



Government
of South Australia

Department of Water,
Land and Biodiversity
Conservation

MEDIA RELEASE

MONDAY 30 JUNE
2008

WATER THEFT SHOULD BE REPORTED

The use of River Murray water will continue to be monitored to identify any cases of water theft.

Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (DWLBC) Chief Executive, Rob Freeman, said it was critical that all River Murray water users adhered to water restrictions.

He said anyone with information about possible water theft has a responsibility to report the information to authorities.

“The Murray-Darling Basin is experiencing the worst drought on record, and record low inflows into South Australia have greatly reduced the amount of water available for use by River Murray water users,” he said.

“As a result, restrictions on the use of River Murray water are in place to ensure that the limited amount of water available in the system is distributed as fairly as possible.”

“While water theft is always of concern, during periods of low flows to South Australia, stealing water has a magnified impact on weir pool levels and compromises all users’ access to water.”

DWLBC commits significant resources to ensure that all River Murray water users are aware of, and comply with, water restrictions. These resources include field officers, on-ground compliance and investigations officers, and surveillance teams. All reports of water theft are taken very seriously and fully investigated.

Meter readers currently visit properties monthly, and if they suspect water is being used illegally they contact DWLBC compliance officers who investigate the matter further.

During the past year the department’s Investigations Unit has investigated 70 complaints, issued 104 informal cautions, 113 formal cautions, and 22 expiation notices.

Considerable penalties can be imposed on anyone found to be breaching water restrictions. These penalties include fines, criminal and civil proceedings, restraining orders, and the suspension and/or permanent cancellation of water licences.

If you suspect someone is breaching restrictions, please contact the DWLBC Investigations Unit’s Murray Bridge office on **8539 2110** (24 hours) or email dwlbc.investigationsunit@saugov.sa.gov.au. You can remain anonymous.

For further information about River Murray water restrictions call the drought hotline on 180 20 20 or visit www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html