

Thursday, January 15, 2009

### **RIVER MURRAY IRRIGATION ALLOCATIONS INCREASE TO 18PC**

River Murray irrigation allocations will increase from 15 percent to 18pc from February 1 following a slight improvement in the volume of water available to South Australia.

Minister for the River Murray Karlene Maywald says the extra 20 gigalitres available to South Australia – on top of the volume to be reserved for critical human needs for 2009-10 – will be used to increase irrigation allocations.

“This increase in irrigation allocations will provide additional water during summer to both permanent and annual crops,” Minister Maywald said.

“Inflows into the River Murray system still remain extremely low. Since June 2008 to the end of December 2008 the total inflow was only 1590 GL, compared with 1798 GL for the same period last year and the long-term average of 7613 GL.

“River Murray inflows in December 2008 were only 172 GL, compared with 214 GL in December 2007. The long-term average for December is 422 GL.

“The prospect of any significant improvement in River Murray water resources over summer remains low.

“The total volume of water in storage in Hume and Dartmouth Reservoirs, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes is currently 2082 GL (22% capacity), well below the long-term average for this time of year of 6330 GL (67% capacity).”

While salinity levels have remained fairly low above Lock 1, low water levels below Lock 1 have resulted in higher salinity levels.

Allocation updates will continue to be issued on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and information on water resource conditions will be available on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, or the first business day following if either day falls on a weekend.

The South Australian Government is currently in dispute with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (formerly the MDB Commission) regarding the former Commission’s calculation of imbalances owed by South Australia for the 2008-09 water year.

“We welcome last week’s announcement that an independent review of the account is under way. That initial outcome will be provided in February,” Minister Maywald said.

For more information about conditions in the River Murray or wider Murray-Darling Basin visit [www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/](http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/)