2005-06

WATER USE				
	Agricultural establishments	Irrigation	Other agricultural uses	Total
	no.	ML	ML	ML

NSW(a)	48 550	4 472 617	284 166	4 756 784
Vic.	36 993	2 470 542	217 874	2 688 415
Qld	32 871	2 435 215	279 654	2 714 868
SA	16 457	927 264	93 342	1 020 606
WA	14 816	317 703	144 860	462 563
Tas.	4 716	201 822	26 643	228 465
NT	648	19 546	13 621	33 167
<b>Aust.</b>	<b>155 052</b>	<b>10 844 708</b>	<b>1 060 161</b>	<b>11 904 869</b>

## 1.2 IRRIGATION ACTIVITY, By State - 2002-03 to 2005-06

	<b>Agricultural establishments</b>	<b>Agricultural establishments irrigating</b>	<b>Area of agricultural holding</b>	<b>Area irrigated</b>	<b>Volume applied</b>	<b>Application rate</b>
	no.	no.	'000 ha	'000 ha	ML	ML/ha
Australia						
Old basis(a)						
2002-03	132 983	43 774	439 531	2 378	10 403 759	4.4
2003-04	130 526	40 400	440 110	2 402	10 441 515	4.3
2004-05	129 934	35 244	445 149	2 405	10 084 596	4.2
New basis(b)						
2005-06	155 052	45 130	444 077	2 583	10 844 708	4.2

2005-06							
New basis(b)							
NSW(c)	48 550	11 413	61 180	986	4 472 617	4.5	
Vic.	36 993	11 658	13 364	657	2 470 542	3.8	
Qld	32 871	10 220	155 571	572	2 435 215	4.3	
SA	16 457	6 322	55 526	219	927 264	4.2	
WA	14 816	3 249	99 096	62	317 703	5.1	
Tas.	4 716	1 917	1 764	80	201 822	2.5	
NT	648	352	57 574	6	19 546	3.3	

(a) Derived using old ABS-maintained frame. See Technical Note for detail.

(b) Derived using new ABR-based register. See Technical Note for detail.

(c) Includes ACT.

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The agriculture industry is a major consumer of water in the Australian economy. The Water Account, Australia 2004-05 (cat. no. 4610.0) showed agriculture to account for 65% of all water consumed in 2004-05.

This publication presents preliminary estimates of agricultural water use, pastures and crops irrigated, and sources of water used for agriculture at a national and state/territory level compiled from data collected as part of the Agricultural Census for the year ended 30 June 2006. Estimates for 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 are also included in this publication of total water use for Australia and states/territories.

Final estimates at the national, state/territory and regional level will be released in December 2007.

Climatic conditions affect both the availability of water for irrigation and the need to irrigate in order to supplement rainfall. Information from the Bureau of Meteorology outlining climatic conditions over key agricultural areas between July 2005 and June 2006 are presented as an appendix.

At the Australian level, 45,130 or 29.1% of agricultural establishments reported using water for irrigation purposes. Increases in the number of agricultural establishments using water for irrigation purposes, and the increase in total number of agricultural establishments to 155,052, reflects the inclusion of additional agricultural establishments in the new ABR-based register of agricultural establishments.

**At the state/territory level, the Northern Territory reported the highest proportion of farms irrigating (54.3%), followed by Tasmania (40.6%) and South Australia (38.4%). Western Australia reported the smallest percentage of farms irrigating (21.9%).**

Victoria had 25.8% of the nations irrigating establishments, followed by New South Wales (25.3%) and Queensland (22.6%).

New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland continued to be the major users of water for irrigation, accounting for 86.5% of all water used for irrigation purposes nationally. New South Wales used 4,473 gigalitres (41.2% of all water used for irrigation purposes nationally) followed by Victoria with 2,471 gigalitres (22.8%) and Queensland with 2,435 gigalitres (22.5%). Across Australia, 2,583,000 hectares of agricultural land was irrigated at an average application rate of 4.2 ML/ha. This application rate was unchanged from the previous year.

In New South Wales, 986,000 hectares of agricultural land was irrigated (38.2% of irrigated agricultural land nationally), followed by Victoria with 657,000 hectares (25.4%) and Queensland with 572,000 hectares (22.1%). Combined, these three eastern states accounted for 85.7% of irrigated agricultural land nationally.

Western Australia had the highest application rate for irrigated agricultural land at 5.1 ML/ha followed by New South Wales (4.5 ML/ha) and Queensland (4.3 ML/ha). Tasmania had the lowest application rate at 2.5 ML/ha, followed by the Northern Territory (3.3 ML/ha).

Back to [AWA](#)

SA Premier Mike Rann says he remains committed to the River Murray Rescue Plan, including the establishment of an independent authority to oversee the River as long as it reflects the principles agreed at a summit in February, despite murmurs from other previously committed state governments.

Brisbane and Maroochydoore Councils will join a regional program managed by Local Government Infrastructure Services, a joint Queensland Treasury Corporation venture with the Local Government Association of Queensland that gives high-level advice on asset management, in order to fast-track repairs to leaking water distribution networks.

Proserpine district cane grower Lui Raiteri is the first irrigator in the region to obtain a Land & Water Management Plan (LWMP), which he prepared to help reduce contaminated run-off into waterways and improve water use efficiency on his farm.

Tasmanian engineering consultants Pitt and Sherry and the University of New South Wales Water Research Laboratory researchers last week organised a Forum on Climate Change - Coastal Impact Adaptation Strategies in Tasmania, opened by the Minister for Primary Industry and Water. Further work of this nature can be expected in Tasmania, as the two organisations have recently signed a memorandum of understanding.

Sydney Water has reduced leakage from its distribution system by one third since 2002/03, having inspected more than 60,000km of pipelines and spending about \$100 million a year.

A Drinking Water Quality Management System Auditor Certification Scheme has been developed by RABQSA International in collaboration with the Victorian Department of Human Services, VicWater and WSAA. Certification under this scheme is mandatory to conduct regulatory audits in Victoria, and is applicable nationally. The next certification course will be held at RMIT in Melbourne on 31st August.

Worley Parsons has acquired water and environmental consultants Patterson Britton and Partners in Sydney and John Wilson and Partners in Brisbane.

