

Wednesday, 20 February 2008

RIVER MURRAY FLOWS TOO LOW FOR ALLOCATION INCREASE

Minister for the River Murray Karlene Maywald says irrigation allocations will remain unchanged at 32 percent in South Australia.

“Despite widespread rain and flooding in some parts of Australia, the inflows to the Murray-Darling Basin shared system in January and early February 2008 have only marginally increased and we are still experiencing an incredibly dry period that is impacting on our water supplies,” Minister Maywald said.

“In total, South Australia has now been allocated 1052 gigalitres of water from the River Murray system, with 350 gigalitres allocated to critical urban needs and irrigation and 702 gigalitres allocated for dilution, reserves and losses.

“Based on the latest assessment from the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, from January 10 to February 13, the volume of water to be shared between South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales has only increased by 48 gigalitres.

“The MDBIC has advised that the current inflows and river operations are at the limits of the monitoring and modelling currently available to them, which has created difficulties with the timely release of information, particularly with regard to flows to SA.

“Under normal circumstances, water monitoring equipment would be measuring much greater volumes. However because of the small volumes of inflows being received, the commission is continuing to check and re-check its measurements to ensure accuracy.

“The SA Government is continuing to seek clarification on the imbalance in water allocated to each state and the volume that remains to be paid back by South Australia. This information will be available shortly.”

Minister Maywald reminded irrigators that if they require additional water for use in 2007/08 or for carryover, that at this stage interstate water markets close on April 30 for all trades.

Irrigators must also advise the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation of carry-over volumes in March. No late applications will be accepted.

