



# **Robyn Parker MP**

## **Minister for the Environment**

## **Minister for Heritage**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Friday, 22 March 2013

#### **PLAN TO RESCUE MACQUARIE MARSHES LAUNCHED ON WORLD WATER DAY**

Environment Minister Robyn Parker on World Water Day today launched a 10 year plan to help restore the health of the Macquarie Marshes Ramsar wetlands, a key breeding ground for waterbirds in the State's north west.

Ms Parker said the Macquarie Marshes Response Strategy was devised to help combat the effects of drought on one of the State's most significant freshwater wetlands.

"The theme for World Water Day this year is '*water cooperation*' so it is fitting that I launch the Macquarie Marshes Response Strategy today," Ms Parker said.

"The Macquarie Marshes are one of the largest freshwater wetlands in NSW and are renowned for large waterbird breeding events. In 2009, after the prolonged drought, a notification of likely change in ecological character of the Macquarie Marshes was submitted to the Ramsar Secretary General.

"In response to this the NSW Government and landholders of the privately owned sections of the Ramsar site have together developed a 10 year strategy to address the decline in the wetlands and help restore the system to good health so it may better withstand dry spells in the future.

"The strategy outlines the management goals and restoration objectives and the projects that will help us reach those objectives. Projects include improvements to water management infrastructure and land management practices and detailed monitoring of water flows and responses from vegetation.

"This strategy is evidence of the good relationships and commitment of landholders and Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) officers to protect the wetlands and better manage our water resources."

Ms Parker said the NSW Government works closely with landholders and community to make decisions about the use of water for the environment in the Macquarie Marshes wetlands and in wetlands across NSW.

"The Macquarie Marshes Environmental Flows Reference Group includes representatives from community, water user and environmental groups, landholders, and various government agencies and has been operating for over ten years," Ms Parker said.

“The group has a wealth of experience in managing environmental water and I thank them for their time and dedication to protecting the Macquarie Marshes.

“Environmental water flows and natural inflows delivered to the wetlands over the last three years have significantly benefited wetland vegetation and wildlife but there is clearly still more work to be done and this plan will help achieve that.”

**The Member for Barwon Kevin Humphries welcomed the strategy, saying the plan to restore the Macquarie Marshes was just one of the ways the NSW Government is working with local landowners to efficiently manage precious freshwater resources.**

**“Drought can have a devastating effect on our freshwater resources and World Water Day is the right day of the year to announce a long term plan to breathe new life into the Macquarie Marshes Ramsar wetlands,” Mr Humphries said.**

Copies of the response strategy can be found at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au) - see “What’s New”. Further information on wetland projects is also available on the OEH website.

The World Water Day theme recognises that 2013 is also the International Year of Water Cooperation.

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