

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**23 November 2009**

### **DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENTAL HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS**

Development of a handbook for teachers wanting to take students on environmental excursions begins tomorrow at Gol Gol, NSW (24 November starting at 9.30am).

When completed next year, the handbook will give primary school teachers along the Murray River guidance and advice to take their students on excursions to engage actively with natural resource, sustainable and environmental issues.

The workshop at Gol Gol is the first of three workshops involving teachers from NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

The project is an initiative of the Murray Darling Association and the Murray Goulburn Cooperative Co Ltd.

Chair of Region Four of the Murray Darling Association, Ms Allision McTaggart, said today that project was part of a three-year project to encourage students to not only learn more about Australia's greatest river but to develop a strong commitment to sustainable communities, agricultural industries and environments along the river.

"In recent years, teachers have indicated that while they want to help students understand and respond to environmental issues, they sometimes lack confidence and knowledge to confidently take students on excursions to rivers, wetlands, farms, forests, parks and waterways," Ms McTaggart said.

"This handbook, developed with teacher input, will help them overcome those problems," Ms McTaggart said.

Ms McTaggart said that the involvement of Murray Goulburn was exciting as it was not only Victoria's largest dairy cooperative, but the first time the company had ventured into this type of environmental education.

"The company is also vitally interested in sustainable futures for its dairy farmer milk suppliers and has a strong interest in sustainable water management in the Murray-Darling Basin," Ms McTaggart said.

The handbook will draw on student, teacher and school community expertise and skills that reside along the Murray River but will also provide students with positive messages about water-dependent agricultural industries,

"The handbook will also include several case studies of how farmers are implementing improved production and irrigation efficiency; and responding to the need for sustainable environments (one example will be an irrigated dairy farm in northern Victoria," Ms McTaggart said.

The draft handbook will be trialled at schools along the Murray River in the three states before it is launched in mid-2010.

Teachers from NSW and Victorian primary schools will participate in the morning workshop at Gol Gol Public School, starting at 9.30am.