

Thursday, 1 October 2009

IRRIGATOR WATER ALLOCATIONS TO INCREASE

Recent improved inflows into the Murray-Darling Basin mean South Australia's River Murray licence holders will be able to access 25 per cent of their entitlement from today, up from 16 per cent.

Acting Minister for the River Murray Patrick Conlon said better rainfalls across the basin which have made this possible are also good news for the environment.

“And recent good rainfall in the Adelaide Hills has also meant that our storages are near capacity, and we have not needed to take any water out of the River Murray since April,” Mr Conlon said.

“South Australia's irrigators have been doing it tough in recent years, with final allocations last year at an historic low of 18 per cent, and today's news provides some certainty for this season.

“This is great news for irrigators and the Riverland economy, which is so important to the state.

“Earlier this year the State Government also purchased 50 gigalitres of environmental water. This water will be released over this coming summer to mitigate environmental damage to Lake Alexandrina.”

Mr Conlon said the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's latest water resources preliminary assessment shows an overall improvement in the shared resource of about 300 GL.

“South Australia is entitled to 100 GL of this improvement,” Mr Conlon said.

“After using half to repay our advance of water received at the start of 2009-10, we have 50 GL to provide for general allocations.

“As a result we are able to increase the allocation to licence holders to 25 per cent.

“However, water resource availability throughout the southern Murray-Darling Basin remain at historically low levels and licence holders are reminded that access to additional water in the future is not guaranteed.

“The current volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria is about 2,540 GL (27 per cent of capacity), compared to 2,656 GL (28 per cent capacity) at the same time last year,” Mr Conlon said.

Allocation announcements will continue to be made on the 1st and 15th of each month, or the first business day after, if those dates fall on a weekend. For more information about conditions in the River Murray or wider Murray-Darling Basin visit www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/

