



NORTH EAST  
CATCHMENT  
MANAGEMENT  
AUTHORITY

## MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 16 February 2009

### Flooding important for the environment

Although flooding can be disastrous for urban communities, it is essential for river health and the natural systems linked to rivers.

Delegates at a national floodplain and flood conference being held in Albury Wodonga this week (17 – 20 February) will hear how flood techniques are being used to restore threatened ecosystems.

The regulation of rivers and ongoing drought has greatly reduced seasonal flood events along the Murray River, threatening the health of native fish and trees.

Traditionally, rivers in the North East received their maximum flow in spring following rain and snow melts. Over summer, flows slowed and the water temperature rose.

“ From an environmental perspective, rivers in our region now receive too much water in summer as water is released for irrigation downstream. This ‘pulse’ of water drops the temperature, altering the growth cycle of the river red gum and breeding cycle of native fish,” said North East CMA Chief Executive, Mr John Riddiford.

Groundwater systems are also depleted.

“ Future floods can restore the balance of this resource and add fertility to our agricultural systems,” said John.

In 2008 the North East CMA and the Murray Darling Basin Commission installed flood regulation devices near Lake Moodemere, Rutherglen to help protect nearby wetlands.

The project involved construction of a concrete regulating structure with aluminium gates that can be manually opened and closed.

“ These regulators help to control the water level into the wetland, ensuring a more natural flow regime that mimics natural flows. They help minimise the losses of vital irrigation water through evaporation and seepage,” explained John Riddiford.

The North East CMA, City of Wodonga, Albury City Council and the Floodplain Management Authorities are the organisers of “*Bridging the States, one floodplain, one unified approach*” ([www.floodconference.com.au](http://www.floodconference.com.au)) being held at the Albury Convention & Performing Arts Centre.

---

#### Photo/interview opportunities:

- **Thursday, 19 February from 10.45 – 12.45:** presentation by **Geoff Earl**, Goulburn Broken CMA who will speak about the issues and conflicts involved in managing out of bank environmental flows.

For further information please contact:

Mary-Anne Scully, North East CMA Media & Communications – **Tel: 0408 685 225**