



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

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NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE AND WATER AGENDA MOVES FORWARD

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, today chaired the first meeting of the Council of Australian Governments Working Group on Climate Change and Water in Sydney.

The meeting follows the decision at last month's COAG, where the Prime Minister and first ministers agreed on a process for national reform in key areas.

The role of the Working Group on Climate Change and Water is to ensure an effective response to climate change and sustainable water use across Australia. As the Federal Minister responsible for leading progress on these issues, Senator Wong chairs the Working Group.

Senator Wong said climate change and water were key challenges of this generation.

The Working Group set in place a process to deal with climate change issues, including to roll existing state based targets into a single expanded national Renewable Energy Target.

Senator Wong said the meeting also established a sub group to review and streamline a set of climate change measures across jurisdictions, to complement Federal implementation of the emissions trading scheme.

Senator Wong said the coming together of a Working Group from across the country to deal with issues of climate change and water at the same time was a sensible step forward.

In water, the Rudd Government will focus on providing national leadership in four key areas:

- Taking action on climate change;
- Using water wisely in regional and urban Australia;
- Securing water supplies that don't rely entirely on rainfall; and
- Supporting healthy rivers and land.

"Being prepared for the impacts of climate change will drive everything the Rudd Government does on water," Senator Wong said.

"We believe the Federal Government has a national leadership role to play in the area of water and we want to work cooperatively with State and Territory governments to progress these four areas of priority."

"We want to get on with the job of addressing the challenges faced by irrigation communities, cities and towns and the rivers that provide our water."

The Working Group will report to COAG in March.

Contact: John Olenich - 0408841850