

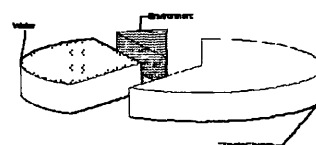
## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

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### The 2008-2009 Federal Budget

The following information is extracted from the Ministerial Statement of Minister for Climate Change Penny Wong and Minister for Environment Heritage and the Arts Peter Garrett, dated 13 May 2008, available at: <http://www.budget.gov.au/2008-09/> Australian Government investment in climate change, water and the environment since the 2007-08 Budget is \$3.8 billion over the four years of the Budget divided as follows:

	2007-08 Additional Estimates	2008-09 Budget	Total
	\$bn	\$bn	\$bn
<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Water</b>		<b>1.2</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Environment</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.8</b>



#### Climate Change

Through this Budget, the Government has provided \$59.0 million over four years to the new Department of Climate Change to develop and implement the Australian Government's domestic and international climate change strategy. This includes \$37.3 million over four years in funding for the central element of the strategy — the design and implementation of an emissions trading scheme. It also includes funding to support Australia's participation as a full negotiating partner in all key international climate change forums.

The 2008-09 Budget includes \$467.0 million over five years for the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to assist households and communities to take practical action to improve energy and water efficiency and reduce their environmental footprint.

To assist businesses reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, \$260.0 million will be invested in Clean Business Australia and the Clean Energy Innovation Centre, through the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. A further \$1.7 billion will be invested through the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism and the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Resources to deliver

initiatives to promote clean energy for a sustainable future.

#### Water

Through Water for the Future the Government is taking a national leadership role and is focusing on four water priorities ... An important part of this plan is the \$400.0 million that has been brought forward over the period 2007-08 to 2009-10 to address over-allocation and improve water efficiency in the Murray Darling Basin. This includes \$15.2 million in funding from the 2007-08 Additional Estimates.

The Government is also investing more than \$1.5 billion in the development of new water supplies for our cities and towns to secure our water needs into the future.

The Water for the Future — National Urban Water and Desalination Plan will help cities to diversify their water supplies through desalination, recycling and stormwater harvesting — new sources of urban water supplies that are less dependent on the climate. This is complemented by \$254.8 million in new funding to increase the security of water supplies in smaller cities and towns ... will fund new projects and upgrades to existing infrastructure.

The Government will also help Australians to take practical action in their own homes

with the \$250.0 million Water for the Future – National Rainwater and Greywater Initiative. Eligible householders will be able to receive rebates of up to \$500 for the purchase and installation of rainwater tanks and greywater products.

#### Environment

This Budget provides new funding of \$303.1 million over four years to meet this commitment, through a number of programs across portfolios.

**Caring for our Country initiative** ... the Government is advancing its new \$2.2 billion to deliver an environment that is healthy, better protected, well managed, resilient and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate. It amalgamates previous programs including the Natural Heritage Trust, Landcare, the National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality, and the small grants EnviroFund. The government has committed \$2.25 billion to the program for the first five years and will develop annual business plans which will direct funding priorities. The first business plan is due in September 2008 for the 2009-2010 financial year, and will include the first series of short term (1-3 year) targets to achieve identified outcomes and invite applications for funding. For more information call 1800 552 008 or see [www.nrm.gov.au](http://www.nrm.gov.au).... Funding includes a \$200.0 million rescue package for the Great Barrier Reef, \$180.0 million to boost the National Reserve System, \$10.0 million to save the Tasmanian Devil, \$2.0 million to tackle the cane toad menace and \$90.0 million for Indigenous rangers.

#### **Comments on the budget**

The **Australian Conservation Foundation** has commended the Federal Government for solid funding of its climate change election commitments and urged it to take the next step by the end of this year by setting a strong, science based 2020 target to cut emissions (ACF Home: 13 May <http://www.acfonline.org.au>).

The **Australian Greens leader Bob Brown** has described the budget as a disappointment and stated that Kevin Rudd has “flunked” the test of climate change (The Melbourne Age, May 13).

#### **Other recent changes to federal environmental law and policy**

Australia's ratification of the **Kyoto protocol** came into force at on 11 March 2008, making us a full party to the Protocol.

