

Monday, 16 March 2009

### **RIVER MURRAY IRRIGATION ALLOCATIONS TO STAY AT 18PC**

Continued dry conditions and low inflows across the Murray-Darling Basin mean River Murray irrigation allocations will remain at 18 percent.

Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, said inflow conditions had significantly deteriorated since the end of December last year because of well below average rainfall combined with above average temperatures.

“In February 2009, only 50 gigalitres of inflows were received to the Basin which is below the previous record low of 60 GL in February 2007.

“During the past two months, no Basin state has received any improvements in the amount of water it can allocate from the River Murray shared resource, and it is highly likely that inflows will be around minimum levels during March 2009.

“Future improvements will be limited because of the extremely dry conditions currently being experienced across the Upper Murray system.

“Hume, Dartmouth, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes storages are currently at 16pc capacity (1493 GL) compared with the same time last year at 21pc (1947 GL) and the long-term average for this time of year of 57pc (5300 GL).

“Salinity levels between the border and Lock 1, and at Mannum and Murray Bridge, generally remain low. However, salinity levels in the Lower Lakes remain high.

“The water level at Lake Alexandrina (at Milang) is currently minus 1.01m AHD, and at Lake Albert is currently minus 0.54m AHD.”

South Australia is on track to secure the required water for critical human needs in 2009-10. However, there remains a chance that a small amount of water may need to be purchased if there are no improvements in the amount of water available to SA before the end of 2008-09.

Allocation updates will continue to be issued on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, or the first business day following if it falls 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/](http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/)