Rodney District Council's newly upgraded Army Bay Sewage Treatment Plant won a Silver Award for project delivery firm, Sinclair Knight Merz at the recent Association of Consulting Engineers New Zealand meeting.

The International Water Association (IWA) launched a Professional Development Award in 2006 presented in association with the website

In the world's biggest river expedition of its kind in 2007, three ships will travel from Regensburg, Germany down the 2,375 km length of the Danube River and its main tributaries to test pollution and water quality. Costing over one million euros, the entire expedition will last until late September.

Australians' love affair with bottled water is costing the planet 314,000 barrels of oil a year.

Victoria's new Premier John Brumby is looking to increase the water supply but his solution to the problem may cost billions.

National Queensland Senator Barnaby Joyce remains concerned about the gap between the state's water plan ending in September 2014 and the commonwealth assuming liability for reduced water availability from January 2015.

Up to \$31 billion worth of coal buried under Sydney's water catchment may never be extracted unless it can be mined without disrupting the city's future water supply.

Water projects are expected to increase the price of water in the cities. For NSW, this would bring consistency as IPART has already increased the price of farm water use.

Water restrictions in Sydney could be eased as early next month if the recent heavy rain leaves the city's dams more than 60 % full.

### **FarmOnLine**

#### **Drought claims more of NSW but rain arrives just in time**

The NSW Government may have expanded its drought-declared area to now cover 75pc of the State, but many of its farmers are today celebrating excellent falls of up to 100mm for the week.

NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald, yesterday detailed how the area of the State now affected by drought has increased from 69.9pc 75.8pc.

"We need follow up to the rains that fell in late June and July," Mr Macdonald said.

"The area of NSW experiencing marginal conditions has increased from 10.8pc to 14.6pc, while only 9.6pc of



NSW is experiencing satisfactory conditions (down from 19.6pc)."

Areas that have officially moved back into drought include parts of Armidale, Casino and Kempsey, and the whole of Tweed-Lismore, Condobolin and Coonabarabran.

However, many of those areas on the NSW North Coast and Northern Tablelands have received good rain in the past week, receiving falls of up to 100mm (see map) in the seven days to today. The rain is still falling in Gunnedah, making tomorrow's start to the AgQuip field days likely to be wet and muddy. The rain began on Thursday in Queensland and has spread south, bringing very good falls to Central and Southern Queensland and Northern NSW, while most of the rest of agricultural Australia has received at least modest rain of up to 10mm.

However, more will be needed, particularly in the grain growing parts of NSW and Queensland.

NSW planted one of its biggest crops ever after good rain earlier in the year, but the follow up has been lacking.

"Basically we need rain and we need it now to ensure decent yields are received from winter crops," Mr Macdonald said.

"About two-thirds of the State received little rainfall in July with only the southern third receiving average rain.

"For crops to achieve reasonable yields, significant rain will be required across most parts of the grain belt before temperatures rise in spring."

SOURCE: *The Land*, NSW's weekly rural newspaper, posting news updates daily on *FarmOnline*.

### Effects of drought draining family resources

The drought is still being felt in households across NSW struggling to keep up with the cost of bills and essentials.

"Living on hope" is how NSW Farmers Association Central West regional services manager, Graham Blatch, described the situation, as rural families hold on for some rain in the next fortnight to promote spring growth.

"The forecast is fairly ordinary in the short term," Mr Blatch said. "There's a fair bit of concern and a fair bit of unsaid stress.

"People are hardly game to think about what would happen if it doesn't rain."

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Rising interest rates are also a concern for families who, after several tough years, have mounting debts to pay off.

The Country Women's Association of NSW is still distributing Emergency Drought Aid Funding to families in NSW on behalf of the Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Households can apply for a maximum of \$2000 for essential items including electricity and medical bills, food and school fees, with community grants also available.

More than half of the \$3.2 million allocated to NSW in July this year has already been spent, but the CWA is still encouraging more families to apply.

The Federal Government announced an additional \$8m of the funding in May for the CWA to distribute after funds dried up in April due to demand for assistance.

Mr Blatch said funds distributed by the CWA had been gratefully received by rural families and communities.

"It has been good for people to get some high-priority bills paid," Mr Blatch said.

"At this stage there has been no improvement in cash flow.

"Most people are waiting for a crop of some sort and looking for a spring so they know how much stock they can carry through summer and winter."

Application forms and criteria for the CWA's funding are available from the [CWA website](#), by emailing [drought@cwaofnsw.org.au](mailto:drought@cwaofnsw.org.au), or by phoning 9358-2923.

SOURCE: [Central Western Daily](#), Orange, NSW, a Rural Press publication.

### **Water scientists worry about biofuel side effects**

Water availability could be further limited by an expansion of the biofuel industry, an international meeting on the world's water supply has heard.

Many of the experts at World Water Week, a weeklong meeting in Stockholm, say policy makers should prioritise food over fuel.

"You can live with less energy but not with less food," Suhas Wani, an Indian scientist, says.

With the world's population expected to reach 9 billion by 2050, the International Water Management Institute projects the water needed for food production will grow by up to 90pc by then, unless water is used more efficiently.

However, others say surging demand for biofuels is actually helping poor agricultural countries by boosting the prices of farm goods.

"Decades of declining agricultural prices have been reversed thanks to the growing use of biofuels," says Christopher Flavin, head of the Worldwatch Institute, a Washington-based environmental research agency.

SOURCE: [FarmProgress](#), a Rural Press USA publication.

## **Govt funds major water projects for cotton industry**

A \$12 million funding package from the Australian Government will be used to improve floodwater management and irrigation efficiency in the cotton industry.

The package, announced by Assistant Water Minister John Cobb today, will also be put towards improved groundwater monitoring and management.

Combined with private investment, the projects in NSW and Queensland will be worth almost \$40.5 million.

"The centrepiece of today's announcement is funding of more than \$8.8m from the Water Smart Australia Programme to improve water metering and measurement of flood water in the Condamine-Balonne region in Queensland," Mr Cobb said.

That region has regularly been the brunt of complaints from NSW floodplain graziers who claim the cotton industry in Queensland is allowed to harvest an excessive amount of floodwater.

Mr Cobb says the project will contribute to better data and real time monitoring of water use in the region.