In late March, all **Murray Darling Basin** States and the federal government agreed on a new national framework to manage the Basin, involving a new independent Murray Darling Basin Authority and the federal Water Minister empowered to approve a new Basin-wide plan, including a cap on the amount of water that can be taken from rivers and groundwater in the Basin, with States to continue to set annual water allocations within that cap. The July 2008 COAG meeting will formalise the agreement through an Intergovernmental Agreement.

A Bill introduced on 20 March 2008 will amend **national fisheries laws** to boost Australia's powers to fight illegal fishing, including new powers to seize illegal fishing vessels and new offences for Australians caught poaching overseas.

**New fuel consumption and CO2 labelling standards** will apply to cars made after 1 October 2008 and sold in Australia. A mandatory windscreen label on new cars less than 3.5 tonnes will show fuel consumption and carbon dioxide emissions of the car under different conditions.

The **Infrastructure Australia Act 2008 (Cth)** came into force on 8 April 2008, establishing a 12-member body 'Infrastructure Australia' and an Infrastructure Coordinator, to advise government and investors on national infrastructure priorities, the needs of users, funding options and policy issues arising from climate change.

A Bill introduced on 19 March 2008 will amend **product stewardship** laws to encourage the recycling of oils by giving a grant or benefit to registered entities which consume or sell recycled oil.

New laws which commenced in March 2008 give effect to the **International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage** by establishing a liability and compensation regime for pollution damage from bunker (engine) oil from ships. The new laws will require ships over 1000 tonnes to have insurance covering their liability for pollution damage while in Australian waters. The laws will apply when existing state laws do not.

#### **EDO NSW climate law discussion paper**

EDO NSW has released a model climate law discussion paper which outlines the issues EDO would like to see addressed by comprehensive national climate change legislation. Addressing climate change requires more than just the establishment of an emissions trading scheme, and EDO identifies a number of key elements that should form part of a comprehensive legislative response. The Model Climate Law Project Discussion Paper is now available on the EDO NSW website at [www.edo.org.au/edonsw/site/policy.php](http://www.edo.org.au/edonsw/site/policy.php).

#### **Recent opportunities to comment**

**Draft federal water market regulations** – see [www.environment.gov.au/water](http://www.environment.gov.au/water).

**National electricity meter roll-out** - For a copy of the submission by the Total Environment Centre See [www.mce.gov.au/assets/documents/mceinternet/Total%5FEnvironment%5FCentre%5FInc20080422153312%2Epdf](http://www.mce.gov.au/assets/documents/mceinternet/Total%5FEnvironment%5FCentre%5FInc20080422153312%2Epdf).

#### **Impacts of climate change on coastal communities inquiry** - see

[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ccwea/coastalzone/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ccwea/coastalzone/index.htm).

#### **Recent environmental reports**

**National Pollutant Inventory data for 2006-2007** has been released, detailing emissions of 93 substances to Australia's air, land and water. See

[www.npi.gov.au/overview/index.html](http://www.npi.gov.au/overview/index.html).

#### **Australia's Initial Report under the Kyoto Protocol** available from

[www.climatechange.gov.au/inventory/publications/pubs/unfccc-report.pdf](http://www.climatechange.gov.au/inventory/publications/pubs/unfccc-report.pdf).

The report contends that Australia is back on track to meet our Kyoto target of an 8% increase in emissions on 1990 levels for the period 2008-2012.

#### **WWF report on Australian Species and Climate Change**. See:

[www.wwf.org.au/publications/australian-species-and-climate-change-report/](http://www.wwf.org.au/publications/australian-species-and-climate-change-report/)

**Initial Report from the Australia 2020 Summit** held 19-20 April in Canberra is available from

[www.australia2020.gov.au/report/index.cfm](http://www.australia2020.gov.au/report/index.cfm).

The report includes ambitions, priority themes and top ideas from each of the 10 streams of the Summit, including the 'Population, Sustainability, Climate Change, Water and the Future of our Cities' stream.

#### **OECD report on Australia's environmental performance** shows enforcement is lacking and environmental services are under-priced. See:

[www.oecd.org/document/36/0,3343,en\\_33873108\\_33873229\\_39355364\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/36/0,3343,en_33873108_33873229_39355364_1_1_1_1,00.html)