

Wednesday, 15 April 2009

RIVER MURRAY ALLOCATIONS REACH ONLY 18PC FOR 2008-09

River Murray irrigation allocations will remain unchanged at 18 percent for the rest of 2008-09 because of ongoing drought conditions across the Murray-Darling Basin.

Minister for the River Murray Karlene Maywald said only 40 gigalitres flowed into the system in March, which meant no increase in the amount of water available to South Australia.

“Inflow conditions have continued to deteriorate since the end of last year due to low rainfall and above average temperatures,” Minister Maywald said.

“Last month’s inflows were very close to our worse-case scenario predictions while January and February 2009 inflows were slightly below the previous historical minimum inflows.

“Given the extremely dry catchment there will be no increase in irrigation allocations for the rest of 2008-09.

“The volume of water held in Hume, Dartmouth, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes is currently 1321 GL, or 14pc capacity, compared with last year at 1771 GL, or 19pc capacity, and the long-term average for this time of year of about 5020 GL, or 54pc capacity.

“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 1.1m AHD, and at Lake Albert (at Meningie) is currently minus 0.49m AHD.”

Water resource updates will continue to be issued on the 15th 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/