"The project will see telemetry fitted to stream gauging stations and individual meters on water harvesters to provide real time data on water usage on a catchment-wide basis," Mr Cobb said.

"This information will provide security for water users and the environment in the region and provide for better overall water modelling and management in this sensitive area."

The Federal funds are conditional upon the Queensland Government contributing \$17.8m and the water users a further \$4.5m.

Mr Cobb also announced funding for a further four projects in NSW, two of which will aid the cotton industry.

The Government will chip in \$995,600 to measure and monitor the evaporation and seepage losses from at least 270 on-farm storages across the cotton industry and monitor the impact of works to reduce evaporation and seepage on 135 storages.

The project will develop best practice in the management of on-farm storages.

And \$489,000 will be spent to lift water use efficiency in the Gwydir Valley by 10pc through a combination of new on-farm technology and education activities.

SOURCE: Rural Press National News Bureau, Parliament House, Canberra.

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**adelaidenow.com.au**

### **\$30m pipeline to flush Torrens**

A NEW pipeline project designed to deliver recycled water to Adelaide's CBD and flush the River Torrens, was announced by the State Government this afternoon.

A 30km pipeline network – that will run past Adelaide Airport, into the city centre to North Adelaide – will be laid from the Glenelg Wastewater Treatment Plant as a part of the project worth a total \$60 million.

The state government will put \$30 million into the project, with the federal government expected to add another \$30 million.

The project that will also see the expansion of the Glenelg Waste Water Treatment Plant is designed to:

DELIVER recycled water to Adelaide's parklands.

POTENTIALLY enable environmental flows down the River Torrens.

MAKE available re-used water for 64 commercial development opportunities in the central business district.

Premier Mike Rann said the project would more than triple the annual water reuse at the Glenelg Treatment Plant, up to 28 per cent.

"This will free up stressed ground water resources and River Murray water that is now used to water our parklands and supply commercial development in the city," he said.

**The proposal for such a pipeline has been in the spotlight for more than years with the State government rejecting an offer of \$25 million in Federal funds in 2004.**

The policy was also announced by the State Government in 2005.

Opposition Leader Martin Hamilton Smith said the announcement was too little too late.

"This project is about as old as the River Murray," he said.

"Mike Rann is now running this State as a convenient platform for Kevin Rudd's election campaign.

"On the weekend he rejected Prime Minister John Howard's offer of \$100 million for the Southern Expressway – yet today he's dusting off an old offer to suit federal election campaign strategies."

## **The Australian**

# **ALP to phase out electric hot water**

Labor plans to rid Australian homes of off-peak electric hot water systems, in a move it claims will cut Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by 7.5million tonnes each year.

Half of all systems currently sold are the off-peak electric variety and Labor believes their removal from the market would be equivalent to taking almost two million cars off Australian roads.

The federal Opposition announced yesterday that in government it would work with the states to implement

tough new greenhouse and energy minimum standards for hot water heaters.

Labor's climate change spokesman, Peter Garrett, said greenhouse-intensive electric hot water systems accounted for 28 per cent of the average home's greenhouse gas emissions and produced three times the pollution of solar, heat-pump or gas systems.

At a housing project in Adelaide, Mr Garrett said Labor's aim was to phase out installation of the off-peak "greenhouse intensive" electric systems from 2010 in new homes or those with access to reticulated gas. By 2012, it would not allow them to be installed in new or existing homes.

Off-peak systems already in use will not be affected until they need to be replaced.

Mr Garrett pledged to work with industry to make the policy work. "It will be a phase-out over time, which will allow industry to plan for that phase-out," he said.

Mr Garrett said the current federal rebate of \$1000 a unit announced last month by the Howard Government would be continued to be offset by the higher cost of solar hot water systems.

The Energy Supply Association of Australia yesterday reported increased energy demand last year equal to a new power station, with the biggest growth in demand tracking population and resource booms in Western Australia and Queensland at 4.8 and 4.5 per cent respectively.

South Australia also reported a 4 per cent increase in residential demand fuelled by increased installation of air conditioners.

Australia's largest hot water system manufacturer, Rheem Australia, said there would be substantial impact from the move.

Rheem national marketing manager Gareth Jennings said the company was digesting the plan, but "understands these sorts of measures need to be taken".

Labor will keep existing rebates to encourage take-up of alternatives and believes its plan can save households \$300 a year.

### **Extreme disasters on the rise**

Extreme natural disasters have become more frequent and their impact more severe, affecting about 250 million people around the world and costing more than \$67 billion a year.

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Nine in 10 people affected by natural disasters and seven in 10 of those killed by natural disasters since 2000 lived in the APEC region, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' Asia and Pacific regional chief, Terje Skavdal, said yesterday.

In an address to an APEC Emergency Management chief executives seminar in Cairns, Mr Skavdal said savage flooding across Asia and parts of South America, Africa and Europe served as a reminder that recent decades had brought a higher rate of extreme disasters. "This was also brought home by the 2004 tsunami and the series of several record storm seasons in the Atlantic and Caribbean," he said.

The Boxing Day 2004 tsunami, which hit 14 countries on two continents, accounted for 37 per cent of all recorded fatalities from natural disasters since 2000, with most of the deaths in APEC states. "Wars, poverty, and disease ... continue to spread human suffering, and there are new risks of mass terrorism and pandemics," Mr Skavdal said. "Nonetheless, the destructiveness of natural phenomena has grown disproportionately."

He said disaster response collaboration had accelerated after the tsunami, particularly in the directly affected region, with strong and growing networks for civil-military collaboration. Even so, he said, the increased danger of natural disasters required an increased investment in risk reduction, which to date was falling short of agreed targets. Climate change, population growth, urbanisation, environmental degradation and the rapid transformation of fertile land into desert had all accelerated the likelihood

that natural disasters would have a serious impact on people's lives.

"More and more people around the world live in an urban setting, and in Asia, in particular, many urban centres are in earthquake zones or areas vulnerable to flooding," Mr Skavdal said. "Risk management in cities is an especially complex endeavour."

Nevertheless, despite the increased frequency and destructiveness of disasters, the death toll had fallen compared with last century. In the past decade, fewer than one million people died in natural disasters worldwide, compared with three million deaths in the same period 40 years ago.

"It is a tribute to the development of early warning systems and other preparedness efforts taken in your countries and on a regional level," Mr Skavdal said.

