MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

PW 96/08 30 June 2008

$2 MILLION TO HELP ENGINEERS DESIGN FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

The Rudd Government will provide $2 million for the first stage of a major review of the main reference manual for engineering works in Australia – the *Australian Rainfall and Runoff Handbook*, Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, announced today.

The handbook is the key source of technical information in Australia for designing infrastructure to withstand the impact of extreme rainfall, flooding and storm surge. It is the main reference manual for all engineering works in Australia and was last reviewed in 1987.

"The potential impact of climate change on the design of our dams, drainage systems, roads and bridges will be a major new focus of the handbook, which contains Australia's most influential and widely-used design guidelines for engineers," Senator Wong said.

"This handbook will help us adapt to the climate change we can't avoid by assisting engineers to design infrastructure that can better withstand the effects of climate change.

"The Rudd Government is also committed to tackling the cause of climate change by reducing greenhouse gases with an emissions trading scheme.

"The emissions trading scheme is the economically responsible way to tackle climate change because it will move us from the heavy pollution economy of the past to the clean economy of the future, at the lowest possible cost to families and businesses."

Senator Wong said the Council of Australian Governments had last year identified the need to update the *Rainfall and Runoff Handbook*.

The Government will work with Engineers Australia to complete the handbook in three stages over four years. The first stage will involve 10 projects with a focus on rainfall intensity, frequency and duration.

The revised handbook will incorporate new data and technical and scientific advances in hydrology engineering to account for the potential effects of climate change on water resources, infrastructure planning, flood prediction and emergency management.

Floods and storms are currently responsible for up to 70 per cent of annual natural disaster losses across the country.