

COAG Work Program on Water – November 2008 – Agreed Actions

<i>Actions to enhance water markets</i>
To improve the operation of water markets and trading jurisdictions have agreed to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a national water market system to support timely and low-cost water transfers across irrigation area boundaries and state borders;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • faster processing of temporary water trades by adopting the proposed service standards and reporting framework within the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB), and implementing service standards for permanent trades;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of a pilot project in Victoria, in consultation with users in other States, to develop the functionality to enable water registers to introduce on-line banking for irrigators;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disseminating information for water market participants to protect the interests of buyers and sellers and to improve contracting practices, including the development of model contracts where appropriate; and
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of a best practice compliance and enforcement framework for water management.
<i>Actions to progress urban water reforms</i>
To improve the security of urban water by the adoption of the enhanced national urban water reform framework, jurisdictions have agreed to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopt national urban water planning principles;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish and publish the levels of service for metropolitan water supplies;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publish guidance to facilitate best practice scenario planning for climate variability;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finalise and adopt NWI pricing principles;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review consumer protection arrangements in relation to services provided by water utilities;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate possible enhancements to pricing reform, including scarcity value of water and the valuation and recovery of environmental externalities;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the issue of establishing entitlements for recycling, stormwater and managed aquifer recharge;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote the use of competition through an examination of barriers to third party access and the costs and benefits of establishing a nationally consistent regime;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine the case for a micro-economic reform agenda in the urban water sector;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine the role of improved urban water metering and billing practices in the allocation, use and management of water;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finalise a review of water restrictions in Australia;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate the establishment of a national clearing house for best practice urban water management;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investigate the development of a national system for reporting urban water consumption;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish centres of excellence for Recycling and Desalination; and
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a strategy to improve water supply and wastewater services in remote communities.

Water information and capacity building

To further improve the knowledge base on water jurisdictions have agreed to the development of:

- a national hydrologic modelling strategy, that will ensure future water planning and management is informed by the use of best practice modelling;
- a national water knowledge and research plan, to establish priority research themes, ensure coordinated research effort, and ensure the best returns from investment; and
- annual national water accounts, including a pilot account to be published by the Bureau of Meteorology, to develop a consistent national picture of the availability and use of water resources to inform planning and market activities