## Adelaide Advertiser

# Saving planet has rewards

The business sector's heavy ecological footprint can be significantly reduced in ways that can save companies money.

### Big water user turns off taps

A company that this time last year was South Australia's second-largest consumer of mains-water has more than halved its reliance on the public system.

Penrice Soda Chief Executive Guy Roberts said a new \$500,000 desalination plant using salty bore water (**cheaper than sea water**) had supplied the soda-ash maker with one gegalitre since December.

This was 67% of its annual need or enough water for 10,000 Adelaide households a year. **Penrice was a company we had been concerned about, as a high water user, for a number of years.**

22<sup>nd</sup>

FarmOnLine

### NSW rain reaches into eastern wheat-belt

This National Climate Centre map shows the widespread rainfall across the eastern states so far this week.

For the week ended 9am Tuesday, falls of 150mm and more are shown as deep blue.

On the NSW coast north from Newcastle to Grafton, one big patch in the coastal ranges, in purple, has received 200-300mm.

Other colour codes indicate:

- Blue: 100-150mm.
- Blue-green: 50-100mm - widespread falls across most of the NSW northern Tablelands, including Tamworth, and into the wheatbelt west of Tamworth.
- Green: 25-50mm - the eastern northern NSW wheatbelt, and across a big area of south-east Qld, including Brisbane.

But farther west, in the wheatbelt around Dubbo, NSW, the map shows how the rain has tapered off sharply, with falls of 15mm or less.

The Bureau of Meteorology has recorded winds of over 100km/h in northern NSW, while on the Gold Coast gusts reached just over 90km/h.

Late on Tuesday, a severe weather warning remains current between Coolangatta and Fraser Island, with strong winds expected to carry west to the Darling Downs and Granite Belt districts.

The Gold Coast on Tuesday was battered by rain and winds, driven by a 'mini-cyclone' at sea off the far south Qld coast. The full force of this weather cell is yet to reach Brisbane, where light rain has been falling for two days.

SOURCE: National Climate Centre, Bureau of Meteorology.

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### SA commits to \$60m wastewater scheme

Adelaide's wastewater could soon be used to water the city's parklands and boost River Murray flows with the creation of a \$60 million pipeline network. SA Premier Mike Rann has committed the state government to paying half the construction costs of a 30km pipeline network that will carry treated recycled water from the Glenelg Wastewater Treatment Plant, south of Adelaide, to the city. Under the project, entitled the Glenelg Reuse Scheme, more than 5.5 billion litres of water will be pumped into a network of pipes to be laid under the Adelaide central business district for use commercially, on parks, and the river.

The federal government offered to pay half of costs during the 2004 election campaign and Mr Rann said he hoped the prime minister would deliver on the promise.

Mr Rann said construction could start as soon as next year and if the commonwealth money was made available, the pipelines could be online by late 2010.

SOURCE: AAP

### North Coast NSW flash floods: rain in South-East Qld

More than 100mm has fallen on most North Coast centres, NSW, overnight, causing flash flooding and widespread power cuts.

Half a dozen roads around Lismore and Grafton are currently cut, with the Nymboida River, west of Grafton, is still rising.

Goonellabah, east of Lismore, and areas around Byron Bay have lost electricity, due to fallen trees cutting power lines while trees have also blocked roads.

Country Energy representatives said the situation was likely to be rectified quickly but has urged anyone coming across a line that is down not to touch it and report the incident, immediately.

Rain and winds are forecast to continue today (Tues) across the North Coast.

A low pressure area off the Gold Coast, deepened overnight Monday and the Bureau of Meteorology says it's now equivalent to a category 1 cyclone, with winds up to 90km an hour in the region.

Good rain during Monday over much of South-East Queensland is continuing on Tuesday.

Falls of 30-40mm have been widespread in what is normally the driest month of the year in the region.

SOURCE: Breaking news from *The Land*, NSW, weekly rural newspaper, with its news updates daily on FarmOnline.

## **Adelaide Advertiser**

# **Winter flows won't be enough**

Key catchments of the Murray-Darling Basin have received barely half of the 600mm of winter rainfall needed to relax water restrictions in South Australia.

**FarmOnLine**

**Rain lifts the mood at 35th annual AgQuip**

It couldn't have been a better start to Commonwealth Bank Ag-Quip 2007 farm machinery field days.

Two prior days of rain that blew away for the opening day, leaving only strongly running streams, full dams and water, water, everywhere.

While the crowds appeared relatively light on the blustery first day of Ag-Quip's 35th year, the mood among exhibitors was bullish on the promise that much of the State's northern winter crop was secure for a few more weeks.

With that reprieve, is the hope that farmers and their suppliers are going to be spared from more of the horror run that has gripped the sector for the past couple of years.

"It's been ugly," said Brendan Deck, general manager for Croplands Australasia.

"From a product planning point of view, we've been down to weeks of work, not months.

"But now it's green, the dollar has come back.

"We're hoping that this is the turnaround."

Michael Sherratt, AGCO's northern NSW sales manager, agreed that market conditions have been "pretty tight", but said the rain should boost sales for the lower horsepower end of the tractor market.

"For the higher horsepower items, it's not going to change that much in the near future," Mr Sherratt said.

"A lot of that market depends on irrigation.

"This rain isn't going to help there a lot."

But one equipment category assured of doing well, and which has sold strongly throughout the years of intermittent drought, is hay and silage gear, Mr Sherratt said.

Ag-Quip was described as "an event that binds the rural community" during an on-site luncheon addressed by Australia's Governor-General, Major-General Michael Jeffrey, who visited the event to celebrate a milestone for drumMUSTER, the chemical container collection scheme.

Major-General Jeffrey attended the first day of Ag-Quip 2007 to celebrate the collection of the 10 millionth container since drumMUSTER began in 1999.

The first day of Ag-Quip also saw the conclusion of judging on *The Land* and NSW Farmers Association Farm Inventor of the Year competition.

A cleverly designed clamp for securing a ladder safely to a gutter or fascia board topped the under \$1,000 division of the competition.

Developed by mid-North Coast father and son team, Cecil and Chris Wiseman, Wards River, the device features a ratchet clamp that can be fixed to the gutter from the ground before the operator climbs the ladder.

