

# DOING WHAT'S RIGHT FOR AUSTRALIA

The Howard  
Government



## WATER SUSTAINABILITY

Recognising its critical importance for our economy, way of life and the environment, the Howard Government has worked hard to improve water sustainability, through:

- The National Water Initiative (a national blueprint for water reform).
- The \$2.2 billion Australian Government Water Fund, for investment in water infrastructure, which has improved water management and practices in the stewardship of Australia's scarce water resources.
- The Community Water Grants Program (a component of the Australian Government Water Fund) is saving over 28 billion litres of water every year through 3200 projects since 2005.
- Returning 500 gegalitres a year to the River Murray by 2009 under the Living Murray Initiative, in which an initial \$200 million was invested to restore river health, followed by \$500 million in 2006 to improve capital works and environmental flows.
- Creation of the world's first national Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Scheme, providing for water efficiency labels on showerheads, washing machines, toilets, dishwashers, urinals and taps.
- Providing up to \$50,000 for every school to install solar hot water systems and a rainwater tank and providing funds to Scouts Australia

for rainwater tanks in Scout halls across the nation. As well as improving energy and water efficiency, these practical initiatives will help educate our children and give them more of a stake in a more sustainable environment.

In January 2007 the Howard Government announced *A National Plan for Water Security* – a \$10 billion package designed to ensure that rural water use is placed on a sustainable footing over the next decade, with a special focus on the Murray-Darling Basin where the bulk of our agricultural water use takes place.

The recently passed Water Act 2007 represents the biggest reform of water management in Australia's history and will lead to implementation of the fundamental aspects of the \$10 billion Water Plan, including:

- Setting a sustainable cap on surface and groundwater use.
- Ensuring an efficient water market.
- Establishing a substantial environmental water plan backed up by entitlements obtained through the irrigation refurbishment programme.
- Establishing national water accounts through the Bureau of Meteorology.

While water issues can be fraught with parochial interests and short term politics, the Howard Government will continue to work for practical outcomes for Australia's future.



For more information about our achievements and plans for the future

