



**Minister for Climate Change and Water**

C08/23220

Mrs Julia Irwin MP  
Member for Fowler  
PO Box 547  
CABRAMATTA NSW 2166

Thank you for your letter of 26 May 2008 concerning a water security petition for South Australia. I regret the delay in replying.

The Australian Government is working with state and territory governments who are responsible for delivering water services to help ensure the long term water supply of all Australians. The Australian Government's approach is outlined in 'Water for the Future' which provides \$12.9 billion in funding over ten years.

Securing water supplies for the current and future needs of Australia's towns and cities is a key priority of the Australian Government. That is why under 'Water for the Future' the Government is investing \$1.6 billion in a range of urban water supply projects including: desalination; water recycling; major stormwater capture; water saving and loss reduction; and rainwater tanks and greywater systems. These projects will assist state and territory governments to diversify their urban water supplies and respond to reduced and more variable rainfall.

Specific commitments that will bolster South Australia's water security include:

- \$137.5 million for eight projects that by 2012 will have the capacity to provide up to 44 gigalitres of treated stormwater and wastewater per year for irrigation and industrial use;
- up to \$200 million for a desalination plant in Adelaide, depending on the capacity;
- \$160 million to a proposed desalination plant in the Upper Spencer Gulf which, should it proceed, will reduce the communities' reliance on the River Murray; and
- \$120 million to build pipelines that provide access to fresh water from further upstream in the Murray River for people reliant on Lakes Alexandrina and Albert.

You may also be interested to know that the intergovernmental agreement signed by Australian Governments in July 2008 allows South Australia to store water in the Hume and Dartmouth dams to ensure there is enough water for Adelaide and towns reliant on the Murray for drinking water.

Should you have any queries regarding this issue, please contact the Assistant Secretary, Urban Water Security Branch of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Mr Steve Costello, on 02 6274 2906.

Thank you for bringing this issue to my attention.

Yours sincerely

~~Penny Wong~~