Topping the Over \$1,000 category was a versatile baulk gate and drafting system for cattle races developed by another North Coast innovator, Gerald Hicks, Nana Glen.

SOURCE: Extract from *The Land*, NSW, August 23 issue.

### **Satellite images to snare Murray water thieves**

Late-night boat patrols and special surveillance flights will be used in the driest areas of NSW to investigate water theft from the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers and from one of Australia's most important waterbird breeding sites, also.

The NSW Minister for Water, Phil Koperberg, warns that water theft is a serious offence.

#### **He says officers will be deployed to carry out random checks.**

Satellite imagery will be used to crack down on farmers stealing water to top up their allocations.

Boat patrols will check if river pumps are being illegally operated in the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers, and charter aircraft will fly over areas difficult to access, to see if crops are being irrigated illegally, he says.

"Illegal water use is effectively stealing from your neighbours, the broader community and the environment," Mr Koperberg said, before a cabinet meeting in Orange today.

"You wouldn't steal livestock so don't steal water," Mr Koperberg said the investigation would also target the Macquarie Marshes, regarded as one of the most significant breeding sites for colonial nesting waterbirds, amid concerns that illegal banks and channels had been used there to divert water.

The Macquarie Marshes, in the central west, is a semi-permanent wetland owned by graziers and the State Government.

Mr Koperberg said, "In the last financial year, the Department of Water and Energy has heard 68 allegations of water theft from the Murray and Murrumbidgee area - that's more than one a week.

"Forty-four of those matters are under further investigation."

Anyone found deliberately stealing water, faced fines of up to \$132,000 for an individual or \$275,000 for corporations.

"Our focus is on protecting the rights of licensed water users and the health of the natural environment - that's why we have stiff penalties in place," he said.

SOURCE: *Sydney Morning Herald*

### **Water bill passed, but debate continues**

Even though the Federal Government's plans to reform water use in the Murray Darling Basin have finally been made law, tensions between the States and the Commonwealth, regarding the transfer of water powers, is far from over.

The Senate was held back to sit an extra day on Friday to ensure the bill was passed before Parliament rose for three weeks.

All eyes will now be on the inter-governmental agreement (IGA) the States will be asked to sign, but still have not seen.

Victoria and NSW already indicate they will not jump on board unless Prime Minister John Howard agrees to meet their demands.

The Victorian Farmers Federation this week made it clear, once again, that it would not support an IGA that assumes a full referral of powers from the States to the Commonwealth.

VFF president, Simon Ramsay, acknowledged all States would have to sign the IGA to achieve:

- Access to off-farm funding and
- Commonwealth takeover of State commitments to compensate water users for loss of water rights.

NSW Premier, Morris Iemma, is also sticking to his guns.



He vows not to sign up to the IGA unless the full risk of compensation is worn by the Federal Government - something the Federal Government says will only happen if all States are signatory to the deal.

"NSW's position remains unchanged," Mr Iemma said.

"We had a deal. The Prime Minister needs to stick to that deal.

"The fact that the Prime Minister has been unable to get national agreement shouldn't mean he now reneges on the deal, to the detriment of NSW taxpayers."

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NSW Liberal Senator, Bill Heffernan, spoke to the Bill as it was being moved through the Senate on Friday, using the opportunity to call for real powers to be given to the new authority, which will manage the basin.

He fears that without proper powers, the new authority risked becoming a "toothless tiger".

"If we do not want this new body to turn into another Wheat Export Authority, which is a complete bloody failure, we need to give it some teeth," Senator Heffernan said.

SOURCE: Rural Press National Agricultural News Bureau, Canberra.

### **Irrigators charged with water theft on Murray**

Two Murray Valley landholders have been fined for taking water from an unlicensed bore and constructing an illegal embankment in the drought-stricken Wakool region, NSW, where water allocations for irrigators remain at zero.

Compliance Director Garry Wills said one Wakool dairy farmer was fined \$800 by the Deniliquin Local Court this week and ordered to pay \$1070 in legal fees and court costs for taking water from an unlicensed bore on his property.

Mr Wills said that the Department's compliance staff inspected the property in December last year after noticing the dairy farm was significantly greener than neighbouring properties.

"When a property is lush and green while those around it are parched and dry, it's often a sign that water is being used illegally," he said.

"In this case we found that the landholder had constructed a large gravel pit with 18 bores connected to a pumping system, and was using the groundwater to irrigate his property.

"No licence had been issued for the bores, so the farmer was taking this water illegally."

Mr Willis said the Wakool area was still in severe drought, and over-pumping the groundwater system could increase salinity and reduce water availability to licensed bore water users who depend on the supply.

In a separate case, a Wakool landholder has been fined \$750 by the Department of Water and Energy for constructing an illegal embankment on the Wakool River.

On inspecting the property the department found the landholder had illegally constructed a low level cattle crossing, which was impeding the Wakool River's flow downstream.

"We hope these cases will deter others from stealing water from our groundwater systems, lakes, rivers, and streams," Mr Willis said.

Mr Wills said that compliance officers from the Department of Water and Energy were actively monitoring water use in the Murray Valley to ensure that all licence holders are operating within the law.

\* For more information on the rules regarding water access and trade visit <http://www.dnr.nsw.gov.au/water/licensing.shtml>.

SOURCE: Extract from report in *The Land*, NSW, August 23.

### **Rain, gales continue in South-east Qld**

Strong winds and rain continue to batter Queensland's Sunshine Coast, toppling trees and powerlines while more than 22,000 homes remain without power in the state's south-east.

Around 60mm have fallen over the major southeast Queensland dam catchment region northwest of Brisbane.

A Bureau of Meteorology spokesman said the weather cell that dumped rain across southeast Queensland during Tuesday, had moved north to Cape Moreton and the Sunshine Coast.

"Gale force winds of 120kmh have been recorded off the coast at Cape Moreton, while winds in Brisbane are at 70 to 80kmh," the spokesman said.

A Brisbane SES spokesman said minor damage had been recorded in the capital.

Strong winds are expected to move farther up the coast toward Fraser Island on Wednesday, with strong winds persisting in the region into Thursday and Friday.

**SOURCE: AAP**

24<sup>th</sup>

### **FarmOnLine**

#### **Water warrior's team leaves rivals high and dry**

His students at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW, proudly call him 'the world water warrior'.

