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FROM THE MINISTER FOR WATER

Tuesday, 5 May, 2009

## WATER PROJECTS SECURE 2300 JOBS AND OUR WATER SUPPLY

More than 2300 jobs will be secured in construction in 2009-10 as the Brumby Labor Government builds key infrastructure to secure Victoria's water supply.

The Minister for Water, Tim Holding, said 1500 jobs would be secured through the construction of Victoria's desalination plant and 800 jobs through building other key projects such as the Food Bowl Modernisation project, Sugarloaf pipeline and Geelong Interconnector.

"The Brumby Labor Government is securing Victoria's water supply during the longest drought on record and securing jobs now in a tough global environment, with this budget alone securing up to 35,000 Victorian jobs," Mr Holding said.

"Our Government has committed \$2.8 billion to water projects, with water authorities spending an additional \$5.3 billion. These projects are transforming the state and reducing our reliance on rainfall as we face the reality of climate change."

Mr Holding said the 2009 State Budget included an additional \$298,000 contribution to the Murray Darling Basin Authority to improve the health of the Murray-Darling Basin.

"Communities, irrigators and rivers are all suffering as the Murray-Darling Basin remains in the grip of the longest and most severe drought on record," Mr Holding said. "This funding will go towards the new Murray Darling Basin Authority which is working to improve the health of the Murray River and its tributaries."

Mr Holding said the 2009 State Budget also included an extra \$42 million for concessions for water and sewerage bills for low-income earners and a further \$2.4 million for a water-saving retrofit program.

"Concessions for water bills for low-income earners have been increased to help offset the rise in water bills to fund vital water infrastructure projects," Mr Holding said.

Other major water projects underway across Victoria include:

- The reconnection of Tarago Reservoir which will provide an additional 15 billion litres of water per year to Melbourne which will be completed in the middle of this year;
- Australia's largest water saving project - the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project – which was allocated \$600 million in last year's State Budget is already saving water for farmers, rivers and Melbourne;
- Desalination plant at Wonthaggi, to provide 150 billion litres of water regardless of rainfall
- The Sugarloaf Pipeline which will provide water savings to Melbourne from 2010;
- Geelong-Melbourne Pipeline, which will secure water supply for Geelong;
- The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline, which will be delivered six years ahead of schedule; and
- The Class A recycled water upgrade of the Eastern Treatment Plant.

"These projects are creating thousands of jobs, particularly in regional areas like Gippsland and northern Victoria," Mr Holding said.

**Media contact: Luke Enright: 9651 5799/0409 952 447**

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