



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

MONDAY, 31 JANUARY 1983

WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENTS - SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South Australia stands to benefit substantially from the \$640 m. Bicentennial water resources programme announced last Tuesday. The Government is acutely aware of South Australia's dependence on the Murray and deeply concerned about the effects of high salinity levels in South Australia.

The Bicentennial Programme will be particularly important in helping to give South Australia better quality Murray water.

Subject to discussion with the States, the Commonwealth will provide funding to raise the level of the existing weir at Euston to increase storage capacity and improve the regulation of water release from the Hume and Dartmouth dams. We will also increase the storage capacity of the Menindee Lakes.

These measures will have a very positive effect on maintaining a sufficient flow of water down the Murray to South Australia and at the same time they will improve the quality of Murray water in South Australia.

The Commonwealth will also provide further assistance for the Adelaide and northern towns filtration schemes. Building on the \$15 m. already spent by the Commonwealth, this further assistance will increase substantially the number of people receiving better quality River Murray water for domestic purposes.

.../2

In addition, the extended National Water Resources Program will include the completion of flood mitigation works on the Torrens river providing protection from floods for about 5,000 homes and 500 commercial buildings.

These measures are additional to the special grant of \$10 million for upgrading water supplies which South Australia received in the 1982/83 Budget.

The Bicentennial program also includes feasibility studies of a number of far sighted and imaginative water developments. Of particular importance to South Australia, is the comprehensive engineering, economic and environmental study of a new upper Murray dam. Such a dam would augment water supplies in the River Murray system, greatly to the benefit of South Australia.

It is worth noting that if it hadn't been for the construction of the Dartmouth Dam many South Australians dependent on the Murray System would be enduring severe water restrictions today.

Adequate quantities of water of sufficiently high quality is vital to the future development of South Australia. The Bicentennial Programme will help substantially improve both quantity and quality and thereby provide greater long term development opportunities for the State.

---oo000ooo---