Shahbaz Khan has made the lower Murrumbidgee the United Nation's world benchmark for successful river catchment management.

He's developed new techniques for managing saline soils in Pakistan, improved water management in the Philippines and earned accolades for making China's irrigation systems more efficient.

This week, the CSIRO irrigation hydrologist and United Nations World Water Forum leader added a new honour to his impressive resume the 2007 Land and Water Australia Eureka science prize for water research and innovation.

The prize was awarded to an 11-member research team, led by Professor Khan, that conducted the first comprehensive audit of water, nutrient and salt flows through the Murrumbidgee and Coleambally irrigation catchments in NSW.

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The ambitious, world-first program also resulted in the development of new water-saving technology to rapidly detect channel seepage hotspots and new computer software to improve on-farm water management.

The team, which combines the expertise of CSIRO, Charles Sturt University and the NSW Department of Primary Industries, is also contributing to improved water management and efficiency in Pakistan, the Philippines, Britain and New Zealand.

Their research has also led to changes in government policy and irrigation practices in China's Yellow River basin.

The Australian Museum Eureka Prizes dinner is the biggest annual science and innovation awards event in Australia.

Climate change was a dominant theme this year, with nine of the night's 20 prizes awarded to programs focusing on aspects of climate change.

Australian Museum director Frank Howarth said, "From a project reducing greenhouse gas emissions in remote West Arnhem Land to critical research into sea level that will help governments across the world plan for climate change, this year's Australian Museum Eureka Prizes again showed how science provides solutions."

CSIRO oceanographer John Church received the University of NSW Eureka Prize for scientific research for inventing a way to combine historical data from tide-gauge readings with modern satellite data to measure the height of ocean surfaces around the world.

He successfully used the data collected from his observations that

- Violent volcanic eruptions have had a significant impact on sea level as a result of the cooling effects of volcanic aerosols in the upper atmosphere and
- Global sea-level rise has accelerated during the 20th century as a result of climate change.

"Sea level rise is an important issue to society and is central to the current debate about global warming and its impacts. I am greatly honoured to receive this award," he said.

A group of Arnhem Land traditional owners won an inaugural Eureka award for innovative solutions to climate change.

The West Arnhem Land Wildfire Abatement team developed a program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from grassland and bushfires in the Northern Territory.

Coral reef scientist Professor Terry Hughes, of James Cook University, won the 2007 Sherman Eureka Prize for environmental research for his contribution to understanding the world's coral reef ecosystems.

**SOURCE: Canberra Times**

### **Turnbull announces new evaporation studies**

The Federal Government is to fund a new water study to identify water lost through evaporation and plant use.

Minister for Water, Malcolm Turnbull, has announced \$2.8 million in funding for three projects that focus on the remote sensing of evapo-transpiration at the local, catchment and regional levels.

Evapo-transpiration includes evaporation and plant water use - the second biggest component of the hydrological cycle.

"If we can improve existing remote sensing technologies to determine the extent of evapo-transpiration across a range of land uses and environments, rural communities will be much better placed to improve water productivity and to estimate the availability of water," Mr Turnbull said.

The projects will:

- Measure the water requirements of crops and eco-systems in the Murray Darling Basin
- Use new technology to determine current water balances and availability and
- Map the amount of water used by plants.

SOURCE: Rural Press National Agricultural News Bureau, Canberra.

**The Australian**

### **Push to shift pulp mill gives Turnbull an out**

Prime ministerial confidant Geoffrey Cousins, backed by a Liberal candidate, is urging the Coalition to turn the Tasmanian pulp mill to its advantage by offering to relocate it to a less sensitive site.

Mr Cousins, with the support of the Liberal candidate for the federal seat of Lyons, Ben Quin, and Tasmanian business and local government figures, said assisting Gunns to shift the project to another site could be a "win-win" solution.

**Mr Cousins is planning a campaign against Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull in his Sydney electorate over his decision to grant conditional approval to the mill, which will be built near Launceston in the marginal seat of Bass.**

A large component of the opposition to the controversial \$2billion project comes from existing industries in the

Tamar Valley -- winemaking, farming and tourism -- fearing the impact of pollution on their businesses.

However, an alternative site almost 100km to the west at Hampshire, which was considered by Gunns but rejected largely because of higher transport costs, has no such industries.

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And the Mayor of Burnie, Alwyn Boyd, said yesterday the region -- in the marginal Liberal seat of Braddon -- was "waiting with open arms" for the project.

"It is in Malcolm's political interest -- quite apart from the environmental interest -- for him to find a compromise," Mr Cousins told The Australian.

"That (moving the mill to Hampshire) would be a much better proposal."

Polls suggest shifting the mill to Hampshire would be a net vote winner in two marginal seats, with significant opposition to the proposal in Bass, but likely overwhelming support for Hampshire in the seat of Braddon.

Mr Quin, who is risking Liberal Party disendorsement by vowing to oppose the mill unless it is subject to further public scrutiny, would not name an alternative site.

However, he told The Australian yesterday the inadequacy of the state operating permits to be applied to the mill appeared to make the Tamar Valley site untenable.

"First review of the permits leads me to the conclusion that the pulp mill cannot be approved for construction in the Tamar Valley," Mr Quin said. "It would be far preferable in my view if we could find a way to relocate this mill to another site in Tasmania, even at this very late stage."

The Hampshire option has also been put to Mr Turnbull by Hobart business consultant Gerard Castles, a former member of the Tasmanian Government's community leaders group.

And last night Greens leader Bob Brown told The Australian his party would back construction of a better-designed mill at Hampshire, 28km south of the port city of Burnie. "We would like to see a mill at Hampshire that was based on plantations and closed-loop (recycled waste water)," Senator Brown said. "That would be an option that we could and would accept."

He said Hampshire had the benefit of being surrounded by plantations and did not have the same air inversion layer that made the emissions of fine particulates such a concern to public health in the Tamar.

"We've always suspected that the only real reason they (Gunns) opted for the Tamar was that it was \$60million cheaper," Senator Brown said. "For the 100,000 people living in the Tamar Valley, it (shifting the mill to Hampshire) would remove them from the spectre of pollution from the mill at Long Reach that's hanging over their heads."

