

# JOINT MEDIA RELEASE



**The Hon Peter Garrett MP**  
*Australian Government Minister for the  
Environment, Heritage and the Arts*



**The Hon Carmel Tebbutt MP**  
*New South Wales Minister for Climate  
Change and the Environment*

20 August 2009

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF MACQUARIE MARSHES

Expert recommendations to guide the future management of the internationally significant Macquarie Marshes have been released today for public comment.

NSW Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, Carmel Tebbutt, said scientific research, combined with historical information and on the ground expertise, has been examined to determine the current state of the Marshes and its predicted future in the Draft Macquarie Marshes Adaptive Environmental Management Plan.

“Mapping data obtained over the last 30 years has revealed that the area of wetland that receives the flooding frequency required to support semi-permanent wetland vegetation has decreased,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“The draft management plan outlines a series of recommended actions required to halt the decline of the marshes and restore resilience to the Macquarie Marshes wetland system.

“These include water recovery, building on sustainable land management practices and improving water management infrastructure.

“As a major portion of the marshes is private land the Government will be working with landholders to build on the work already being undertaken to ensure the wetlands survive, despite the challenges we are facing from the prolonged drought.

Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett said that the data and information made available in the development of the Plan had prompted the Australian Government to notify the Ramsar Secretariat of a likely adverse change in the ecological character of the Macquarie Marshes Ramsar Site as required under Article 3.2 of the Ramsar Convention.

“The Government is strongly committed to the conservation and wise use of Australia’s wetlands. We take our obligations under the Ramsar Convention seriously and are strongly supportive of actions to maintain the health of our Ramsar wetlands.

“The Australian and New South Wales governments have been purchasing water in the Macquarie catchment which will benefit the Marshes.” Mr Garrett said.

“To 31 July 2009, through the ‘Restoring the Balance in the Murray-Darling Basin’ program, the Federal Government has secured the purchase of 501 gigalitres of water worth \$762 million to return to the Basin’s rivers and wetlands.”

“As the health of the Macquarie Marshes depends on the implementation of the actions in the Plan driving change on the ground, we would strongly encourage public comments on the draft Plan” Ms Tebbutt said.

The closing date for submissions is 25 September 2009, with a final version of the Plan due to be released by the end of 2009.

Copies of the Draft Plan are available from the Department of the Environment and Climate Change and catchment management authority offices within the Central West catchment, by phoning 131 555, emailing [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au), or visiting the website at [www.wetlandrecovery.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wetlandrecovery.nsw.gov.au)

The Draft Macquarie Marshes Adaptive Environmental Management Plan is one of the key projects funded by the NSW Wetland Recovery Program, which is jointly funded by the Australian Government and NSW State Government.

The NSW Wetland Recovery Program is delivered by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water in partnership with the Department of Primary Industry and Investment, and the Border Rivers-Gwydir and Central West Catchment Management Authorities.

Media Contact: (Minister Tebbutt) Patrick Keneally 0431 743 212  
(Minister Garrett) Ben Pratt 0419 968 734