



The Hon Carmel Tebbutt MP

**Deputy Premier
Minister for Climate Change and the Environment
Minister for Commerce**

Media Release

Steering committee to oversee Toorale Station transition

A joint state/federal steering committee will oversee the early transition of Toorale Station when ownership of the property transfers at the end of 2008, Deputy Premier and Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, Carmel Tebbutt, announced today.

“The NSW Government is working cooperatively with the Federal Government to manage Toorale Station’s move into the national reserve system,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“That process is beginning today with the first meeting of the steering committee to plan for the seamless management of pests, weeds and fire once the NSW Government assumes responsibility for the land later in the year.

“I know how importantly the people of Bourke and the Central West regard Toorale Station which is why a full plan of management process will involve the community in shaping the future management of the park,” she said.

Under the \$23.75 million purchase agreement with the Federal Government the land will be managed as a protected area.

The 91,383 hectare Toorale Station is on the junction of the Darling and Warrego Rivers. The property has five separate water entitlements totalling 14 gigalitres.

With the cessation of floodplain harvesting and the removal of artificial water catchments, long-term modelling suggests a minimum of 20 gigalitres of water per year will be returned to the local river systems.

The Department of Environment and Climate Change will aim to use local contractors wherever possible, including Bourke Shire Council, to undertake identified works during the decommissioning of water storage facilities on the property. Similarly, DECC will use local suppliers for goods and services wherever possible.

“I understand that Bourke Shire Council plant and operators are already used on the adjacent Gundabooka National Park, and I expect that sort of arrangement to continue,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“The purchase of Toorale Station is a significant step towards protecting and conserving the unique ecosystems of the Darling Riverine Plains and Mulga Lands bioregions. It also ensures water is more equitably available for environmental and other purposes in the area.

“For over 150 years Toorale Station has been an important part of the local community around Bourke, but now this historic property will ensure that communities 500 kilometres down stream will remain viable too,” added Ms Tebbutt.

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