**Water Savings from Moira Lake Rehabilitation**

The NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group Inc. (MWWG) has been working with NSW State Forests over several years to rehabilitate Moira Lake, a larger lake in the Barmah Milliewa Forest on the Murray River. Engineering works constructed at the lake exclude regulated river flows from the lake and allow the lake to dry over summer. The work has succeeded in re-establishing a seasonal drying phase in the last 3 summers (the first summer drying phases for 50 years). Vegetation at the lake has already responded and is spreading further across the lakebed with each season.

In addition to the rehabilitation of the lake environment, keeping water out of the lake over summer (when it would be dry under natural river flow conditions) has also prevented evaporative loss from the lake surface of water meant for downstream irrigation. In effect, less water now needs to be released from Hume Dam for water supply over summer because less is lost in transit. The net water saving from rehabilitating Moira Lake is 2,200 megalitres each year. These water savings are from regulated flows, not from any environmental allocation as many people assume.

The working group has been lobbying for some time to have these water savings recognised and used for environmental benefit. The NSW government and the Murray Darling Basin Commission recently agreed to a trial management of the water savings from Moira Lake. The working group has been granted about 2,000 megalitres, and up to 50% of this allocation can be sold each year. The remainder is to be directed to wetlands needing increased inundation. The MWWG has prepared Business and Operating Plans for managing the water.

**Assessment of Flow Requirements for Murray Wetlands**

The MWWG has also initiated a project to assess the levels of inlets to wetlands along the Murray floodplain between Hume Dam and Yarrawonga. Similar work is being done for the Edward-Wakool and the Darling Anabranches. This information will be used to develop a GIS database of wetland inundation levels. The group is seeking support for the project from Victorian agencies and the MDBC. As an extension of this project, the group is also seeking to develop standards for an integrated regional wetland database.

**Proposed Assessment of Weir Manipulation**

The MWWG will be working with the Murray Darling Freshwater Research Centre and the Department of Land and Water Conservation to assess the feasibility of a weir pool manipulation trial at a selected site over the next 3 years.

**Economic Assessment of Gol Gol Wetlands**

The Group has also helped the Gol Gol Community Reference Group Inc. contract an assessment of Lake Gol Gol and Gol Gol Swamp (near Mildura) by natural resource economists Jeff Bennett and Stuart Whitten. The study will help the group to determine the most appropriate rehabilitation option for the wetlands.