

Monday, 2 August 2010

RIVER MURRAY IRRIGATION ALLOCATIONS INCREASE TO 31 PER CENT

Minister for the River Murray Paul Caica today announced that River Murray irrigation allocations have increased from 24 per cent to 31 per cent following an improvement in the volume of water available to South Australia.

Mr Caica said in further good news, the accumulation of the promised 170 GL of environmental reserve water for the Lower Lakes for 2010/11 has been completed.

He said the improved allocation was based on South Australia receiving a minimum of 1,591 GL during 2010-11 under a “worst case” scenario.

“Recent rainfall across the Murray-Darling Basin has resulted in 590 GL of inflow being recorded in July which is well above the 200 GL originally forecast in early July,” he said.

“The increase to 31 per cent is good news for River Murray irrigators in South Australia and is considerably higher than at this time last year, when irrigation allocations were at just five per cent

“Previously we were forecasting general allocations to be at 25 per cent by the end of August, so it is pleasing that we have been able to increase them to 31 per cent.

“In addition South Australian irrigators have access to 100 per cent of their approved carry-over.”

Carry-over of water in upstream storages will be an ongoing arrangement for South Australia.

Mr Caica said it is important to note that River Murray storages remain low in comparison to the long-term averages.

The current volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria is 4325 GL (46 per cent capacity). This volume includes a large amount of water for private carry-over and critical human needs.

Although this is higher than at the same time last year (1 890 GL, 21 per cent), it is well below the long-term average for this time of year (6660 GL, 71 per cent).

For more information about conditions in the River Murray or wider Murray-Darling Basin visit www.mdba.gov.au