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Bills Backgrounder
No 4, October 2008

Water (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2008

This Bills Backgrounder provides web links to legislation, reports, documents and statistics relating to issues raised by this bill before the Victorian Parliament.

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Bills, Acts & Regulations

[Water \(Commonwealth Powers\) Bill 2008](#)

[Explanatory Memorandum](#)
[Statement of Compatibility](#)
[Minister's Second Reading](#)

In accordance with normal protocol, the version of referred text agreed between the parties to cover these matters is formally tabled in only one state Parliament. This [agreement](#) was tabled in the South Australian Parliament on 23 September 2008 by the Honourable Karlene Maywald, MP, Minister for the River Murray.

The bill also refers a limited subject matter amendment power to the commonwealth. In relation to this amendment power, Minister Garrett in his [second-reading speech](#) of 25 September 2008 presenting the commonwealth Water Amendment Bill 2008 to the House of Representatives noted that the commonwealth government has committed to securing the agreement of the basin states before proposing any amendments to the commonwealth Water Act based on these referred subject matters.

[Commonwealth Water Act 2007](#)
[Murray-Darling Basin Act 1993](#)
[Snowy Hydro Corporatisation Act 1997](#)
[Trade Practices Act 1974](#)
[Legislative Instruments Act 2003](#)

Comparative legislation

SA [Water \(Commonwealth Powers\) Bill 2008](#)

NSW [Water \(Commonwealth Powers\) Bill 2008](#) (as Passed by both Houses)

QLD [Water \(Commonwealth Powers\) Bill 2008](#) (Second Reading adjourned 7/10/08)

Background Documents

[Agreement on Murray-Darling Basin Reform](#) (COAG 2008)

Since its establishment in 1992, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has settled and signed a number of intergovernmental agreements. The agreements have signified the commitment of jurisdictions to implement decisions that have been either reached or confirmed by COAG. In many instances, agreements have been the precursor to the passage of legislation. Sometimes this has been Commonwealth legislation, while on other occasions joint Commonwealth and State and Territory legislation has been enacted.

The [Murray-Darling Basin Agreement](#) replaced the earlier River Murray Waters Agreement which had been in place since 1915. The Murray-Darling Basin Agreement provides the process and substance for the integrated management of the Murray-Darling Basin. The Water Amendment Bill 2008 includes the amended Agreement as a Schedule.

[Living Murray Initiative](#)

[Water for the Future plan](#) (Australian government's plan for water) and [website](#).

Penny Wong, Minister for Climate Change and Water, Speech to the 4th Annual Australian Water Summit Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre 29-30 April 2008 '[Water for the Future](#)'.

The [Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Water Initiative](#) was signed at the 25 June 2004 Council of Australian Governments meeting. The Tasmanian Government joined the Agreement in June 2005 and the Western Australia Government joined in April 2006. The NWI represents a shared commitment by governments to increase the efficiency of Australia's water use, leading to greater certainty for investment and productivity, for rural and urban communities, and for the environment.

The [National Water Initiative](#) (NWI) is Australia's enduring blueprint for water reform. Through it, governments across Australia have agreed on actions to achieve a more cohesive national approach to the way Australia manages, measures, plans for, prices, and trades water.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, Bills Digest on the [Water Amendment Bill 2008](#)

Media

Victorian [Government Media Releases](#) relating to water issues

Federal Minister for Climate Change and Water [Media Releases](#)

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