Gunns initially examined both Hampshire and Long Reach, in the Tamar Valley, as sites for the mill but came down in favour of Long Reach, north of Launceston, largely because of transport costs. The Long Reach site includes a wharf on the Tamar River for ships to be loaded with the one million tonnes of pulp to be produced. Hampshire would require the trucking of pulp 28km north to the port of Burnie.

Gunns and the Lennon Government have dismissed shifting the project to Hampshire, despite growing opposition to the mill proposed for Long Reach.

However, the Long Reach mill is yet to receive final commonwealth approval and Mr Turnbull yesterday insisted that despite his release of draft approval, he was yet to make a decision.

"I will consider all the relevant advice and material very carefully before making my decision," Mr Turnbull said. He told The Australian he could give no guarantees that a decision on federal approval would be made before an election was called.

State approval appears likely to be delivered by a vote of Tasmania's parliament on Thursday, depending on the votes of independent members of the upper house, who are being heavily lobbied by all sides of the debate.

Mr Boyd said the vast majority of people in the northwest were bitterly disappointed not to attract the mill.

"We are here waiting -- it would get a very good reception and certainly wouldn't attract the trouble we're seeing down the Tamar," he said.

"Even the Greens are saying it's better here than the Tamar."

He said Hampshire, where Gunns has a woodchip mill, as it has at Long Reach, was not near tourism businesses or vineyards. "There's nothing back there: just trees, trees and more trees and the woodchip mill."

Despite broad support for Hampshire, it would require a failing of the federal or state approval for Gunns or pro-mill Premier Paul Lennon to countenance shifting the proposal.

### **Wind power firm runs out of puff**

The Howard Government has defended its record of support for alternative energy sources after the Opposition blamed it for the planned closure of a Victorian wind turbine blade producer with the loss of 130 jobs.

Vestas Australia Wind Technology announced yesterday it would close its Portland turbine blade factory at the end of the year after concluding that Australia's green energy market was unviable.

Labor environment spokesman Peter Garrett said the Howard Government's refusal to lift the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target beyond 2 per cent was responsible.

The Vestas operation was the fourth to shut in the past year.

"The closure of the Portland factory is a major blow to the local community and another kick in the guts for our renewable energy industry," Mr Garrett said.

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"While the global renewable energy market is set to be worth \$US750 billion (\$935 billion) a year by 2016 and the industry has an excellent track record in creating jobs in regional Australia, the Government's failure to deliver a price for carbon and its continuing refusal to ratify the Kyoto protocol means Australian jobs and investment are heading overseas."

But Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane said he was surprised by the announcement and that the company had not approached the Government for assistance. "We understand, however, that it is a commercial decision driven by changing market demand," he said. Mr Macfarlane said he was disappointed about the job losses but the Government had strongly supported Australia's renewable energy sector, stimulating \$3.5 billion in extra investment, which had seen Australia's wind energy capacity increase by about 8000 per cent.

Vestas Asia-Pacific senior vice-president Jorn Hammer said if the Government was prepared to put in place "the necessary security for a long-term market", the company might reassess its position.

"It's definitely a fact that the current environment for the wind industry is not big enough to encourage these kinds of investments," he said.

The Danish-based company last year closed a similar \$15million factory in Wynyard, Tasmania, laying off 65 staff.

The new announcement came as Labor continued its attacks on the Government's promotion of the use of nuclear energy. An expert report prepared for the Government last year said Australia could have 25 nuclear reactors by 2050. But Mr Macfarlane has stressed that the community will need to agree to the construction of reactors and that their location will be determined by the private sector, not the Government. Despite this, Labor is running a seat-by-seat campaign warning of the possibility of reactors being built in populated areas. Yesterday, Deputy Prime Minister Mark Vaile said local communities should be able to hold ballots over whether they wanted reactors. Kevin Rudd said the comment was at odds with the assurances of Mr Macfarlane and John Howard that governments would not determine the location of reactors. "You can't have it both ways," the

Opposition Leader said. *Additional reporting: AAP*

## **Adelaide Advertiser**

### **Fears for food, gardens**

Thousands of gardens around South Australia will die and the price of fresh produce will soar as a result of extended water restrictions, experts warn. Water Security Minister Karlene Maywald yesterday said that as SA struggled through dry conditions, the Government has been forced to continue the enhanced level-3 water restrictions.

Under the restrictions, the use of household sprinklers, hoses and watering systems, including drippers and any watering of lawns, is banned, but buckets and watering cans can be used to water trees, shrubs and plants.

"We are a long way from recovering from the current dry conditions," Mrs Maywald said. "Things are not looking good and we have not seen the inflows that we have anticipated through the month of August."

Mrs Maywald said only about 260 gigalitres of water had flowed into the Murray River system in August.

"We expect to get another 300 (gigalitres) or so by the end of the month but that means we will have less than half of the average inflow into the system for August," Mrs Maywald said.

The *Advertiser's* gardening writer, Jon Lamb, said the restrictions were disastrous news for gardeners. "Most gardeners around the state are about to plant their tomatoes, but there is absolutely no point in planting anything if there is no water to keep them alive," he said.

"It's not possible to keep a large area of garden alive with only a bucket.

"While we are not suggesting wasteful quantities of water should be given to gardens, it's important to allow people to use drip irrigation once a fortnight to keep gardens alive.

"The fact that gardeners can't use drip irrigators, but householders can have spas every night, is beyond me."

Annual irrigation allocations will also continue to be restricted to 13 per cent.

"A 13 per cent allocation is barely enough to keep plants alive," Mrs Maywald said. "There is an extremely difficult situation."

At best, irrigators could only receive a 41 per cent allocation by February.

SA Murray Irrigators chairman Ian Zadow said the dire conditions would force up the price of fresh produce.

"There won't be the fruit to pick off those orchards so the costs will go up," he said.

"The drought is just starting as far as the supply of fruit and vegetables is concerned," Mr Zadow said. "It's very concerning for the industry."

The Bureau of Meteorology says the chances of exceeding the median rainfall for September to November are between 35 and 40 per cent.

Opposition Leader Martin Hamilton-Smith said the Government had mismanaged the water issue since the day it took office.

