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MEDIA RELEASE

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LAUNCH OF DARLING DISCOVERY WEBSITE

A new website to improve community and student knowledge, understanding and awareness about the Darling catchment was announced at Bourke today.

An initiative of the Murray Darling Environmental Foundation and the Murray Darling Association, the website aims to generate interest amongst students and the broader community about the richness and diversity of an inland river that does not get the profile and interest that it deserves.

The website has taken two years to develop and includes material on native fish; cultural heritage; water; industry; agriculture; irrigation; tourism; wetlands; vegetation; managing natural resources; history and heritage.

National President of the Murray Darling Association, Mr Ken Rogers, said today that at workshops run by the Murray Darling Association along the Darling River in recent years, students, teachers and community members had commented on the lack of easily-accessible material on the Darling River, similar to that available along the Murray River.

“The lack of this concise and accessible material was also raised by some of the Association’s member councils and visitor information centres along the Darling, including Bourke Shire Council,” Mr Rogers said

“Two years ago, the Association’s Environmental Foundation started to develop a website to improve community and student knowledge, understanding and awareness about the Darling catchment,” Mr Rogers said.

Mr Rogers said that the website aimed to provide high quality material about the Darling catchment and its natural resources to complement the current material about the Murray River.

“The Association hopes the website will help broaden understanding of Darling catchment issues by the wider Australian community and encourage greater involvement in managing the Darling River’s natural resources,” Mr Rogers said.

“The Association also believes the website will contribute to community pride in the Darling River, its communities and good natural resource management,” Mr Rogers said.

Mr Rogers said that to get the website underway, the Murray Darling Environmental Foundation had sourced interest and much-appreciated financial and in-kind support for this project.

“Supporters include the Western Catchment Management Authority, the Broken Hill Community Credit Union, Country Energy Water; Wentworth Branch of the Bendigo Bank; the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority and Web Partners,” Mr Rogers said.

“This support is highly valued and much appreciated,” Mr Rogers said.

Bourke and Brewarrina shire councils as well as other shire councils along the Darling have contributed valuable ideas, contacts, material and photographs while the Murray-Darling Basin Authority provided access to maps and a key written resource, *The Darling River*.

“Communities, farmers, irrigators, organisations, government agencies, artists, Local Government and individuals along this great river also contributed material, ideas and encouragement,” Mr Rogers said.

Mr Rogers said that all of the supporters should feel part of a significant on-going project and hopefully maintain interest and involvement in this project that supports natural resources and communities of the Darling catchment.

Mr Rogers, who is National president of the Murray Darling Association, was in Bourke today for a meeting of the Association’s Administration and Policy Committee. Members of the committee come from NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland.

The meeting will be held at Bourke Shire Council offices.

In 2010, plan to visit www.discoveringthedarling.com.au and discover an undiscovered treasure.

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