

Tuesday, 25 March 2008

### **MURRAY ALLOCATIONS TO STAY AT 32%**

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

“The latest assessment of water resources by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, to the end of February, shows a 20 gegalitre improvement in the total amount of water allocated to South Australia for 2007-08,” Minister Maywald said.

“So far this water year, SA has been allocated a total of 1070GL, which includes 350GL for consumption and 720GL for dilution flow, losses from the system, and reserves.

“This small increase is welcome and will be used to pay off South Australia’s imbalance to the other Murray-Darling Basin states and to secure critical human needs and carry-over for 2008-09.

“Therefore no extra water is available to increase irrigation allocations and licensed water users will remain restricted to 32 percent.”

During February 2008 the total Murray system inflow was just 98 GL, compared to the long-term average of 170 GL.

Flows into South Australia have been increased from 3500 megalitres per day to 3800 ML/day to maintain weir pool levels during the recent period of hot weather.

While salinity levels above Lock 1 remain low, salinity below Lock 1 continues to increase because of low flows into SA.

Salinity at Murray Bridge averaged 980 EC last week, compared to 390 EC for the same period last year. Salinity in Lake Alexandrina is 3870 EC, compared with 1390 EC last year, although there are sections where levels are much higher.

Currently, the water level in Lake Alexandrina is -0.40m AHD (distance below sea level) compared to 0.27m AHD at the same time last year. Lake Albert is currently about -0.50m AHD.

### **Opening allocations for 2008-09**

Minister Maywald says there is a 50-50 chance of an opening allocation for 2008-09 of up to 5 percent. According to the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, this probability depends on rainfall and inflows into the system before July 1, 2008. Possible scenarios for flows to South Australia in 2008-09 will be outlined in an update to be provided in mid-May.

The Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation has produced a series of new diagrams showing:

- The total amount of water predicted to be available for sharing between SA, NSW and Victoria during 2007-08.
- How water available to SA for consumptive use is allocated.
- How SA's dilution flow is used.

These diagrams are available on the DWLBC website at:

[www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html](http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html)

### **Carry-over applications**

Minister Maywald also reminded all licence holders that all carry-over applications must be received by DWLBC by 31 March 2008. Late applications will not be considered.

For further information about carry-over, and for other River Murray drought information, visit [www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html](http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html)