**No one likes what has to happen, maybe people who just like to bitch should get educated, this is the worst situation ever recorded in SA and the suffering could go on for months, well into 2008.**

### **SA needs a long-term water plan**

WATER Security Minister Karlene Maywald is right to extend restrictions on domestic outdoor water use until at least the end of September. Winter rainfall has been below average. The reservoir network is being heavily supplemented from the River Murray and the Murray flow is dangerously low.

Every South Australian must play their part in conserving water.

But this is not a new crisis. It has evolved after years of drought yet the best remedial action the State Government can come up with is to force householders to jeopardise their lawns and home gardens.

The Government has explored the option of a desalination plant.

It has talked about expanding the capacity of the Mt Bold Reservoir by lifting the height of the dam wall.

It has sketched plans for a new weir on the River Murray.

But the talk has come to nothing.

Clearly the Government's favoured option is to pray for late winter and springs rains, which will quietly end the immediate crisis and the need to take any more action to guarantee future water supplies.

But the drought has taught us that a city of 1.1 million, plus a string of regional centres, can no longer rely on the Murray for endless water.

More must be done, whatever the political difficulties, to develop a long-term water strategy.

It is not enough to make the home gardener carry the burden for the lack of vision and planning by past governments.

The elderly deserve better

IT IS a disgrace that some elderly people are being forced to seek emergency relief because of rising food, fuel and utility costs.

On a per capita basis, Australia is one of the richest countries in the world.

It is going through a period of unprecedented economic growth.

Yet evidence from aged-care groups to a federal parliamentary inquiry suggests many people are surviving on "skid row" incomes because rising costs have eaten into their welfare entitlements and perhaps meagre personal savings.

These people, through personal industry and enterprise, helped build Australia.

They are not to blame for their current plight. They are essentially defenceless.

When they were young, personal superannuation was virtually unknown.

They were not in a position to make adequate financial provisions for the future.

Whatever the findings of the parliamentary inquiry, the evidence submitted by aged-care agencies, including the Salvation Army, is a matter of national shame. Urgent action is required to improve the safety net to ensure the elderly live in dignity.

Political parties will, of course, express distress and concern before this year's federal election. The danger is that after the election, the plight of our frail and defenceless aged citizens will be forgotten.

\* Responsibility for all editorial comment is taken by The Editor, Melvin Mansell, 31 Waymouth St, Adelaide, SA 5000.

### **Floods, heat wave batter US**

Three people at a bus stop were electrocuted in a lightning strike as the death toll mounted overnight from storms, floods and a smothering heat wave battering the central United States.

Mudslides and murky floodwaters hampered recovery efforts in Minnesota, Oklahoma, Texas, Ohio and Wisconsin where at least 23 people were killed after a week of heavy rains that prompted dramatic roof-top rescues.

Meanwhile, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama continued to wither under a record-breaking heat wave blamed for the death of at least 25 people.

Recovery workers in Oklahoma were searching yesterday for the body of a high school student who was sucked into floodwaters while running with his cross country team.

Six other people were confirmed dead in the state after the remnants of tropical storm Erin dumped heavy rain there and triggered flooding over the weekend that continued to wreak havoc on the state.

It was the third major flood the state has faced this summer and the deadliest so far because of the intensity of the storm, said Michaelann Otten, a spokeswoman for the department of Emergency Management.

"What made this one so amazingly intense is we had an eye of a hurricane form over our state," she said. "We haven't seen it flood so fast and so high in recent memory."

An initial survey of three counties found 42 homes destroyed and 451 badly damaged. Damage in 21 other counties has not yet been assessed because roads are still impassable, she said.

Three people were killed in Madison, Wisconsin yesterday when lightning struck a utility pole and knocked a live wire into a deep puddle at a bus stop, police said.

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A woman and her toddler were electrocuted as was a man who jumped off a bus to try to help them. The bus driver was also shocked when he tried to help but was knocked back into the bus and survived, police said in a statement.

The Ohio river breached its banks after days of heavy rains and swamped cities and towns across the state. A 74-year-old man died after floodwaters knocked over a petrol can and the pilot light of a nearby water heater set the gas ablaze, the *Mansfield News-Journal* reported.

Texas was spared the brunt of hurricane Dean's wrath but was still cleaning up from the damage wrought by tropical storm Erin and months of endless rain which caused six deaths last week.

This brought the state's flash-flood deaths to 40 so far this year, tying the record set in 1989, said Victor Murphy, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

"We've had persistent, ongoing, relentless precipitation pretty much all year," Mr Murphy said.

"It's our wettest year on record so far... dating back to 1895."

Meanwhile, a crippling heat wave brought death and drought to the south eastern states of Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama.

Thirteen deaths were reported in Memphis, Tennessee and a dozen were reported in Alabama, officials said.

"These are a hundred year-plus records that are being shattered," Mr Murphy said.

One such record was in Athens, Georgia which has had 13 days this month with temperatures at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, compared to an average of one day a year in August.

"That's a tremendous climatologically extreme event," Mr Murphy said.

Birmingham, Alabama broke records with 10 consecutive days of temperatures at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 Celsius), up from the previous record of eight days in the deadly heat wave of 1980.

Drought conditions are so severe that the town of Franklin has begun shutting off water service to homes which violate water restrictions and is considering banning restaurants from serving water to customers who don't specifically ask for it, the *Tennessean* newspaper reported.

Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen has made emergency funds available to buy air conditioners and fans for low-income residents.

### **Howard supports vote on power plants**

Australians should be able to vote in local plebiscites on whether nuclear reactors should be sited in their communities, John Howard says.

The announcement comes one day after Deputy Prime Minister Mark Vaile said locally binding plebiscites could decide the future of nuclear power in Australia.

While Mr Vaile appeared at odds with the prime minister, Mr Howard today came out in support of the idea



today.

Speaking at the Nepean Rowing Club in Penrith in Sydney's west, Mr Howard told reporters the nuclear question was at least a decade away.

"When the time does come for plants to be considered in particular parts of Australia, I believe local communities should be given a vote and I think having a plebiscite in a local community would be a good demonstration to the rest of the nation," he said.

But last week, Mr Howard told parliament commercial investors, not politicians would determine the location of nuclear reactors.

"(It is my) opinion that in 10, 15, 20 years time, public opinion will have shifted on this issue and people will see nuclear power as a very sensible alternative," he said today.