
Monday, 15 February 2010

SA WINS BATTLE FOR WATER, ALLOCATIONS JUMP TO 55%

Minister for the River Murray Karlene Maywald said today South Australia has won its battle with Victoria and New South Wales to secure 40 gegalitres of water for River Murray irrigators.

Minister Maywald says the additional water secured from Victoria and New South Wales in an agreement sealed Friday will allow River Murray irrigator allocations to be increased to 55%.

“South Australia fought hard to secure this 40 GL, demanding an independent review of imbalances after suspecting that we’d be short changed under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement,” Minister Maywald says.

“Under that agreement South Australia is entitled to a share of water diverted from the Lower Darling in New South Wales.

“This independent review confirmed that South Australia did not receive its full share between 2002 and 2009.

“To pay back this shortfall, both New South Wales and Victoria will now have to deliver 20GL each to South Australia. All of the 40GL will be made available to River Murray irrigators.”

Minister Maywald says after a long battle with the upstream states, Murray-Darling Basin Officials Committee finally reached agreement last Friday on the terms of the adjustment.

“This 40GL of water allows us to immediately raise allocations to 55% from 48%, which is excellent news for South Australian irrigators,” she says.

Minister Maywald says the increase in allocations has been made despite there being no improvement in the dry conditions across the southern portions of the Murray-Darling Basin during January 2010.

“River Murray storages are still very low,” Minister Maywald says. “The current volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria is about 2,602 GL or 28% of capacity as a result of the floodwaters in northern New South Wales reaching the Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria.”

“At the same time last year storages were at 1880 GL, or 20%.”

Allocation updates will continue to be issued on the 1st and 15th of each month, or the first business day following that date if it falls on a weekend. For more information about conditions in the River Murray or wider Murray-Darling Basin visit www.mdba.gov.au